



Annual Report 2020

Background

Imagine exists to demonstrate that children with child-directed, technology-enabled learning solutions in their hands can become literate and numerate, driving their own instruction. Over 600M children in developing countries fail to attain minimum proficiency in literacy or numeracy.

We are partnering with organizations across the globe to achieve this goal. We build an evidence base for what works, for whom, and under what conditions. We use data to drive continuous improvement of content, approach, and implementation. Then we provide tools, expertise, capital, and a network to bring this opportunity to children across the globe. We envision a world where all children have access to opportunity. Demonstrating the effectiveness of child-directed, tech-enabled learning, beginning in places with few alternatives, can pave the way for limitless possibilities for all children.

While 2020 was an immensely challenging year across the globe, the COVID-19 crisis has shed a powerful light on the need for innovative solutions, often enabled by technology. As a result, we saw increased demand for our model, leveraged opportunities to test new home-based solutions and utilized additional capacity during program closures to focus on addressing barriers to scale. As such, this was a year of tremendous learning and growth for Imagine as we conducted research on unexpected learning conditions, strengthened our existing partnerships, and formed new partnerships to support expansion of the work in 2021 and beyond. We look forward to serving exponentially more children in new countries and contexts!



Lilongwe, Malawi

2020 Program Review

Over the last 12 months, we added substantially to our growing body of research through completion of a math impact study in the Dzaleka refugee camp, addition of an impact analysis examining learning loss due to school closures, and action research on a home-based pilot in Malawi launched in partnership with VSO and onebillion as a response to COVID-19. In addition, we served as advisors to our partners at IRC on the first pilot in Bangladesh, and we began planning for multiple pilots in new countries -- Tanzania, Sierra Leone, and potentially Ghana -- that we look forward to launching in 2021.

Our strategy continues to focus on two core elements:

1. Proof: Building the evidence base for child-directed, technology-enabled learning in various contexts with a range of partners;
2. Scale: Creating scalable solutions so that we can bring evidence-based learning models to as many children as possible.

We have developed a Strategic Plan for 2021-22 that focuses on four key goals aligned to those elements:

1. Building, communicating and applying evidence;
2. Testing, refining and replicating our implementation model at scale;
3. Ensuring a strong financial position;
4. Building, growing and maintaining a healthy organization.

In this report, we describe our progress during 2020 as well as our exciting plans for 2021 as they relate to each goal.



Lilongwe, Malawi

2020 Progress Reporting

Below are the goals from our 2020-21 Operating Plan:

Goals	Objectives
1) Build an evidence base for child-directed, technology-enabled learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue building evidence from the Malawi Pilots• Build evidence through a series of pilots with IRC• Launch new sites
2) Expand our network and understanding of the field	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Deepen government partnerships to co-launch sites• Deepen understanding of technology landscape and software partnerships
3) Set the stage for scale	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Deepen our relationship with IRC and build successful sites and models• Further develop and build new relationships with stakeholders in government or aid agencies to enable scale• Work with software developers to improve products• Codify and share lessons learned
4) Operate and grow a sustainable organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Extend our team and capabilities, as required• Raise additional capital to support new opportunities• Manage budget and cash flow



Lilongwe, Malawi

Goal 1: Build an evidence base for child-directed, technology-enabled learning

Objective 1: Continue building evidence from the Malawi pilots

Metric of Success	2020 Achievements
<p>Serve appropriate numbers of children to power our studies and produce statistically meaningful results that develop the evidence base needed to serve children well and build the models for scale.</p>	<p>As schools were closing in Malawi due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we were able to complete the endline assessment for our randomized controlled trial (RCT) in the Dzaleka Refugee Camp. Results showed that the intervention produced positive effects in early math skills for children whose first language was not English, when using the math software in English.</p> <p>Following school closures, onebillion, VSO, and the Ministry of Education launched a home-based pilot in Malawi, distributing about 700 tablets to low-income households with primary school age children. To understand parents' and children's experiences of the program, and drivers of and barriers to tablet use, Imagine undertook an iterative, action research project, selecting 100 households for biweekly interviews between September and December 2020. Results indicated that tablet use was widespread and enthusiastic.</p>
<p>Complete an RCT following a second cohort of children for up to 2 years in our long-term pilot in government schools in Malawi, addressing the question of how far learners can progress towards literacy and numeracy and whether the dosage is appropriate for significant progress (see below).</p>	<p>We launched a second cohort of the long-term study in October 2019. Although the study was paused at the end of March 2020, when schools closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we conducted a midline assessment when the children returned to school in October 2020. Eighty-four percent of our sample (507 learners) returned and we confirmed the baseline equivalence of this group. Results from the midline assessment showed that the intervention produced positive learning impacts over the control group: the tablet program helped to mitigate any learning loss that had occurred during the 7 months of school closure.</p> <p>We are continuing the second cohort of this long-term study through the end of the 2021 school year, allowing the children to complete the reading and math curricula. In October 2021, 2 years after launching the intervention, we will assess their progress towards literacy and numeracy benchmarks.</p>
<p>Set aggressive, but realistic learning outcomes in all studies, recognizing we are learning and implementing in extremely challenging</p>	<p>We work with the most promising software that prior research (our own and others') has shown can produce substantively important learning impacts. Our studies are designed to produce, under challenging conditions, effect sizes of at least 0.25 standard deviations in key literacy and numeracy skills and to produce progress against learning benchmarks that is at least 1.5 times greater than the control group. Our research</p>

conditions. Analyze and share results with relevant parties.	portfolio includes studies of different lengths and time on task depending on the research question, including a long-term, 2-year intervention to enable more children to attain emergent and fluent reader status.
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Objective 2: Build evidence through a series of pilots with IRC

Metric of Success	2020 Achievements
Serve appropriate numbers of children to power our studies and produce statistically significant results that develop the evidence base needed to serve children well and build the models for scale	<p>Imagine staff advised the IRC on an initial pilot in the Cox's Bazar refugee camp in Bangladesh. The implementation pilot was completed in early 2020 just as the COVID-19 pandemic hit. Results indicated positive learning outcomes for out-of-school children. Lessons from the pilot have informed plans for an improved implementation at the site in 2021.</p> <p>In collaboration with IRC as our implementation partner, Imagine is leading the research at three new sites in Tanzania, including a refugee camp and two nearby host communities. Because of COVID-19 the study was delayed six months, but preparations during 2020 will allow the study to launch in February 2021. Two-month implementation pilots will be followed by six-month efficacy trials, involving a total of about 1,200 children in the research.</p>

Objective 3: Launch new sites

Metric of Success	2020 Achievements
Operate pilots in 3+ different languages in 3-4 countries including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Malawi • Bangladesh • At least one other African country 	<p>Malawi - In addition to continuing our long-term study in two government schools using onebillion's software in Chichewa, we completed an impact study of onebillion's math software in English in the Dzaleka refugee camp.</p> <p>Bangladesh - With advising from Imagine, the IRC completed an implementation pilot in the Cox's Bazar refugee camp using Enuma's Kitkit School and War Child Holland's Can't Wait to Learn software in English with overlaid instructions in Rohingya.</p> <p>Tanzania - Although our study in Tanzania was delayed due to COVID-19, we prepared to launch at three sites in early 2021, using onebillion's software in French and Swahili and Enuma's software in Swahili.</p>

Goal 2: Expand our network and understanding of the field

Objective 1: Deepen government partnership to co-launch sites

Metric of Success	2020 Achievements
<p>Launch at least one of our pilots in partnership with a government or multilateral aid organization by EOY 2021</p>	<p>We are excited to have submitted 2 bids to innovative programs launched by the Education Outcomes Fund (EOF). One bid would serve up to 200 schools in rural Ghana in partnership with Afrikids. The second bid would support up to 100 schools in Sierra Leone in partnership with Rising Academies. In partnership with each country's government, EOF would provide outcomes-based funding to support selected interventions -- and successful interventions would later be scaled by the government.</p> <p>Imagine was also invited to join UNESCO's Global Education Coalition, created in response to COVID-19 to help share solutions around the world to minimize learning loss during the pandemic and improve education systems in the long-term. UNESCO rallied a wide array of public and private groups, such as UNICEF, Sesame Street, and Google among others, to bring safe learning opportunities to all children. We are honored to be among them.</p>

Objective 2: Deepen understanding of technology landscape and software partnerships

Metric of Success	2020 Achievements
<p>Conduct due diligence through external and internal review of at least 1 new potential software partner; develop at least 1 new software partnership</p>	<p>In our search for a software solution for our work with IRC in Tanzania, we explored various new products in French, which is the language of instruction mandated by the government for refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We spoke with various potential partners and explored a number of potential products; however, we were fortunate that onebillion decided to develop a French language version of their software and, ultimately, we decided that this was the most robust, evidence-based learning tool for our study.</p> <p>In addition, we settled on Enuma's Kitkit School along with onebillion's <i>onecourse</i> in Swahili for implementation in the Tanzania host communities.</p>

Goal 3: Set the stage for scale

Objective 1: Deepen our relationship with IRC and build successful sites and models

Metric of Success	2020 Achievements
Launch work in multiple locations with IRC as partner	<p>Our collaborative Bangladesh pilot was completed in early 2020, just as the pandemic was disrupting education around the world.</p> <p>Although our joint Tanzania study was delayed due to COVID-19, we prepared during 2020 to launch at three sites in early 2021. These sites include a refugee camp serving Congolese refugees and two nearby host communities.</p>

Objective 2: Further develop and build new relationships with stakeholders in government or aid agencies to enable scale

Metric of Success	2020 Achievements
Launch at least one of our pilots in partnership with a government or multilateral aid organization by EOY 2021	<p>We are excited to have been advanced to the RFP stage of two bids launched by the Education Outcomes Fund in partnership with the governments of Sierra Leone and Ghana, respectively. In Sierra Leone, we are working with Rising Academies to plan a potential in-school intervention that would serve up to 25,000 children in 100 schools. In Ghana, we are working with Afrikids to design a potential in-school intervention that would serve 25,000-50,000 children in 100-200 schools starting Q1 of 2022.</p>

Objective 3: Work with software developers to improve products

Metric of Success	2020 Achievements
Invest in at least 1 localization and/or significant software improvement project	<p>Due to COVID and subsequent program closures, we shifted our focus to developing and testing new implementation models such as the home-based model in Malawi rather than developing new versions of software products.</p> <p>In 2021, however, we plan to partner with onebillion to test an innovative digital assessment tool that they are developing to periodically test competencies on the path to reading with fluency and comprehension, as well as equivalent competencies in maths. We are planning to help onebillion test and refine the tool, which could help governments and implementation partners better understand the proficiency levels of learners and the impact of various learning interventions.</p>

Objective 4: Codify and share lessons learned

Metric of Success	2020 Achievements
Begin to make implementation toolkits available to partners in 2020; improve for broader use	We are proud to have published a robust set of open-source <u>toolkits</u> that have been shared on our website and throughout our network via partners such as the <u>EdTech Hub</u> . We are continuing to work with partners, such as IRC Airbel, to refine and customize our toolkits for implementation in new contexts with new software partners.

Goal 4: Operate and grow a sustainable organization

Objective 1: Extend our team and capabilities, as required

Metric of Success	2020 Achievements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain excellence and continuity of current team; add 1-2 hires in 2020 to build out team • Maintain and deepen our culture focused on children, impact, quality, and urgency • Continue to support current team to develop and grow 	<p>Due to COVID, we paused the expansion of our team in 2020; however, we currently have 3 open positions, which we expect to fill in Q1 2021. In preparation for scale opportunities in West Africa, we are looking to build our capacity on the ground by hiring a Project Manager in West Africa. We are also hiring a Research Analyst to add capacity to our M&E team due to the expansion of our research portfolio in 2021. Finally, we are hiring a Research Associate in partnership with Open Up Resources to support research on tablet-based learning in U.S. contexts and to provide additional capacity to our M&E team.</p> <p>In order to strengthen our culture and continue to support and develop our team, we redesigned our performance management process to incorporate an evaluation of the organizational values that we developed in 2019.</p>

Objective 2: Raise additional capital to support new opportunities

Metric of Success	2020 Achievements
Raise significant capital to support planned work	Despite the challenges of COVID, we were able to maintain a solid financial position including renewal of our grant from Imaginable Futures (formerly Omidyar Network) and the addition of two new funders: Mulago Foundation and UBS Optimus. We are entering 2021 in a strong cash position and will continue to manage our resources carefully as we continue our research and serve more children in existing and new sites.

Objective 3: Manage budget and cash flow

Metric of Success	2020 Achievements																																																																																
<p>Manage expenditures carefully and in accordance with our board-approved budget</p>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="4">Imagine Worldwide</th> </tr> <tr> <th colspan="4">Budget vs. Actuals: FY20 Budget</th> </tr> <tr> <th colspan="4">January - December 2020</th> </tr> <tr> <th></th> <th colspan="3">Total</th> </tr> <tr> <th></th> <th>Actual</th> <th>Budget</th> <th>% of Budget</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td colspan="4">Income</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4000 Contributed Income</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>4100 Foundation Revenue</td> <td>\$ 2,387,761</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>4300 Individual Income</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>4390 Other Individual Donations</td> <td>\$ 1,510</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total 4300 Individual Income</td> <td>\$ 1,510</td> <td>\$ -</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total 4000 Contributed Income</td> <td>\$ 2,389,272</td> <td>\$ -</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>4900 Net Assets Released</td> <td>\$ -</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total Income</td> <td>\$ 2,389,272</td> <td>\$ -</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4">Expenses</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total 5000 Personnel Expenses</td> <td>\$ 1,127,255</td> <td>\$ 1,716,012</td> <td>66%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total 5100 Consulting Expenses</td> <td>\$ 282,210</td> <td>\$ 270,000</td> <td>105%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total 5200 Program Partner Expenses</td> <td>\$ 256,465</td> <td>\$ 3,039,050</td> <td>8%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total 5300 Operating Expenses</td> <td>\$ 110,085</td> <td>\$ 254,000</td> <td>43%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total Expenses</td> <td>\$ 1,776,016</td> <td>\$ 5,279,062</td> <td>34%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Some highlights from the budget to actuals above are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personnel expenses are lower than projected due to our decision to suspend FTE hiring while our programs were paused due to the pandemic. We look forward to adding staff to support the work in 2021. • While programs were paused, we utilized consultants to push forward other important areas of work such as the creation of a relational database and development of enhanced procedures for cleaning and archiving data. • Program partner expenses are lower than projected as we suspended existing programs and postponed the launch of new sites due to COVID-19. We are also exploring a fee-for-service model for our scale work to reduce external funding required. • Operating expenses are lower than projected because of smaller team size, suspension of travel and the termination of the lease for our coworking office space. 	Imagine Worldwide				Budget vs. Actuals: FY20 Budget				January - December 2020					Total				Actual	Budget	% of Budget	Income				4000 Contributed Income				4100 Foundation Revenue	\$ 2,387,761			4300 Individual Income				4390 Other Individual Donations	\$ 1,510			Total 4300 Individual Income	\$ 1,510	\$ -		Total 4000 Contributed Income	\$ 2,389,272	\$ -		4900 Net Assets Released	\$ -			Total Income	\$ 2,389,272	\$ -		Expenses				Total 5000 Personnel Expenses	\$ 1,127,255	\$ 1,716,012	66%	Total 5100 Consulting Expenses	\$ 282,210	\$ 270,000	105%	Total 5200 Program Partner Expenses	\$ 256,465	\$ 3,039,050	8%	Total 5300 Operating Expenses	\$ 110,085	\$ 254,000	43%	Total Expenses	\$ 1,776,016	\$ 5,279,062	34%
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Strategic Operating Plan for 2021-2022

Based on our success in 2020, we have defined a set of ambitious goals for 2021-2022 in alignment with our organizational goals and our various grant agreements. We break out our plan into 4 key areas: Research, Scale, Financial, and People and Culture.

Goals: RESEARCH	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate the efficacy of autonomous learning to enable children to learn to read and do math • Build, communicate, and apply evidence 	
Priorities	Metrics of success
Conduct efficacy research on targeted software solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the Malawi long-term RCT, allowing children to finish the onebillion curriculum • Launch and complete RCTs of onebillion's adaptive software in Swahili and French • Launch and complete RCTs of Enuma's Kitkit School software in Swahili and English
Fill gaps in knowledge of what works for whom and why	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct qualitative and quantitative studies of children not making progress in literacy skills • Develop a testing plan for modifying literacy software to address barriers to children's progress in literacy
Define/conduct research on implementation models	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct descriptive research on 1-2 out-of-school implementations • Plan supplemental research on 1-2 scale pilots and implementations

Goals: SCALE	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Test, refine and replicate scale implementation model • Test and validate "value add" of Imagine in scaling 	
Priorities	Metrics of success
Ensure strategic use of resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and launch at least 1-2 scale implementations in a new context
Create high-quality and affordable bundled solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop 1-2 new software partnerships with pilot opportunities • Pilot and/or invest in expansion of software content and/or new languages; • Create a bundled solution that is affordable and effective in target contexts
Ensure high-quality and affordable implementation at scale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Test and refine tools and systems for managing and monitoring scale implementations and ensuring continuous improvement

Goals: FINANCIAL	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain financial strength • Expand and diversity funding sources 	
Priorities	Metrics of success
Ensure funding of operations and adequate reserve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage expenses and cash flow within budget • Meet fundraising goals by renewing existing grants and adding new funders
Establish alternative funding streams for Imagine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-fund direct costs of scale implementations

Goals: PEOPLE AND CULTURE	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attract and retain strong and diverse team to execute on operational goals • Build and maintain healthy and growing organization 	
Priorities	Metrics of success
Ensure strong company values and culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create working groups to address critical areas such as organizational culture, DEI/anti-racism, and performance management
Attract and retain a strong and diverse team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add at least 2 new FTEs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Program Manager in West Africa ○ Research Analyst
Ensure strong governance and maximize value add of board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create and execute a process to utilize, evaluate and renew board members
Increase visibility of organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present at a minimum of 2 conferences/speaking opportunities per year

Mitigating Risks of COVID-19

We have successfully navigated the uncertainties of the global pandemic for the past year, and we feel confident that our plan for 2021 is strong. We are pleased that we were able to make pivots in 2020 that allowed us to maximize the opportunity to study new implementation models, such as the home-based pilot in Malawi, and to glean new findings such as those related to the mitigation of learning loss during school closures. While 2021 will bring anticipated challenges of new software, new geographies and new partners, there may also be unanticipated school and/or program closures that are once again beyond our control. Based on our experiences in 2020, we are prepared and well-positioned with a flexible mindset to be able to make strategic choices to continue our work to the best of our ability and to expand in new directions as dictated by the circumstances.

Conclusion

We continue to be even more convinced of the power of child-directed, technology-enabled learning for children all over the world. We are deeply appreciative of your past support and renewed commitment to our expanding work to empower every child, everywhere to build the literacy and numeracy skills they need to achieve their full potential.



Lilongwe, Malawi