WEEMA’s innovative Digital Literacy Project is harnessing the power of apps to increase children’s ability to read. The program is run in partnership with SELAM Company and Curious Learning and uses tablets to increase students’ literacy skills prior to starting their formal education.

In January 2016, forty young people 4-8 years old from Mudula were selected to participate in the initial cohort of the Digital Literacy Project. The program began in late March at the Degale Public Library in Mudula. Students used tablets provided by WEEMA loaded with applications designed to improve their reading skills. This was the first opportunity most children in this area have had to learn in a formal setting prior to attending first grade. The program, although facilitated by an adult, is modeled on peer-to-peer learning. The students can access a number of applications and can switch between them at any time. They are encouraged to interact and play with each other on the devices.

The program is immensely important because it increases literacy skills while providing students with a structured learning setting. In-country coordinator of the program, Markos Lemma explains that, “If the children were not attending this program, they would either be helping their parents at home or in the field, or be playing with their friends.” WEEMA is able to collect data on app usage and progress. Our latest test revealed that after just three months of digital learning 30 out of 32 children who took the post-test progressed in literacy skills. Students graduating from the program will be well-prepared when they transition to first grade.

In the coming months, WEEMA will launch a second Digital Literacy group of ten students in Hodo, also in the Tembaro woreda. The site location will be the Farmers’ Training Center, a public space where students will come to use the same apps as the Mudula program to enhance their literacy skills. This second installation of the project will work specifically with six year olds for the entire year prior to first grade. WEEMA will continue to collect data in order to update and improve the program.
INTEGRATED EDUCATION

WEEMA has designed an Integrated Education Program (IEP) in six kebeles of Tembaro woreda. Nationally, primary school (grades 1-8) education has been improved in Ethiopia, but resources for pre-primary and high school have remained limited. Inspired by the local Tembaro community’s concern about lack of pre-primary and secondary school available in the woreda as well as Ethiopian government guidelines, WEEMA began our IEP to increase access and quality of education for school age children through capacity building activities. This year we have constructed a new high school building, remodeled a library and supplied lab materials, supported establishment of two kindergartens and built an additional kindergarten.

Q Why focus on Kindergarten?
The community identified Kindergarten as the greatest need in Tembaro. Demand for pre-primary education has grown but there are not enough schools for the number of students who want to enroll. WEEMA is working to build capacity so that all young people have access to pre-primary education and so enrollment numbers can continue to increase. Giving kids access to pre-primary education sets them up for success throughout primary and secondary schools.

Q Why focus on high school renovations?
The demand for secondary education in Tembaro is on the rise, but opportunities for students are limited. WEEMA has completed expansion work that now allows 520 students to continue their education at Bachira High School. In early 2017, similar work in Hodo and Ambukuna will benefit an additional 1,029 high school students. WEEMA’s focus on high school library renovations reflects the importance of the Ethiopian General Secondary Education Certificate Examination, which students must pass to graduate. Building better libraries and providing resources means higher graduation rates.

Kindergarten
In early 2016, due to urgent need expressed by the community, WEEMA rented existing buildings and provided teachers to open the first two public kindergartens in Madula and Keleta in Tembaro Woreda. This summer WEEMA began constructing a third kindergarten in Tembaro in the kebele of Ferzano. This new building will include two classrooms and latrines. Currently, despite ongoing construction, the three WEEMA schools are providing quality education to 812 kindergarten students.

WEEMA has also established a new meal program modeled after meal plans offered by the local private Catholic kindergarten in the area. This program will assist in childhood development by ensuring that children are not hungry during the day and can concentrate on their school work. We are also in the process of adding three local staff members to implement this new meal program. We will continue to prioritize community involvement by holding regular review meetings involving community representatives.

A Story from Keleta Kindergarten
“Hi! My name is Tiblet, I am on the right in the picture. I am five years old and live with my parents. I used to stay home or play in the village since there was no school for me to go to. Thanks to WEEMA, I now go to school at Keleta kindergarten!”

Learn more about Tiblet and keep up-to-date on our projects by following us on social media.
High Schools

WEEMA has undertaken a number of projects that impact secondary education. We are supporting three high school upgrades as part of our Integrated Education Program (IEP). Building on the IEP goals, WEEMA will launch a library and computer room upgrade in Donga Tunto High School in the neighboring woreda, Hadera Tunto.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Dates of Completion</th>
<th>WEEMA Contributions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bachira High School</strong></td>
<td>Tembaro Woreda</td>
<td>March 2016–August 2016</td>
<td>• Construction of a new four-classroom building that serves 520 high school students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Building latrines for the entire school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Providing classroom and library supplies including: blackboards, desks, shelves, chairs and tables, laboratory and library materials, computer and photocopiers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hodo and Ambukuna High Schools</strong></td>
<td>Tembaro Woreda</td>
<td>January 2017–June 2017</td>
<td>• Refinishing the library interior including painting and installing new shelving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Stocking the library with additional books and reference material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Supplying computers, photocopiers and lab materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Donga Tunto High School Upgrade</strong></td>
<td>Hadero Tunto Woreda</td>
<td>November 2016</td>
<td>• Supplying 15 new computers with all accessories and internet access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Upgrading 10 existing computers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Providing additional library furniture, books and resource materials</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
GETTING TO KNOW WHERE WE WORK

THE SOUTHERN NATIONS NATIONALITIES AND PEOPLE’S REGION OF ETHIOPIA, (SNNPR)

In Ethiopia, locations are divided from largest to smallest, like country to state to town. Here's how that division works:

Country ➔ Region ➔ Zone ➔ Woreda ➔ Kebele
Ethiopia ➔ SNNP ➔ Kembata Tembaro (KT) ➔ Tembaro ➔ Hodo

EDUCATION PROJECTS IN TEMBARO WOREDA

DIGITAL LITERACY

1 Digital Literacy within Degale Library & Computer Center
1B Soon to be second Digital Literacy Site

KINDERGARTEN

2 Mudula Kindergarten
3 Keleta Kindergarten
4 Ferzano Kindergarten

HIGH SCHOOL

5 Bachira High School
6 Ambukuna High School
7 Hodo High School
8 Donga-Tunto High School-located in Hadero-Tunto Woreda

TEACHER TRAINING IN TEMBARO

The availability of skilled instructors is essential to increasing access to quality education. At the request of the Tembaro Education Office, WEEMA offered staff capacity building as a facet of our Integrated Education Program. Participants in the training included 195 pre-school and adult education facilitators, also known as “Amechach” in the local dialect. It also included eight WEEMA kindergarten teachers that work across our three schools. Two training sessions were facilitated by officials from the education Office of Tembaro Woreda.