Assessing the Impact of Community Teachers in Kenyan Schools

Summary

The Centre for the Study of African Economies (CSAE) at Oxford University is collaborating with the Kenyan Ministry of Education, World Vision Kenya and the University of Nairobi on a new initiative to improve primary school results in Kenya. The CSAE will:

- Evaluate the impact of over 250 newly hired community teachers in schools across the country; and
- Assess whether school results improve when communities get involved in hiring teachers.

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Policy context

In 2003, Kenya abolished all fees in government primary schools. Previous research by the CSAE, carried out jointly with the Kenyan Ministry of Education and National Bureau of Statistics, showed that this reform increased access to primary education, particularly in poorer districts. However, teacher hiring did not keep pace with increased student numbers, and some state school test results fell. In the same period, enrolment in private schools started going up.

Project description

The CSAE has launched a new study of student performance in Kenya. The CSAE is evaluating the Kenyan Education Ministry's new initiative to recruit over 250 new community teachers across the country. The study is run jointly with the Education Ministry, World Vision Kenya and the University of Nairobi.

The new initiative is designed to be scaled up across Kenya if it is proven to be successful. The initiative aims to improve school results by:

- (i) providing more support to primary school teachers by hiring community teachers, and
- (ii) involving communities by encouraging local monitoring of teacher selection.

By the end of 2009, World Vision, in consultation with the Ministry of Education, is planning to recruit 256 new community teachers and place them in 128 schools across Kenya. All 128

schools will be tracked through surveys of head teachers, schools' management committees, parents, teachers and students.

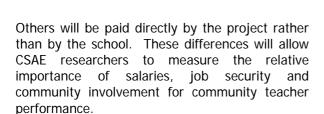
The key outcome of interest is students' academic achievement. This will be measured by their performance in national exams and in special literacy and numeracy tests developed by the Kenya Institute of Education. 64 schools without interns will also be tracked, to provide a basis for comparison. Initial results from the project are expected in January 2010.



Overview of school and students. Kenya. Photo: $\ensuremath{\texttt{@}}$ Curt Carnemark / World Bank

A key question the study asks is how different contracting arrangements for community teachers affect student grades. To investigate this question, the 256 community teachers will be recruited and paid in different ways. Some teachers will receive higher salaries; and some will be recruited locally rather than from the central Teacher Service Commission queue.





Timelines

June – November 2009: Community teachers will be placed in schools.

November 2009: Second round of testing.

January 2010: Preliminary results will be available.

For more detailed information

- 2009: "Free Primary Education in Kenya: Enrolment, Achievement and Local Accountability" presented at the CSAE annual conference. Available at http://www.iig.ox.ac.uk/output/presentatio ns/pdfs/12a-randomized-eval-policieskenya-presentation-01.pdf
- 2009: Forthcoming book chapter on "Public Service Delivery: Education", in Adam, Collier and Ndung'u, Kenya: Policies for Prosperity.
- 2009: Forthcoming chapter on "Primary School Enrolment and Achievement under FPE" for the 2003-2007 EMIS Booklet.
- iiG Briefing Paper 03: 'Lessons from Kenya's introduction of free primary education'. Available at http://www.iig.ox.ac.uk/output/briefingpapers/pdfs/iiG-briefingpaper-03-kenya-primary-education.pdf

Information about the researchers

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Students tend to local crop. Kenya. Photo: © Curt Carnemark / World Bank

This document is an output from research funding by the UK Department for International Development (DFID) as part of the iiG, a research programme to study how to improve institutions for pro-poor growth in Africa and South-Asia. The views expressed are not necessarily those of DFID. Improving Institutions for Pro-Poor Growth (iiG) is an international network of applied research institutes across Africa, Asia, the USA and Europe to generate new insights about institutions' influence on pro-poor growth through an innovative programme of research, capacity building, and dissemination. The lead institution is the Centre for the Study of African Economies, University of Oxford. Other partners are the Department of International Development (QEH), Queen Elizabeth House, University of Oxford; the Suntory-Toyota International Centre for Economics and Related Disciplines (STICERD), London School of Economics and Political Science; BRAC, (formerly known as Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee), Bangladesh; Institute for Social and Economic Change (ISEC), Bangalore, India; Economic Political Science, Ibadan University, Nigeria; and the African Centre for Economic and Historical Studies (ACEHS), Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. iiG research is funded by the Department for International Development (DFID), The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and the Open Society Institute. **Briefing Paper prepared by Bilal Siddiqi and Simon Quinn. Series editor: Karin Loudon.**