



The state of the evidence in education: A global perspective

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Achieving Education Goals



Education: focus on quality & learning in SDGs vs MDGs

Millennium Development Goals



- Net primary enrollment in developing countries 91% in 2015

Sustainable Development Goals



4.1

By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes

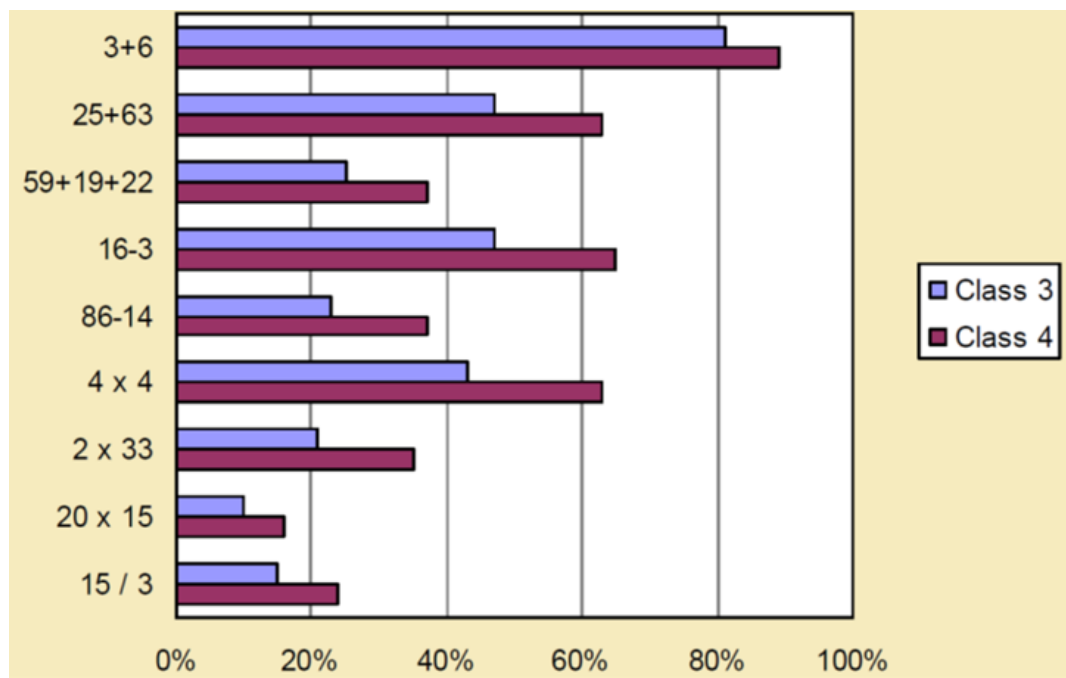
Enrollment gains stunning but attendance often lags

- In poorest countries education has gone from the exception to the rule in a single generation, an extraordinary achievement
 - Number of children in primary school in SS Africa more than doubled from 1990 to 2015
- In most countries more days lost to infrequent attendance than failure to enroll
- We know a lot from RCTs about how to increase enrollment and attendance
 - Small reductions in cost –eg free school uniform
 - Information on the costs and benefits of education
 - 10 cent deworming pill
- Surprising that such small changes can have big effects given the magnitude of the investment of time and effort in education

The new access issues

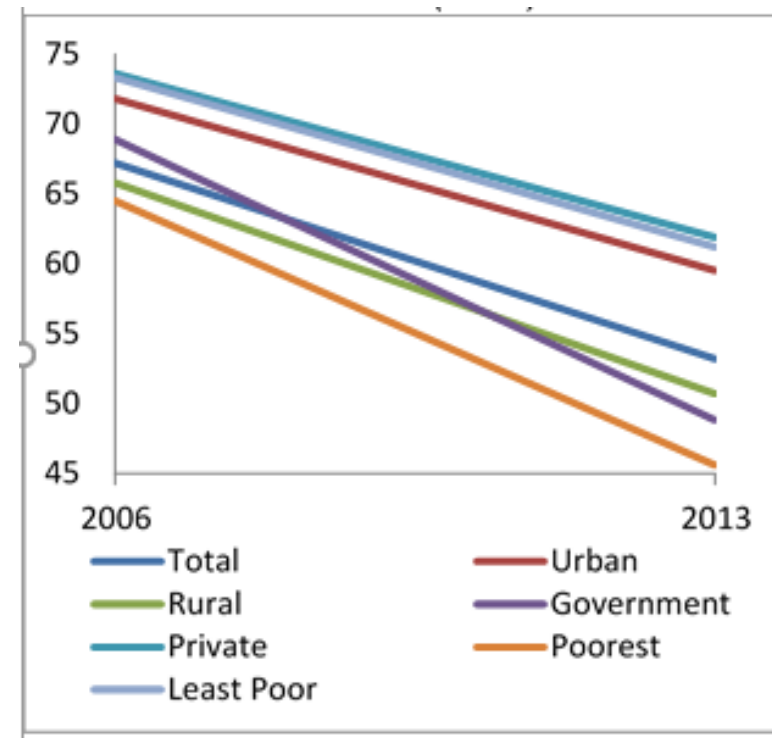
- Secondary education
 - Much lower than primary in most countries, although fast progress as well
 - Barriers are:
 - Achievement
 - Cost
 - Evidence is limited, although major experiment in **Ghana** shows secondary school completion increased by **26 percentage points** (from 47.5% to 83.5%) when children who had qualified, but did not initially attend for lack of fund were offered a scholarship
- Early Childhood program
 - RCT In Mozambique finds that pre-school in village leads to increase in For example, in one recent randomized trial in Mozambique, access to preschool increased children's primary school enrollment, fine motor skills, and problem solving, but not their later language development
 - Need for more research on what constitute **quality** ECD (in terms of preparation for primary): existing experiment largely disappointing.

A learning challenge in developing country schools



Sabarwal, Evans, and Marshak, 2014

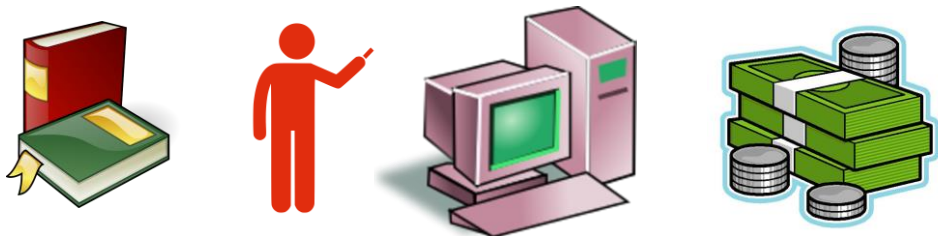
Sierra Leone: Numeracy levels in 350 disadvantaged schools in 5 randomly chosen districts



Rolleston 2015

Andhra Pradesh (India): 12 year olds performed less well on math tests in 2013 than in 2006

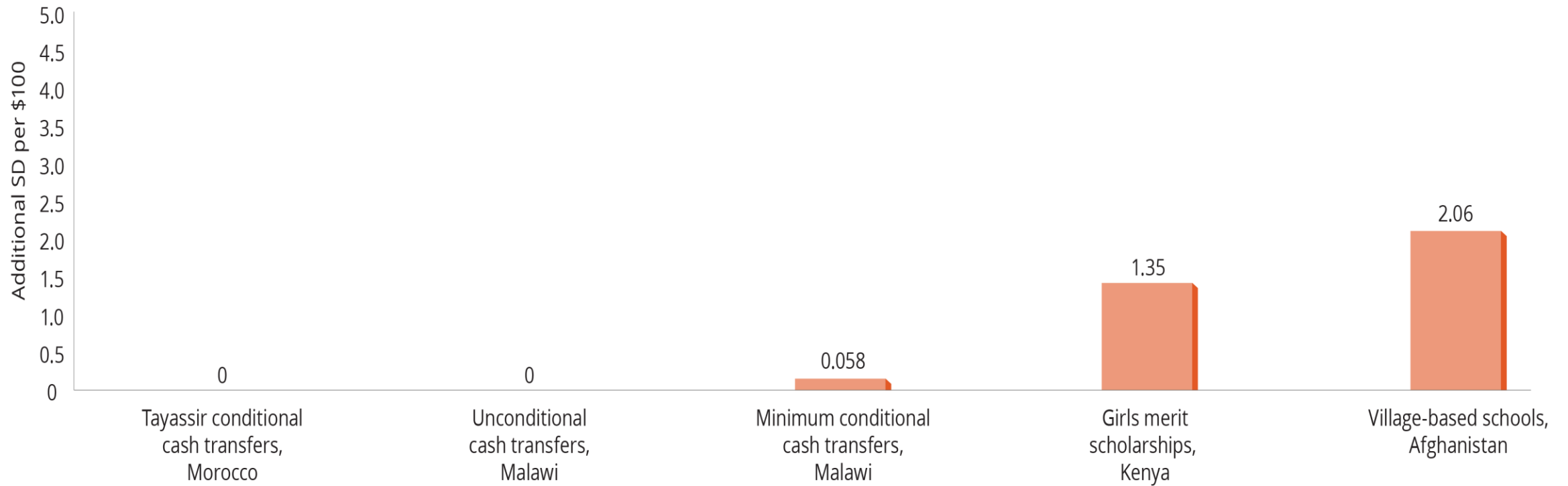
Why is learning so limited in developing countries?



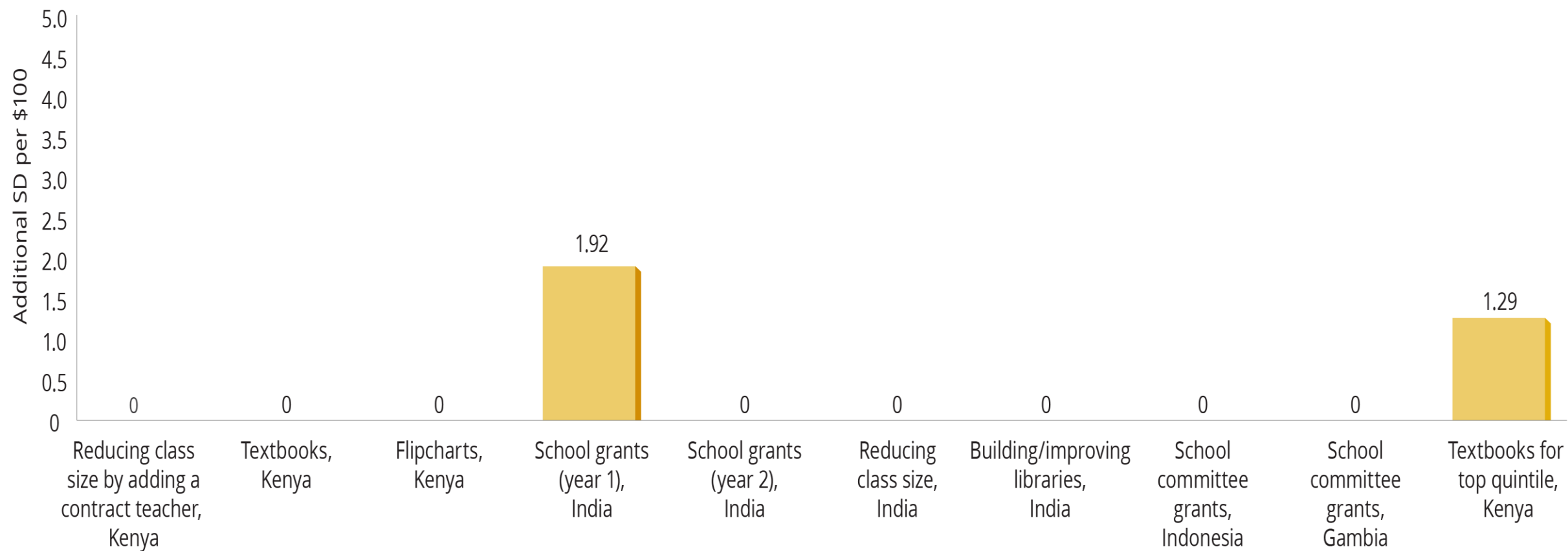
Relative cost-effectiveness of education programs

- All results from randomized trials
- All result are standardized to unit-free measure (SD)
- Cost-effectiveness measured in SDs per \$100
 - 1SD per \$100 is very good value for money

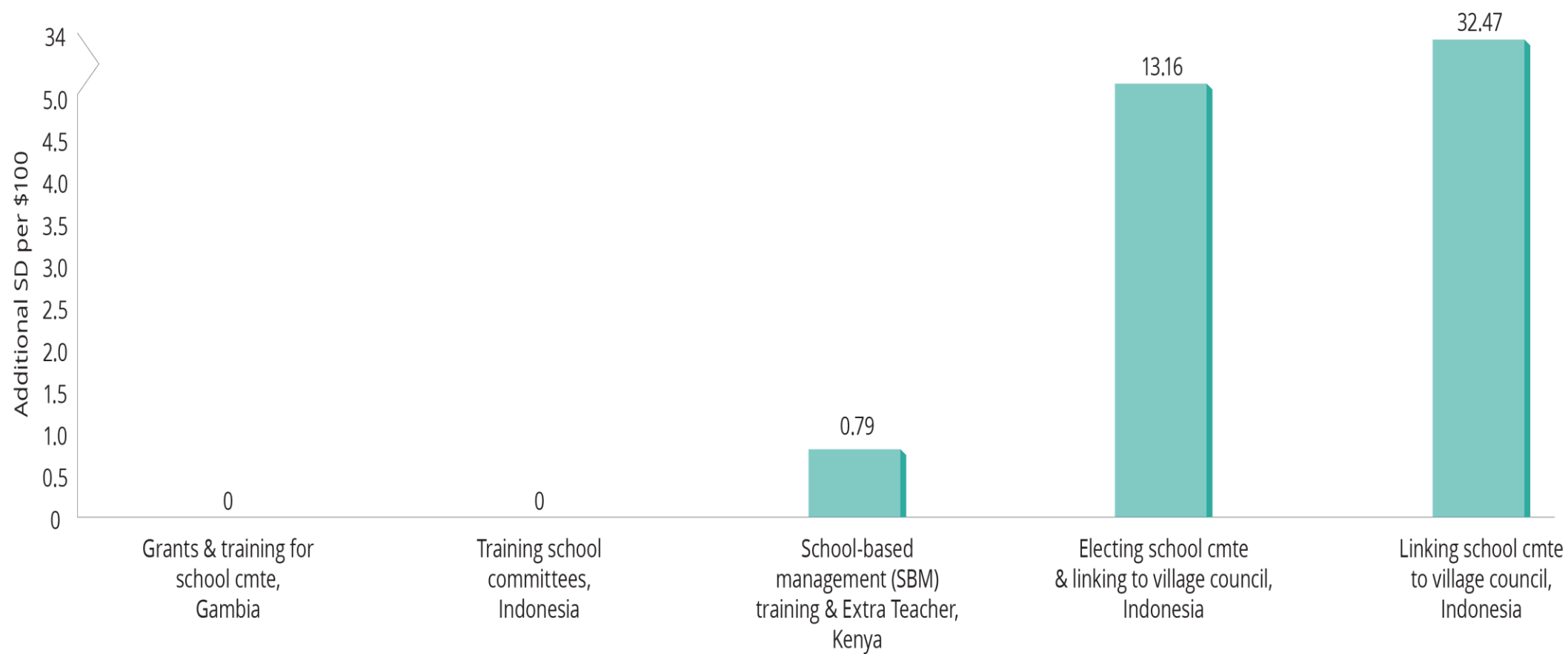
Access can increase learning



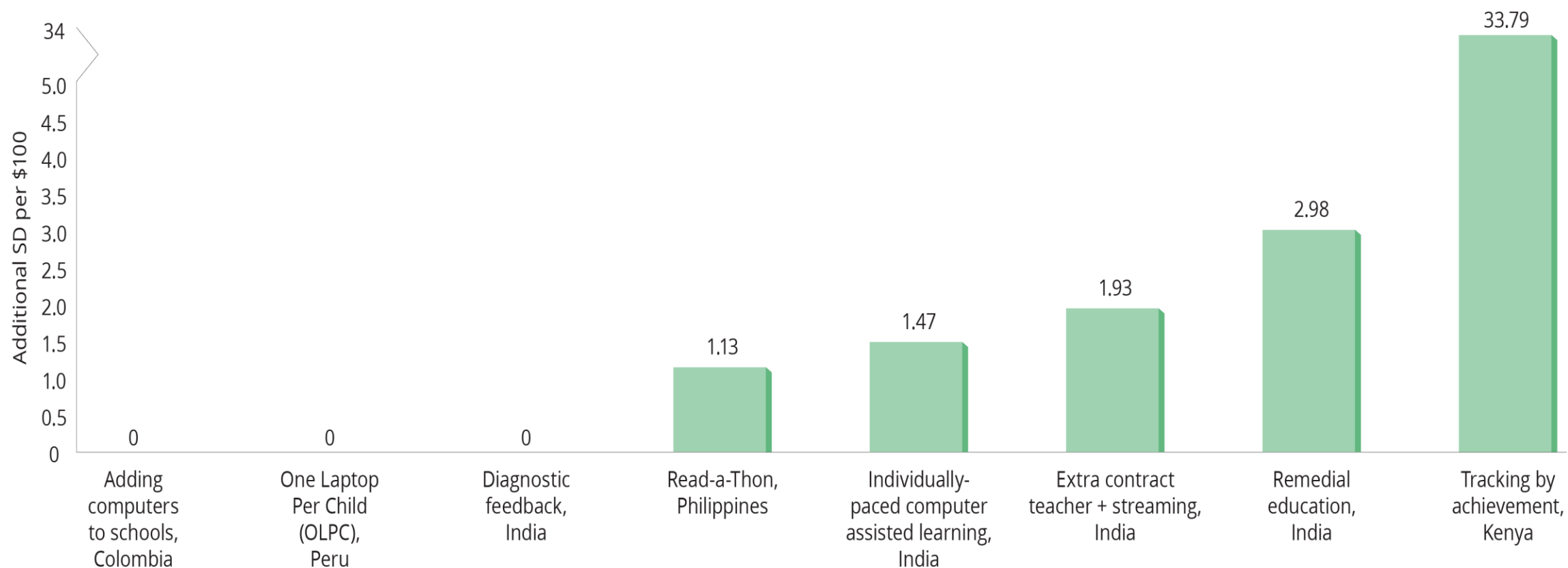
Business-as-usual inputs don't work



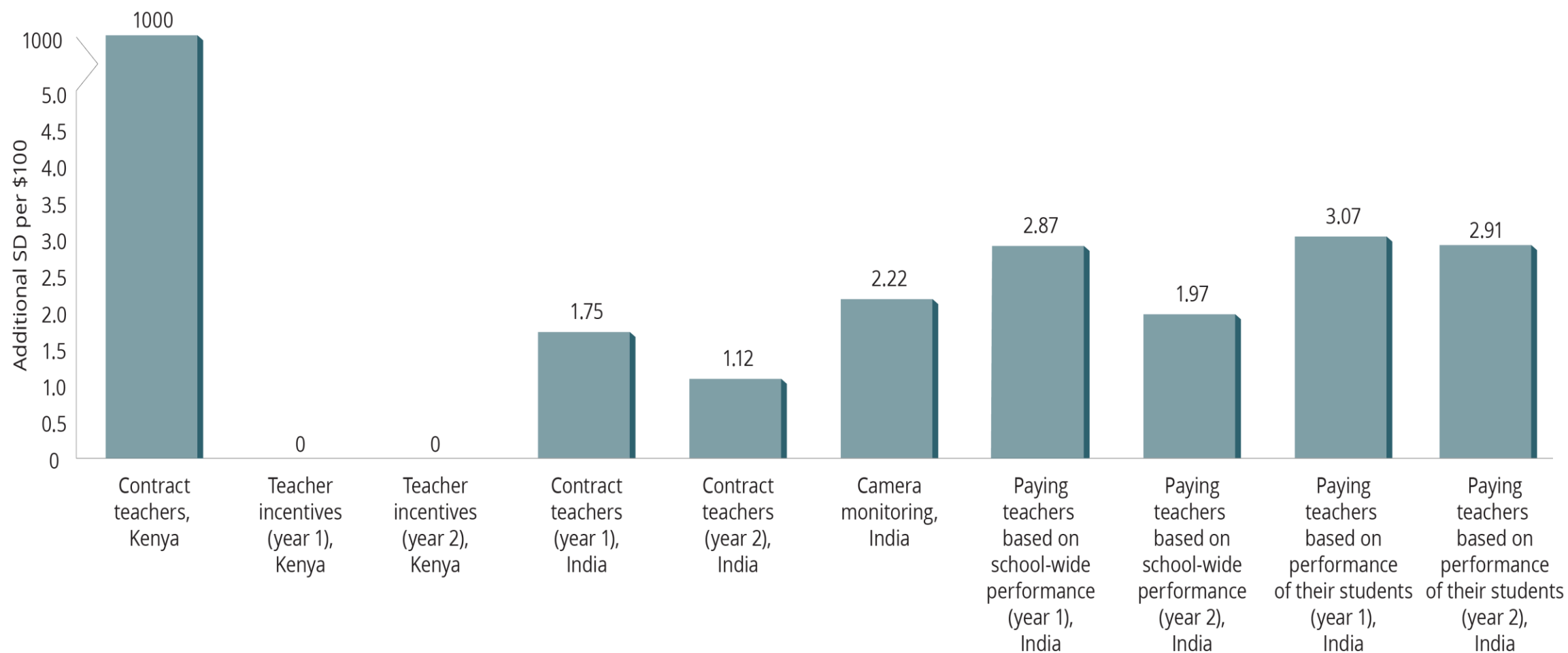
School-based management is hard



Changes in pedagogy are key



Teacher accountability matters



Results highlight underlying structural issues

- Much spending is on teachers and standard inputs
- Very heterogeneous levels of learning
- Curricula of often way above head of poor children
- Teachers are not accountable
- Teachers teach to the top of the class
- Disadvantaged children fall further and further behind



Pratham's numeracy interventions

Conclusion: Highlights for Ghana

- At the primary level, key challenge is to improve learning outcomes
 - Changing Pedagogy to Teach at the Right Level
 - Children can learn and we do know the tools (see Annie Duflo's presentation later): it is a matter of signaling to teachers that it is the priority.
- Thinking about pre-primary as a way to reduce heterogeneity in learning level at the onset of primary:
 - Expose children to materials that can help them build on their own naturally developing capacity
- Access to Secondary education:
 - Financial barrier are important
 - Impacts on cognitive scores, fertility, tertiary, labor markets

The Impact of Free Secondary Education: Experimental Evidence from Ghana

- Scholarships awarded by lottery among 2,064 Ghanaian students (aged 17 on average), tracked to age 25+.
- Scholarship winners:
 - Scored higher on a math and reading comprehension test.
 - Were more likely to attend tertiary education (especially women)
 - Women were 10.7 percentage points (or 18%) less likely to have ever been pregnant, significantly less likely to have ever lived or cohabited with a partner, and had .217 fewer children.
 - Were 5.5 percentage points (10%) more likely to have positive earnings and had significantly higher earnings on average

