Rigorous Evidence in Education: What Have we Learned?

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5 December, 2017
IPA: An international non-profit research & policy organization founded in 2002 by Dean Karlan, a Professor of Economics at Yale

Why Impact Evaluation?

Our Vision: More Evidence, Less Poverty

Our Mission:
To discover and promote effective solutions to global poverty problems
Evaluating Programs with a Randomized Evaluation

Population is split into 2 groups by random lot

INTERVENTION

Outcomes for both groups are measured

CONTROL
Education Policy Lessons

1. Reduce the **costs** of school to **increase** attendance

2. **Target** instruction at the child’s level to **improve** learning
1. Reduce costs, increase attendance

- **Challenge**: still 58 million kids out of school; high absenteeism
- **Multiple programs tested** to reduce hidden and actual costs
- **Results**: Increased attendance
- Varying levels of cost-effectiveness
Merit Scholarships for Girls in Kenya

• 0.27 years of additional schooling per $100
• Increases in test scores for all, even boys

Kremer, Miguel, Thornton 2011: http://www.poverty-action.org/study/girls-scholarship-program-kenya
Distributing free school uniforms in Kenya

Reduced schools days missed by 43 percent
0.71 years of schooling per $100 spent

2. Target instruction, improve learning

- **Challenge**: Kids are in school, but not learning
- **Targeted instruction programs** evaluated in India, Kenya, Ghana
- **Results**: Increasing learning outcomes, especially among low-performers
Remedial Tutoring in India

- Significantly improved student test scores
- Pratham scaling to over 47 million
- Scale up also happening in Zambia

Teacher Community Assistant Initiative (TCAI) in Ghana

- Improvements in numeracy and literacy
- Significant regional variation: implementation matters

Conclusions

• We have learned a lot about helping kids get in school and learn while there
  ✓ Reduce costs
  ✓ Target instruction
• Implementation matters:
  • Effective teacher training and accountability
  • Adapting to Kenya context
• Prioritize effective programs & implement them well
Thank you