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FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Education Programming Against Poverty: Suggestions

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RTI
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#endpoverty



Education and Extreme Poverty: Suggestions

1. Keep focus on quality of primary
2. Standards, benchmarking
3. Starting where poor children are
4. Invest early
5. Accountability and pedagogy
6. Mother tongue
7. Funding and resources
8. Systems

1. Keep focus on quality and primary

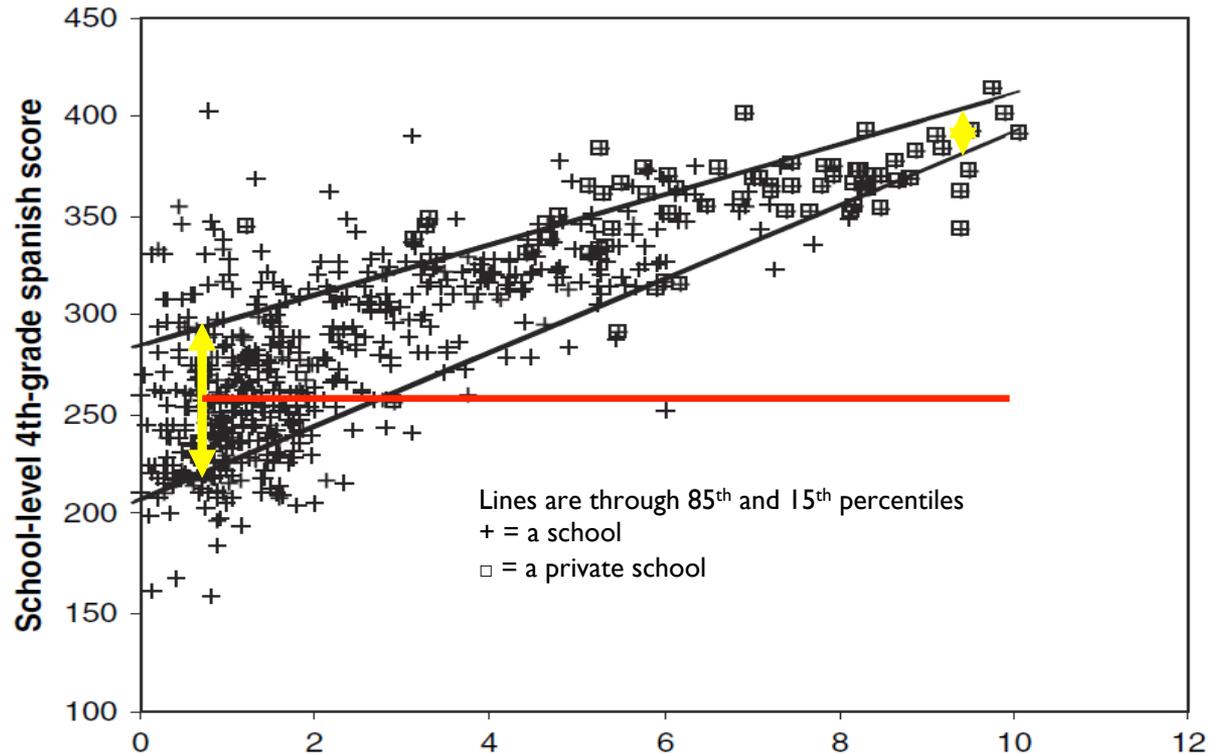
- Lower income countries (e.g., Burundi, Malawi, etc.) offer more years of schooling to primary-age children than do high-income countries! (6.4 vs 5.7).
- Yet median (50th percentile) child in low-income countries achieves at level of 3rd to 7th percentiles in high-income countries. (Would be considered children with disabilities.)
- Benefit-incidence, typical case in point (Kenya):

Distribution of the Benefit of Public Expenditure by Quintile 2005-2006 (%)

Quintile	Poorest	Second	Third	Fourth	Richest
Primary	23.1	24.9	23.1	19.2	9.7
Secondary	5	13.2	22.5	29.8	29.5
University	0	2.8	2.8	15.1	79.3

2. Help set standards

Socioeconomic Index and Spanish Performance Across Schools



World Bank. 2007. Towards High-Quality Education in Peru.

2. *Help set standards*

- Importance of standards and mechanism of enforceability
- Standards may matter more for the poor
- Correlation between satisfaction with school and actual outcomes may be as low as 0.25, if parents not aware of standards
- Read by grade 2” is a simple, communicable standard

3: *Start where poor children are*

- **Official curricula:**
 - Theoretically ambitious
 - In a country where large percentage of 2nd graders cannot read a single word: “Construct the meaning of the text”
 - But upper middle class bias; does not meet children where they are
- **NGOs: simpler, start from zero**
- **Quite a bit of evidence accumulating that “theoretically ambitious” curricular pace results in lower achievement**
 - JPAL studies of Pratham
 - Room to Read’s approach: master skills, not necessarily aim to “cover the curriculum” : stunning results often 1 SD of increase
 - Beatty and Pritchett’s simulations of impact: leaving students behind, over-ambitious curriculum “flattens” learning profile
 - Glewwe’s study of books in Kenya
 - RTI’s study of books in Egypt

Official Curriculum

Effective multi-school NGO Curric.

Official Curricular Statement: Abilities and Attitudes at the End of the 1st Cycle (1st and 2nd grades), Given Jointly for the Whole Cycle⁴¹

- ◆ Constructs the comprehension of the text being read by:
 - ✓ Anticipating the type of text and the purpose of the writing, according to context (situation, motive circumstances and the means whereby the text arrives at his hands).
 - ✓ Reads individually and silently; identifies signals and cues such as: title, subtitles, shapes, known words.
 - ✓ Formulates hypotheses (suppositions) about the meaning of the text.
 - ✓ Tests his or her hypotheses against those of classmates and draws conclusions.

FyA Curricular Statement, by Grade

First grade

- Reads audibly.
- Pronunciation is adequate.
- Reads individually and in groups.
- Reads in groups following models for tone and rhythm.
- Respects exclamation and question marks.
- Does not sound out syllables.
- Reads short (3 paragraphs) texts fluently.

Official Curriculum

- ✓ Creates a synthesis on the meaning of the text.
- ✓ Confronts the constructed meaning with the reading of the text, as carried out by the teacher.
- ◆ Reads with pleasure self-selected texts: poems, stories, jokes, comic strips, etc.
- ◆ Reads diverse texts: stories, legends, poems, recipes, letters, cards, posters, news in line with his or her purposes and the needs of the moment.
- ◆ Recognizes and can classify, according to function and profile, different types of text such as posters, recipes, cards, advertisements, etc.
- ◆ Can read and use double-entry tables of use in daily life (attendance charts, responsibility charts, achievement charts).

Effective multi-school NGO Curric.

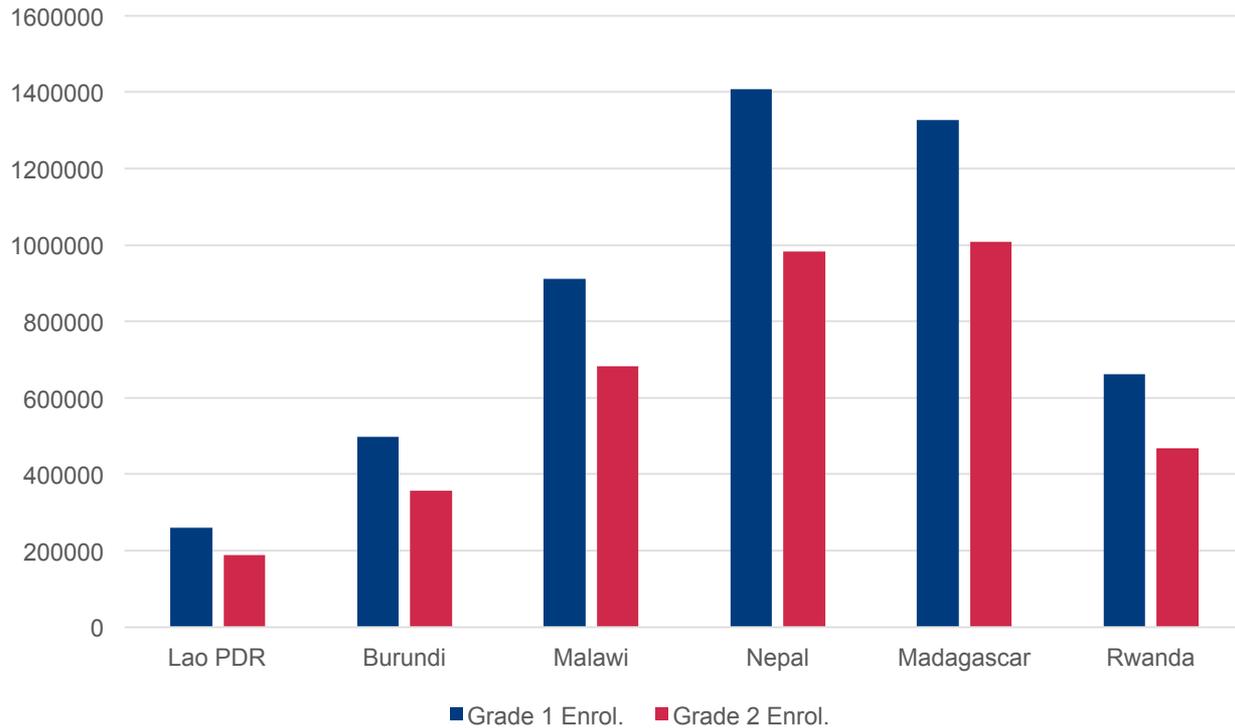
Second grade

- Adapts tone of voice according to audience and type of text.
- Respects commas and periods.
- Does not sound out syllables.
- Does not change letters or words.
- Does not add or remove words.
- Does not skip paragraphs.
- Reads without difficulty words up to four syllables.
- Reads short (3 to 5 paragraphs) texts fluently

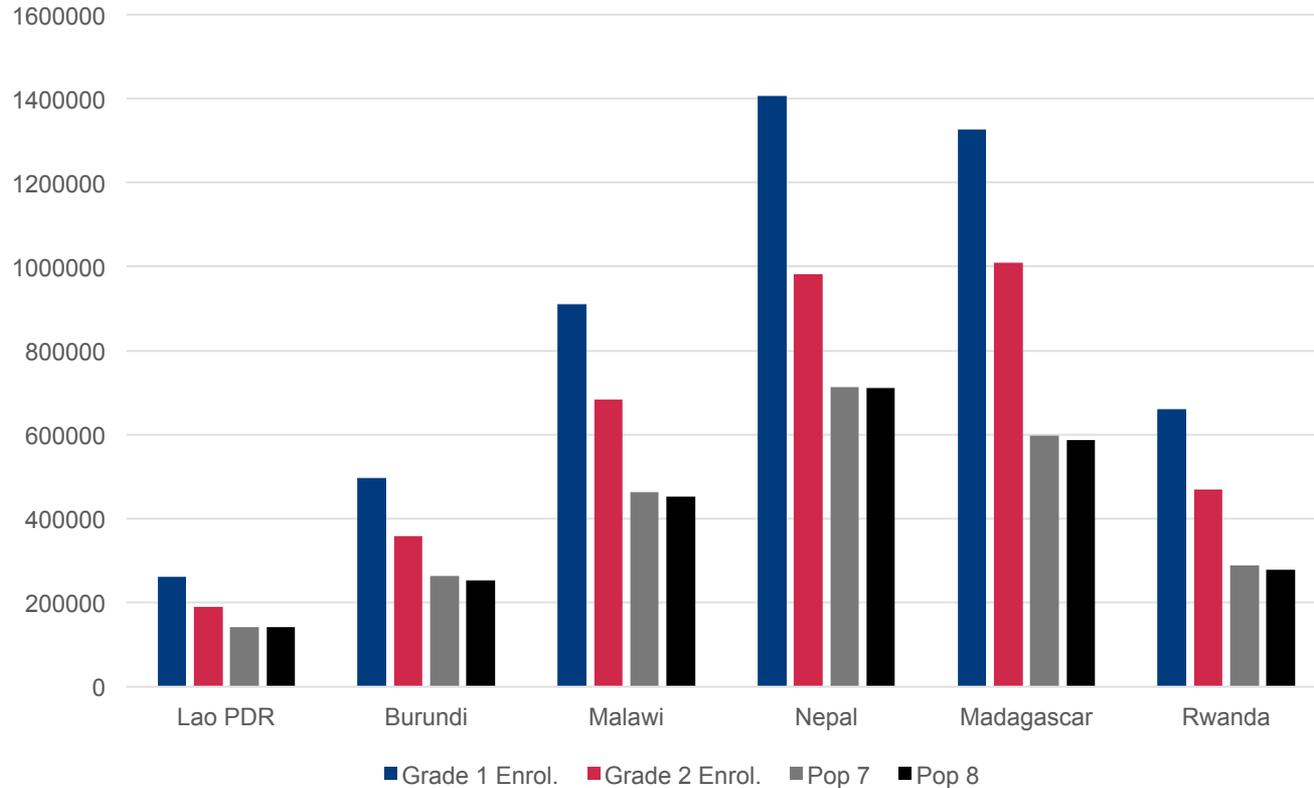
4: Invest early: Fix “mess” in early care/grades

- Huge over-enrollment in grade 1 in poorest 20 or so countries
 - Belief there is dropping out between grade 1 and 2: generally NOT SO
- Massive unreported repetition, not dropout
- Fictional intake rates that are > 120% for years and years
- Simply impossible
- No early childhood, no oral stimulation
- **Crisis in early grade reading**, in grades 1, 2, 3, etc.
 - Known: about 50% of children in EGRAs **can't read any words**
 - Early cog. dev.: best predictor of later cog. dev., and cog. dev. is good predictor of income
- All one complex combined problem related to “**Foundational First Five**”
- Warning: mere downward expansion won't solve anything
- But good evidence on how to do it right (esp. EGR)

What's happening here?



What do we think now?



“Ideal and real values” for early years variables

	“Ideal” values	Actual, 40 countries with Foundational First Five problems (mostly poorest)	Case in point: Uganda (over same time period)
PI/Age 7	About 1.0	1.50	1.60
P2/PI	About 1.0	0.82	0.70
GIR into PI	About 1.0 higher only in post conflict or after huge reforms	1.27	1.50
GER in pre-primary	At least 0.7	0.24	0.13

5: Accountability and pedagogical support

- Current research: carried out in poor countries and poorer regions
- Divide them into two (very gross!) branches:
 - Accountability, systems, quantity of inputs, merit pay, etc.
 - Pedagogy, classroom work, quality of books/teaching, tighter programming and supervision
- Recall Message 2: starting where children are
- Approximate conclusion:
 - Accountability/input exps: median effect size around 0.17
 - Pedagogy pilots: around 0.33*
- Ditch the accountability reforms? Not at all!

5: Accountability and pedagogical support

- Most of the pedagogical experiments have important forms of accountability
- Most of the accountability experiments are relatively “soft”
- Pedagogical experiments are relatively narrow
- Pedagogical interventions unlikely to be scaled or sustained w.o. accountability, supervision
- Therefore: accountability and pedagogical improvement
- Will require:
 - Continued experimentation with best forms of accountability
 - Analysis of how to scale up both → systems work (e.g., DFID, USAID)

6: Work better on mother tongue

- Known for some time: what prevents?
- Experiments not always well evaluated? (In Peru, I counted 12 or so, none with a rigorous design.)
- Requires more logistics, coordination, creativity (e.g., more readers in home languages), teacher placement and support
- “Too complicated?”
- Research shows very hopeful results:

6: Work better on mother tongue

Vast improvements are possible!
(Kom mother tongue experiment)

Test Component	Class 2			Class 3		
	Standard	KEP	Gain ³ (%)	Standard	KEP	Gain (%)
Language Arts	22.0	61.0	177.3	24.2	41.1	69.8
Math	21.5	54.3	152.6	21.0	41.7	98.6
Oral English	52.9	61.3	15.0	*	*	
Overall Test	34.4	59.2	72.1	23.0	41.3	79.6

- Has been known for quite some time (e.g., Velez and Patrinos 1996, Bender et. al. 2005.)

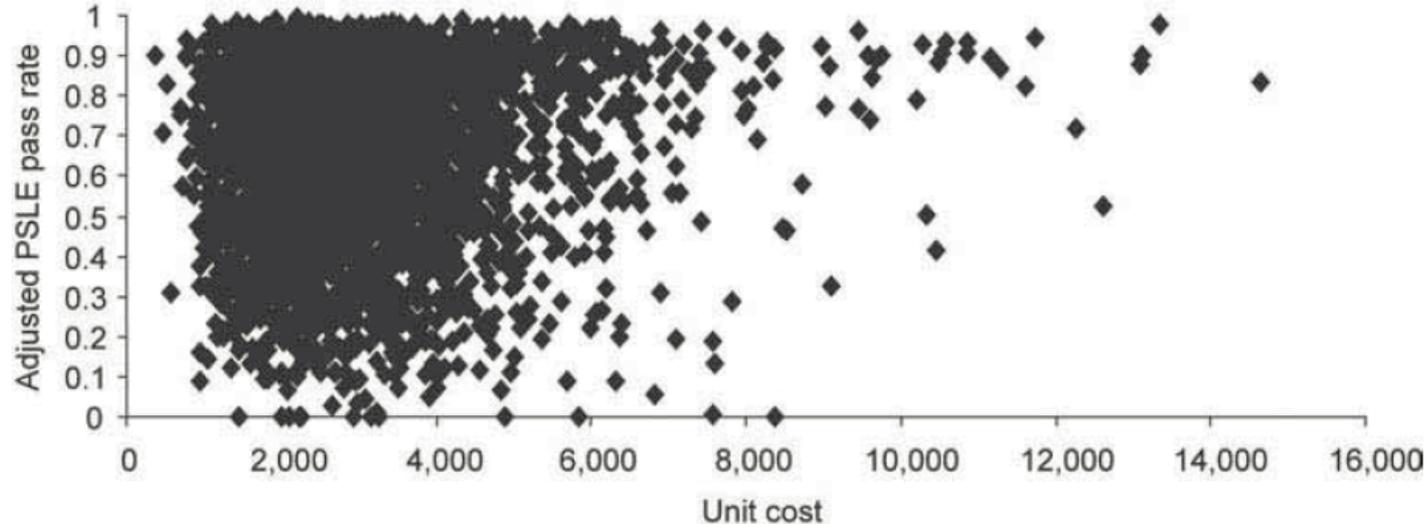
7: Pay attention to finance / resources

- Funding helps but...
 - “Mere” finance does not lead to results, though
 - Increases in salary levels generally lead to no learning improvements
- Randomness itself (random inequality) is inherently galling, use formulas, audit them
- Pro-poor financing if very tightly linked to results (accountability and support) could help the poor
- But careful with perverse incentives
- Differentiated support (don’t give all teachers the same coaching) would be a real innovation

7: Pay attention to finance / resources

Almost no relationship between resources and results: accountability is key

Figure 4.10: Relation between PSLE Results and Spending on Cost per Student at the Primary Level (Government-Funded Schools)

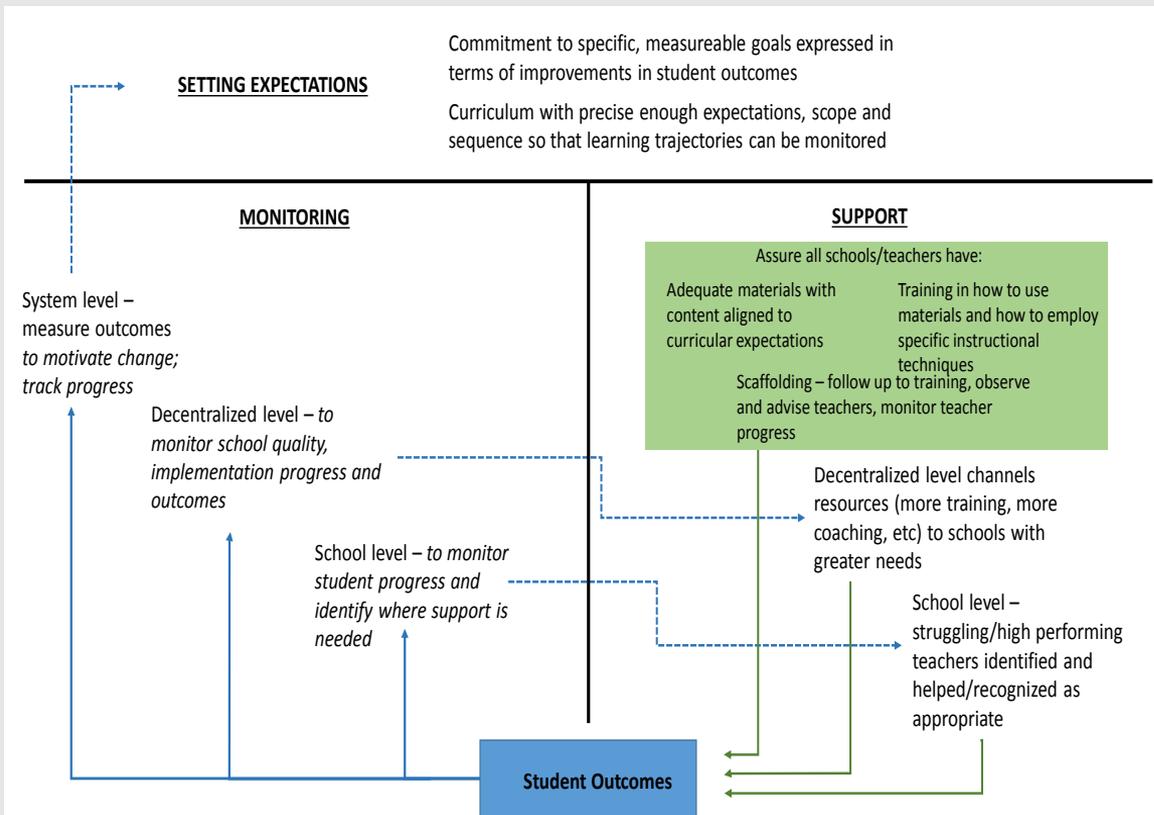


Message 7: Systems, scale-up, sustainability

- Increasingly have “vertical” interventions that seem to work such as EGR (analogy to health) – thanks to USAID!
 - But so far full systematization eludes
- There were systems improvement efforts in 1970s and 1980s (e.g., IEES, BRIDGES)
 - but somewhat de-linked from learning outcomes, results measurement, concrete use-cases
- Now have concrete cases, such as EGR
 - Time to re-look deeply at systems concrete experiences in hand?
 - Examples: SABER, McKinsey report
 - DFID, USAID?
 - SABER: 100s (?) of indicators or behaviors
- Is there a “bare-bones” “sine qua non” set of system → meet needs of poor?

Message 7: Systems, scale-up, sustainability

Consider only the most essential functions?



*Crouch and DeStefano. 2015. Paper for RISE Education Systems Research Conference.

Questions, comments?

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