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DIME BRIEF

The transformative effect of managing for results in primary education in Madagascar

The Development Impact Evaluation Initiative is a broad-based World Bank program to generate knowledge on the effectiveness of government programs. It supports government agencies adopt a culture of real time evidence-based policy-making on the basis of rigorous impact evaluation. By testing how to make policies work, it contributes to improving policy performance.

DIME works with 300 agencies in 72 countries across 15 thematic programs to generate knowledge, improve quality of operations and strengthen country capacity for evidence-based policy-making.

This impact evaluation is part of the Africa Program for Education Impact Evaluation.

AGEMAD

Over the past decade there has been impressive progress in access to primary education in Madagascar. However, enormous challenges remain to improve pedagogy. Within primary schools, many aspects of the pedagogical processes are poorly managed and tasks that are essential for student learning are neglected. Results from a 2005 survey confirmed that in many schools student absenteeism and student academic performance are poorly monitored and that teachers fail to conduct essential pedagogical tasks such as preparation of lesson plans.

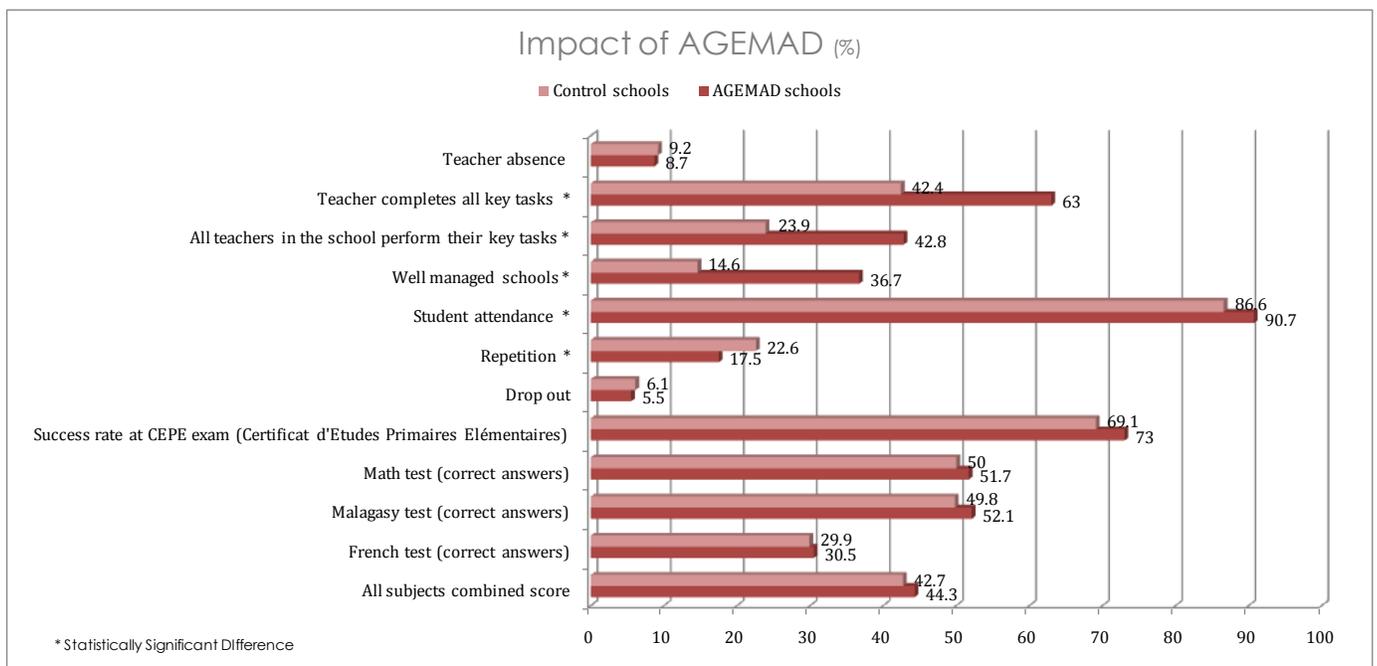
The Malagasy Ministry of Education assembled a team of educators to examine the options for renewing and rationalizing the tools for school management. The team worked with sustained support from the Bank team to elaborate a new set of tools for educational management focused mainly at the school and classroom levels. They consulted extensively with their colleagues in regional offices and with school heads and teachers, a process that yielded a new set of tools that was both validated and owned by practitioners in the system.

The Ministry of Education thus moved to implement AGEMAD (Amélioration de la Gestion de l'Éducation à Madagascar), a far reaching program to improve workflow processes in the school system, and increase results focus. The program stressed responsibilities and accountability processes through provision of management training, tools and guides. It also facilitated school-community interactions and promoted accountability for results through school report cards. Report cards became the basis for school meetings' discussion for developing school improvement plans.

Impact evaluation

The Ministry of Education was keen to test the efficacy of the new tools before scaling them up country-wide. Thus, the idea of a rigorous impact evaluation took root. In preparation for the impact evaluation, the Bank facilitated the Malagasy team's training in impact evaluation, and ensured their active engagement with external technical experts to conceptualize the design of the evaluation and the questionnaires for data collection.

The impact evaluation was designed to understand whether management and accountability interventions altered the behaviors of service providers and schooling outcomes. In addition, understanding how intensive the treatment would need to be was of great policy interest.



To this end, a randomized experiment was carried out over the course of school years 2005/06 and 2006/07 in a representative sample of school districts. School districts were randomly assigned to control and three treatment arms. In each treatment arm the intervention was targeted towards different levels of the school administration chain—district level only, district and sub-district levels, and district, sub-district and school levels. The design made it possible for the evaluation to separately identify the effectiveness of the different levels of intensity and test whether training directly only the district or both the district and sub-district level administrators would be sufficient to affect school level behaviors.

Impact evaluation results

After two years of implementation and when the interventions encompassed all administrative levels (district, sub-district and school), the provision of management training, tools, and the use of accountability mechanisms significantly changed the behavior of service providers and improved school management.

AGEMAD interventions had statistically significant impacts on school functioning. They contributed to a greater focus on key pedagogical tasks by teachers and principals. In treatment schools the proportion of teachers

performing their key tasks rose by 20 percentage points. These tasks include monitoring student attendance, preparing lessons plans, and evaluating student performance.

In turn, teacher behavior seems to have positively impacted students' behavior. Student attendance improved by 4 percentage points and grade repetition fell by 5 percentage points. There is also indication that student drop out decreased and test scores rose, although the gains were not statistically significant by the time of the evaluation.

Thus, AGEMAD, implemented intensively across administrative levels, succeeded in changing the behavior of school actors towards better management and learning outcomes.

This contrast with interventions limited to the district and sub-district levels which were mostly ineffective. District and sub-district levels officials were not able to play a transformative role with the schools perhaps due to a combination of weak mechanisms for monitoring and control, lack of leadership, interest or motivation and/or high work load at the district level.

Policy implications

In 2008, when the results of the impact evaluation were shared and discussed with the Malagasy team, the government decided to scale up the program to the rest of the school system. The AGEMAD management tools were integrated into the normal curriculum of teacher training programs and schools were encouraged to use the tools to train the large number of community teachers funded by the Madagascar's grant from the Education for All Fast Track Initiative Catalytic Fund.

In addition, the AGEMAD impact evaluation gave Malagasy policy makers an appreciation of the benefits of impact evaluation. The Ministry of Education launched another impact evaluation in 2008 focused on school feeding.

Beyond Madagascar, the study highlights the importance of pedagogical processes in securing good learning outcomes. It also shows how a program like AGEMAD can affect teachers' behavior and cause a positive ripple effect on students' behavior. The provision of training, tools, and information; the supervision and follow-up at key points in the administrative chain; and the facilitation of school-community interactions around school report cards can help enhance the functioning of schools and improve student outcomes.

This is the first study that has put a precise value on to improving neglected school tasks. It has also shown that there is no quick fix. Improving school management requires a concerted effort from all administrative levels in the education system to support the work of teachers and school heads at the front lines of service delivery.

Source: Gérard Lassibille, Jee-Peng Tan, Cornelia Jesse and Trang Van Nguyen (2010). "Managing for Results in Primary Education in Madagascar: Evaluating the Impact of Selected Workflow Interventions." The World Bank Economic Review, Vol 24(2).

<http://wber.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/content/full/lhq009?ikey=aq1zMhsZHxN8jOU&keytype=ref#content>

The Africa Program for Education Impact Evaluation (APEIE)

APEIE was established in 2007 to improve the ability of countries to meet the MDG goals in the context of the Education for All Fast Track Initiative, which has been financing the program. APEIE objectives are to:

- (i) Build technical and organizational capacity in the education sector to conceptualize and implement rigorous impact evaluations through a learning-by-doing approach;
- (ii) Build country-level evidence on the effectiveness of education policy and programmatic alternatives; and
- (iii) Provide cross-country venues for dialogue, networking support and publication outlets to foster cross-fertilization and peer-to-peer learning regarding the efficacy of education interventions.

APEIE has been supporting 14 country-specific impact evaluations and convening regular cross-country meetings to build capacity and discuss policy lessons.

- In Abuja in 2007, the country delegates and the team task leaders received training on impact evaluation and international evidence on education policies. Each team applied their new knowledge to the development of the impact evaluation for their education program. Ghana was interested in evaluating school management committees and Senegal was interested in school grants.
- In Dakar in 2008, countries presented their baseline results and discussed challenges moving forward. Already, the workshop was in the hands of the participants sharing notes and experiences. It was a good opportunity to hear from clients and team task leaders alike.
- In Accra in May 2010, the original countries and new recruits into the program discussed how the evidence guided their education programs and what new policy innovations they are considering moving forward.

Today APEIE is the first program to be fully integrated into a sector unit and mainstreamed into the operations. Two economists are based in the education unit and provide full-time support to operations to incorporate a results-based approach in the Africa education sector portfolio.

Arianna Legovini, Muna Meko, and Jee-Peng-Tan (2007)



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