



Teacher Incentives in Public Schools: Do they improve learning in Tanzania?

Highlights

- Twaweza's KiuFunza II program implemented two teacher incentive systems (Stadi (levels) and Mashindano (gains)) as an experiment in Grades 1-3 in a representative sample of public primary schools in Tanzania. The incentives were linked to student test scores.
- After two years of treatment (2015 and 2016), both incentive systems improve learning outcomes. The Stadi (levels) incentive program is easier to communicate and implement while it is as effective as Mashindano (gains).
- The effect sizes estimated are between 0.06-0.17 SD, depending on subject and test setting. The low-stakes data estimates translate into a learning impact of one-third of a year of schooling (added to the business as usual learning progress).
- There is no effect, negative or positive, on grades or subjects that are not tested or incentivized.
- For the average KiuFunza teacher, the incentive payment amounts to less than half of a net monthly salary (3.5 percent of the annual salary).

1. Introduction

All children should learn to read and calculate in the first years of primary school. Teachers are key agents and the most costly resource employed to make this happen. In Tanzania, however, pupil learning progress is inadequate: Only 38 percent of children aged 9-13 are able to read and do arithmetic at Grade 2 level

(Uwezo, 2017). Teacher motivation is low too: 47 percent of teachers were absent from their classroom during unannounced primary school visits in 2014 (World Bank, 2015).

Teacher performance pay links teacher motivation and learning: it offers a financial

This brief was written and produced by
Twaweza East Africa
P.O. Box 30140, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania
t: +255 22 260 4301 | e: info@twaweza.org |
www.twaweza.org/taea

KiuFunza



Teacher Incentives in Public Schools: Do they improve learning in Tanzania?

In 2015-2017 Twaweza East Africa implemented KiuFunza II, a randomized performance pay trial in the early grades of public primary schools in Tanzania. This trial is part of an experimental program to improve learning introduced by Twaweza in collaboration with J-PAL/IPA.

KiuFunza implemented two different teacher performance pay systems. The first system is called Stadi (levels) and rewards teachers based on the number of students that reach specific proficiency levels. The second is called Mashindano (gains) and rewards teachers based on their students' test score ranking relative to children with the same starting level.

The performance pay learning impact was studied in a nationally representative sample of 180 schools (60 schools randomly selected into each of the two incentive pay programs, and 60 control schools). The evaluation finds that both teacher performance pay systems

improved student test scores. The simpler “levels” system was at least as effective in raising student learning as the more complex “gains” system.

Furthermore, the levels scheme had a more equitable distribution of benefits, improving learning across all initial ability levels.

February 20, 2018