Researchers
Sabrin Beg
University of Delaware
Anne Fitzpatrick
The Ohio State University
Adrienne M. Lucas
Lerner College of Business and Economics, University of Delaware

Staff
Renaud Comba
Policy Manager
Edward Tsinigo
Research Manager, Ghana
Henry Atimone
Senior Research Associate
Bridget Konadu Gyamfi
Senior Policy and Implementation Manager
Joyce Jumpah
Associate Research and Policy Manager

Timeline
2018-2021

Study Status
Results

Study Type
Randomized Evaluation

Sample Size
210 schools

Research Implemented by IPA
No
Managing to Learn

Salvio Beg, Aoise Fitzpatrick, and Adriene M. Lucas

August 16, 2023

Abstract

To achieve significant improvements in public services, neither civil servants nor implement effective reforms. Our randomized controlled trial demonstrates that public sector managers must signal the importance of reforms through their personal effort, affecting change like a leader would. We compared three groups: T1) training teachers in a new pedagogy (Differential Instruction) and providing managers with opportunities, primarily a classroom observation tool, to signal their early effort; T2) T1 with additional manager training to enhance managers’ people management skills; and a control group. Both interventions increased instructional management by 0.3SD and student test scores gains by 0.15SD; 10 percent of a learning-year. T2-differentially improved People Management but not productivity. Management improvements persisted for at least one year and student test scores gains at least two years. Managerial practices can be improved with existing public sector personnel but only improve output when systemic effort changes. These results provide insight into how to implement proven interventions at scale in the public sector.


Academic Paper
The Importance of Management Support for Teacher-Led Targeted Instruction in Ghana
In partnership with IPA Ghana, the Ghana Ministry of Education, and UNICEF, researchers conducted a randomized evaluation that showed that engaging school principals and supervisors to improve their monitoring and support for teachers substantially increased the implementation of Differentiated Instruction in classrooms. As a result, student test scores in English and math increased by one-third of a school year. Both the increased test scores and the improved management persisted after the intervention ended.

In Ghana, 70 percent of students are below grade level in literacy and math. Differentiated Instruction—one of the most rigorously tested interventions to improve learning—teaches students at their learning level for part of the day, with positive results across contexts. However, a previous study in Ghana found that only five percent of public schools implemented it, with evidence suggesting that a lack of oversight and support for teachers to adopt it in their classrooms contributed to this.

In collaboration with IPA Ghana, the Ghana Ministry of Education, and UNICEF, researchers conducted a randomized evaluation to assess whether engaging school managers (principals and circuit supervisors, supervisors of groups of about 10 geographically close schools) to improve their management practices increased the implementation of Differentiated Instruction in classrooms. A total of 210 public primary schools across Ghana were randomly divided into the following groups:
1. **Differentiated instruction + school manager signaling**: Teachers and school managers were trained in and given materials for Differentiated Instruction. School managers conducted 30 minute classroom observations and completed forms highlighting the most important aspects of differentiated instruction to signal to teachers it was important, valued, and would improve test scores.

2. **Differentiated instruction + additional school manager training**: Teachers and school managers received the same as above. School managers received additional training on effective people management and reminder sessions to support teachers.

3. **Comparison Group**: Schools continued their usual instruction.

Results showed that both interventions nearly doubled the likelihood that head teachers and school circuit supervisors observed teachers in their classrooms for more than 30 minutes (74 percent relative to the comparison group mean of 39 percent) and increased implementation of Differentiated Instruction. While management measures improved for both groups, schools in Group 2 had sustained improvements in management practices. In turn, student test scores in English and math increased by one-third of a school year, with effects persisting for two years after the intervention. Starting in 2022, the Teacher Training and Management Effort intervention was being scaled to **10,000 schools in Ghana**.

**Sources**


Implementing Partners

Ghana Ministry of Education

UNICEF

Funding Partners

The World Bank

J-PAL

UNICEF