

Researchers

Noam Angrist
Youth Impact

Micheal Ainomugisha
Building Tomorrow

Sai Pramod Bathena
Alokit

Peter Bergman
University of Texas

Colin Crossley
Youth Impact

Thato Letsomo
Youth Impact

Claire Cullen
Youth Impact

Moitshepi Matsheng
Youth Impact

Rene Marlon Panti
Research Manager

Shwetlena Sabarwal
World Bank

Timothy Sullivan
NewGlobe

Staff

Karisha Anne Cruz
Senior Policy and Project Development Associate

Rene Marlon Panti
Research Manager

Timeline

2021-2022

Study Status

Results

Study Type

Randomized Evaluation

Sample Size

3,492 households with children in grades 3 and 4

Research Implemented by IPA

Yes

Building Resilient Education Systems: Cost-effective Mobile Tutoring in the Philippines and Beyond

mEducation's phone-based tutoring program yields promising results in improving numeracy skills and student well-being



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Despite an increase in global school attendance rates, low levels of learning persist among many students worldwide. The urgent need for resilient education systems, particularly in countries where emergencies frequently disrupt education, has been highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Youth Impact's phone-based tutoring program, mEducation or Connected, aims to improve math skills by delivering math problems via text and providing weekly 20-minute phone tutorials tailored to individual learning levels. The program showed promising results in Botswana, where it was initially implemented, and to test its scalability, researchers conducted a randomized evaluation in five countries, with IPA leading the evaluation in the Philippines. The program led to a significant 40 percent increase in children's math skills in the Philippines, with an average cost of USD \$12 per student, making it one of the most cost-effective education interventions available.

RESEARCHERS

Noam Angrist, Michael Aromagisha, Sai Pramod Bathena, Peter Bergman, Colin Crossley, Claire Cutler, Thabo Lerumo, Michelangelo Matiang, Rene Marlon Pardi, Swasthina Sabarwal, Tim Sullivan

PARTNERS

Youth Impact, Philippines Department of Education DepEd

COUNTRY

Philippines

SAMPLE

3,492 households with children in grades 3 and 4

TOWCS

Education Quality, Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), Youth

STUDY TYPE

Randomized Evaluation

IPA STAFF

Rene Marlon Pardi, Karissa Anne Cruz

TIMELINE

2021-2022

Project Brief

Building Resilient Education Systems: Cost-effective Mobile Tutoring in the Philippines and Beyond



In This Image

Mobile Tutoring in the Philippines © Ivan Lonan / Shutterstock

IPA led the evaluation of the mEducation tutoring program in the Philippines, which resulted in a significant 40 percent increase in students' math skills at an approximate cost of USD \$12 per child, making it a cost-effective solution.

Despite an increase in global school attendance rates, low levels of learning persist among many students worldwide.¹ The urgent need for resilient education systems, particularly in countries where emergencies frequently disrupt education, has been highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic.² Youth Impact's phone-based tutoring program, mEducation or ConnectEd, aims to improve math skills by delivering math problems via text and providing weekly 20-minute phone tutorials tailored to individual learning levels.

The program demonstrated positive outcomes when first implemented in Botswana. To examine its scalability, researchers conducted a randomized evaluation in five countries, with IPA leading the evaluation in the Philippines. The program was implemented across 3,492 students who were randomly assigned to one of three groups: a control group that did not receive the program, a group that received both phone calls and SMS, and an SMS-only group. Additionally, the program was implemented by both Philippines Department of

Education (DepEd) or IPA to assess its feasibility for government implementation and evaluate whether the program delivery had an impact on its effectiveness.

The full mEducation program (SMS + phone calls) in the Philippines led to a significant 40 percent increase in children’s learning outcomes. The Philippines was among the countries with the biggest impact. The SMS-only intervention led to a 8 percent increase in learning outcomes, but only in the Philippines and Uganda, suggesting that text messages can be effective in contexts with the greatest need. Government-led implementation of mEducation was equally effective as NGO-led implementation. The program has an average cost of approximately \$12 per child, yielding 3.4 learning-adjusted years of schooling (LAYS) per \$100 spent, making it a cost-effective solution.

Sources

¹ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, *Global education monitoring report, 2021/2: non-state actors in education: who chooses? who loses?*. Paris, FR: UNESCO, 2021.

² UNICEF Press Release, “Learning losses from COVID-19 could cost this generation of students close to \$17 trillion in lifetime earnings,” UNICEF, December 6, 2021, <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/learning-losses-covid-19-could-cost-generation-students-close-17-trillion-liifetime>.

Partners



Youth Impact

