Teacher Training and Entrepreneurship Education: Evidence from a Curriculum Reform in Rwanda

Researchers:

Moussa Blimpo

Todd Pugatch

Sector(s): Education

Location: Rwanda

Sample: 3,000 students in 200 schools

Initiative(s): Post-Primary Education Initiative (PPE)

Target group: Secondary schools Students Teachers

Outcome of interest: Earnings and income Employment Empowerment Student learning Business investment Socio-emotional development Soft skills

Intervention type: Business skills training Training School-based inputs

AEA RCT registration number: AEARCTR-0001030

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Partner organization(s): Educate!, Rwanda Education Board, Akazi Kanoze Access

Secondary school enrollment in Africa is expected to double by 2030, yet high youth unemployment rates suggest that the existing formal education system is not preparing students to improve their livelihoods through work. Working with the Rwandan Education Board, Educate!, and Akazi Kanoze Access, researchers are examining the impact of a program that trains teachers in Rwanda's revised secondary school entrepreneurship curriculum on student academic, economic, and labor market outcomes.

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If current trends continue, secondary school enrollment in Africa will double by 2030. However, high youth unemployment rates suggest that the existing formal education system is not preparing students to improve their livelihoods through work. To address this issue, Rwanda is one of ten African countries planning to reform their curriculums to emphasize skills and entrepreneurship. These curriculum reforms will only improve student outcomes if teachers deliver them effectively, yet little evidence exists on how to effectively implement a nationwide curriculum reform. This study examines the effect of a teacher-training program on student academic, economic, and labor market outcomes.

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In Rwanda, 67 percent of the population is under 25, and these youth comprise 70 percent of the unemployed labor force. Beginning in 2016, all secondary school students in Rwanda are required to take an entrepreneurship course with three main components: 1) active, hands-on "Scripted Learning Activities," which emphasize entrepreneurship skills; 2) a "Skills Lab Pedagogy" that directs teachers to structure class time in a laboratory format; and 3) "Student Business Clubs" where students work in teams to start and run school-based businesses. The entrepreneurial education curriculum represents a major shift in pedagogy,

moving to more interactive, student-centered learning, and is focused on providing students with skills to succeed in the job market.



A full classroom and teacher pay attention to one student at a chalkboard in front of the room.

Photo credit: Marion Galovic

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Working with the Rwandan Education Board, Educate!, and Akazi Kanoze Access, researchers are examining the impact of a program that trains teachers in Rwanda's revised secondary school entrepreneurship curriculum on student academic, economic, and labor market outcomes. Researchers in collaboration with the Ministry of Education will sample 200 geographically diverse (urban, peri-urban, and rural) schools across three provinces to participate in the study. Schools will represent public and private schools, as well as high-, medium- and low-income schools.

Half of the schools will be randomly selected to receive intensive teacher training which includes ten days of teacher workshops spread over the two years of the study and a one-day administration workshop each year. Teachers will also receive two years of structured lesson plans.

The other 100 schools will serve as the comparison group; the schools will participate in the new entrepreneurship curriculum, but teachers will not receive intensive training. About 15 percent of teachers in these schools will participate in a five-day general orientation on changes in the broader curriculum, but they will not receive specific training in entrepreneurship content or the three key components of the new curriculum.

In 2017, Educate! plans to organize a National Student Business Expo open to all secondary schools, including those where teachers received training and those where teachers were not trained. Researchers will compare how students from treatment

and control schools participate in the expo. The training program will last for two years (2016-2017), and researchers will measure the impact on student academic, economic, and labor market outcomes over three years.

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Study ongoing, results forthcoming.