



THE EDUCATION INVESTMENT IN AFRICA: A SCAN OF OUTCOMES

Africa Grantmakers' Affinity Group IROKO EDUCATION PROJECT

January 2010

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Introduction

The Africa Grantmakers' Affinity Group (AGAG) is a network of funders currently funding or interested in funding in Africa. Our mission is to promote increased and more effective funding in Africa through building and sharing knowledge. AGAG organizes networking activities for Africa grantmakers and conducts research on funding trends.

Why the name Iroko?

As part of our knowledge-building agenda, AGAG has launched the IROKO project to strengthen networks among funders working in similar areas and to identify best practices and lessons learned. The Iroko is a majestic and sacred African tree used to create the "talking drum." As the title of this project it symbolizes the "tree of knowledge" that we hope will grow from the results of this project and will reflect the diversity of approaches used to support organizations working to improve the lives of African communities.

The two main objectives of the Iroko project are to identify funders and other stakeholders interested in becoming a part of a community that will share information, knowledge and expertise to benefit themselves and the field of Africa grantmaking; and to capture and disseminate that information.

Focusing on Education

Education is an important cornerstone for development and represents just one of the areas that are supported by both private and public funders. Therefore, the purpose of the Iroko Education Project is to engage in a series of discussions about the investment in education in Africa by selected organizations and to identify and highlight best practices and lessons learned.

The goals of the IROKO Education Project are to:

- Bring together funders and other stakeholders to share information and engage in productive debate about effective approaches and strategies to address common challenges in education in Africa;
- Strengthen networks and methods of communication among funders and other stakeholders working in the field to stimulate knowledge building and sharing from their collective experiences;
- Encourage collaboration and the development of a community of practice with the common goal of supporting the efforts of African organizations to improve education in their communities.

Education in Africa

Africa is the fastest urbanizing continent in the world. By the year 2030 half of its population will be living and working in towns and cities. However, the following facts present a daunting challenge to Africa's development and ability to contribute on a global level.

According to the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and World Bank the following are some key fact about education in Africa:

- Although literacy rates have greatly improved in Africa over the last few decades, approximately 40% of Africans over the age of 15, and 50% of women above the age of 25 remain illiterate.

- Illiteracy among individuals over the age of 15 stands at 41 per cent; gender disparity in education prevails in 75 per cent of countries.
- For the period 2000–06, Seychelles had the highest adult literacy rate (92%); Mali and Burkina Faso had the lowest (24%).
- Early childhood development is, in most countries, left to private sector actors primarily working in urban areas in aid of more advantaged social groups.
- Almost 50% of countries may not attain the goal of universal primary education by 2015; nearly 40 million children are not going to school.
- Liberia has the lowest primary student-teacher ratio of 19; in Mozambique the ratio is 67. Cape Verde has the highest gross enrollment rate in secondary education (80%); Niger has the lowest (11%).
- Enrollment in lower secondary school rose to 46% in 2003 from 28% in 1991.
- The gross secondary school enrollment rate exceeds 20% in half of the countries, yet remains below 8% in 10 countries.
- Higher education and other levels and forms of education are experiencing problems with respect to access, quality and even relevance.
- HIV/AIDS is likely to claim the lives of 10% of teachers within the coming five years, and 20% of school-age children will be AIDS orphans.
- A minimum of three million more teachers is needed in sub-Saharan Africa to achieve the goal of universal primary education by 2015.
- Africa loses an estimated 20,000 skilled personnel a year to developed countries, brain drain.
- There are more people connected to the Internet in New York City than on the entire African continent.
- In Liberia, almost no one has Internet access (0.03 per 100) compared with 34 in every 100 people in Seychelles.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

In September 2000 world leaders came together at the United Nations Headquarters in New York to adopt a global partnership to reduce extreme poverty with a series of targets to be achieved by 2015 that have become known as the Millennium Development Goals. Education is but one of the eight United Nations' Millennium Development Goals. Specifically,

Goal 2 aims to ensure **universal primary education for children** everywhere, boys and girls alike, to complete a full course of primary schooling. However, the other goals also mention, directly or indirectly, a need for education support toward each goal.

For example, in addressing **Goal 1, Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger**, the aim of full and productive employment must be supported by education.

Goal 3, Promote Gender Equality, addresses the need to eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education. This is also dependent upon secondary schooling, education quality and teacher resources.

Goals 4-7, Child Health, Maternal Health, Combating HIV/AIDS, and Environmental Sustainability can be addressed with additional education.

Finally, **Goal 8, Global Partnerships**, addresses the need to disseminate information to support development in other countries. This goal contains the need to address Internet accessibility, the powerhouse of information support.

Conducting a Scan on the Education Investment in Africa

As the initial step, selected relevant and trusted sources were reviewed to identify key areas of investment. Information was gathered from the World Bank, UNESCO, UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP), the International Working Group on Education (IWGE), and the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA), USAID and corporate and private philanthropies.

The purpose of the scan was to identify key areas of investment in education and examples of best practices that were supported by data that demonstrated how these projects and programs contributed to the progress and improvement of education in Africa. Based upon the results of the scan, eight categories were identified that best represent key areas of investment in education in Africa and served as a framework for identifying best practices. The eight categories are:

1. technical assistance
2. synthesis, analysis, and dissemination of best practices
3. technology to assist with knowledge sharing
4. teacher professional development
5. access for special populations, particularly girls
6. resources and text books
7. the inclusion of HIV/AIDS in the curriculum and system models
8. strengthening the “Brain Gain.”*

(*Brain Gain refers to efforts to keep individuals/nationals with technical or academic qualifications in their countries by giving them career support and opportunities to establish themselves.)

Examples of Best Practices and Outcomes

The next step was to review activities supported in these eight areas for examples of programs and projects that had specific goals which were achieved and that could be qualified and quantified relative to the outcome sought and identified as a best practice.

Criteria for Best Practice

In reviewing materials we used the following criteria for identifying best practices or lessons learned.

1. What was the outcome sought (the goal) and how did you reach it (practice)?
2. What was the timeframe from start to project completion, or for data outcomes?
3. Why should this example be termed a best practice?
4. If a best practice outcome was not obtained, what was the “lesson learned” that will aid in reaching the outcome sought?
5. Identify the cross-cutting principles that were a part of this case. Cross-cutting principles that should be a part of every best practice include:
 - Human Rights
 - Equitable access to technology
 - Accountability

- Collective responsibility,
- Collaboration that includes public-private partnership
- Realistic timeframes for implementation within context

Scan Results

What follows is a description of each organization whose educational programs were investigated for clear, quantifiable outcomes with replicable results. Often outcomes were not clearly stated or measured in identifying best practices in the field of education.

World Bank

The World Bank was considered but eliminated because the World Bank formula for considering funding options is not the same as the model used by foundations or nonprofits, making it difficult to analyze for comparison purposes of this project. Additionally, the World Bank PPI (Private Participation in Infrastructure) database includes both canceled and current projects. This complicates understanding best practices as some practices may have been discontinued because of negative results. Consequently, it is necessary to examine the reports of the different organizations to compare goals and outcomes.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

The UNESCO website revealed numerous resources to review. UNESCO highlights the advances referred to here as ‘best practices’ under their category of ‘research.’ However, much of the ‘research’ actually demonstrates methods to ensure system transparency and processes of data collection.

For example, one program targets transparency in schools by providing incentives or tools, such as grants, scholarships, subsidies, textbooks or meals, to reach the individuals, schools and areas most in need. However, a study is proposed to compare different mechanisms of allocation of incentives in order to determine which ones are most and least successful in reaching their intended beneficiaries. The reason for the study is that IIEP, a branch of UNESCO, has recognized that while there are benefits to targeted measures, in other contexts the targeted measures and goals tend to divert from their original objective and never reach the intended beneficiaries. The conclusion is that even their best efforts need to be reassessed with regards to the outcomes sought. In a separate 2007 UNESCO document addressing global perspectives in teacher preparation, challenges and theories were still being addressed.

UNESCO’s “Brain Gain” project was started to stem the migration of academics and scientists from Africa to other countries. One Brain Gain Initiative provides equipment, including servers for grid-enabling and cloud computing technologies. It also offers training, support, and operational funds to ensure each participating institution benefits fully from the opportunity provided. Launched in 2007, access to this computing power allows “*students to learn, interact, and engage in cutting edge university projects all over the world*”. It also enables students to work directly with leading researchers who can now conduct research from home. Though beneficial and needed, no outcome regarding the success of the technology and support to students is available to date.

International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP)

IIEP is a branch of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). IIEP published a text entitled “Opportunities for change: Education innovation and reform during and after conflict.” The publication highlights the critical importance of strengthening education partnerships and long-term support for education innovation and reform. The publication and its numerous case studies refer to innovation, teacher quality and support, investment in curriculum and other generally agreed upon practices supporting education

opportunity. While few examples are mentioned with baseline data, much attention is brought to the need to collect baseline data to ensure progress and transparency

International Working Group on Education (IWGE)

IWGE is an informal group of aid agencies and foundations that was created in 1972 to enable donor agencies to exchange information and work closely together on education issues. Since 1982, it has devoted itself to the development and promotion of basic education. A review of IWGE yielded a publication highlighting education opportunities for change that emerge out of periods of conflict. Case studies discussed a number of challenges and methods utilized, as well as the benefits of strategic planning to support education quality and growth in conflict areas. The overarching theme was that partnerships are crucial to education success. Capacity assessment, development, and innovation are all useful and necessary tools when trying to increase quality and sustainable education opportunities. Yet, in the majority of these reviews, no detailed description was provided as a best practice to be replicated.

Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA)

ADEA, like other international development agencies, also seeks to make a difference with regard to education outcomes in Africa. However, a search of the ADEA website for best practices was not successful and one document noted the challenges in disseminating information on best practices to their membership.

In ADEA research of education quality in Mozambique, they discovered that two recurrent themes were continually addressed: 1) curriculum relevance and teacher training, and 2) working conditions and motivation. Both were seen as prerequisites, or best practices toward improving educational quality in Mozambique. Yet, in order to improve education analysis and best practice outcomes a number of items were recommended. They include increasing practice, team work, transparency, research knowledge, dissemination of findings and dialogue between all persons engaged, which would include policymakers, the research community and development partners. ADEA is keen to acquiring working groups, research and data collection in education.

United States Agency for International Development (USAID)

Within USAID, the scan of programs to address education needs in Africa revealed mixed results in terms of discernable outcomes.

Some programs had minimal analyses of outcomes. Six examples are noted here to demonstrate. The first three programs are specific to increasing educational access and success for girls. In Program One, the aim was to increase enrollment of girls, but no information was provided as to how much enrollment had increased after two to five years. In Program Two, the aim was to use clubs to help keep girls on track to complete their education, but no outcomes of education completion were noted after two years. Program Three used peer tutoring to help increase girls' enrollment, but increased enrollment rates were not noted as a result of the program after two years of implementation.

Program Four aimed to develop tools to ensure teacher quality and maximize the teaching workforce, which is declining due to the impact of HIV/AIDS. Over 200 teachers were being trained to effectively use TV and video in the classroom and to integrate educational and entertainment programming into the curriculum. However, whether this training has improved education quality is not discussed.

Program Five aimed to decrease the rate of illiteracy, particularly among women, but no statistics are provided on increased literacy outcomes. The statistics that are reflected report that only 1% of women are enrolled in the literacy courses. Finally, in Program Six, there were no secondary schools in a small town and no one in town had ever earned a high school diploma as a result of poor quality

elementary schools. After two years of parent and teacher engagement, it was noted that parents and teachers now easily discuss children's progress and community organizations are donating funds to cover fees for students entering junior high school. However, there is no mention of an assessment of school quality or establishing a secondary school, the aims of the program.

Other USAID programs had clear outcomes, such as: "brain gain" projects, where individuals with technical qualifications are given career support and opportunities to establish themselves in their countries; a law sponsorship program for disadvantaged law students at South African universities, where every student is interned within a law office; an economist scholarship program established to address the historic shortage of black economists in and outside of the South African government that has placed 51% of its recipients in government jobs and the other 49% in professional posts; South Africa's Takalani Sesame Street that raises awareness of HIV/AIDS in its young audience with age-appropriate programs; and, a solar lighting program that has helped increase night school enrollment by 24% in Liberia.

Conclusion

The goal of this exercise was to conduct a quick scan to identify the wealth or dearth of information available about best practices to add to the progress and work of education in Africa. This scan of selected investments in education is not meant to cover all investments and is in no way complete.

However, this scan revealed that the interventions often did not answer the question "was the outcome or benefit to the community in line with the initial intervention sought?" Surprisingly few real examples were supported by data in the written documents or fully explained the problem the program or activity articulated. Few could identify outcomes with data and best practices that are replicable. Both program clarity as well as a more thorough investigation is in order.

Next Steps

The next step is to seek input from grantmakers and other stakeholders, with or without attribution, to identify examples of best practices or lessons learned regarding education in Africa. The goal is capture and disseminate examples to the field as an important part of the tree of knowledge about effective funding in Africa. This information would be helpful to both grantmakers and grantseekers who want to make a difference in the outcomes of their program goals.

A series of tele-seminars will be held in February and March 2010 leading up to a one day in person meeting of **Education Funders** on March 25, 2010. The agenda for this meeting will include presentation of case studies of best practices in selected areas. Additional meetings may be planned to continue the dialogue and expand the network. The goals of these meetings are to:

- Educate the audience about the research and resources available;
- Articulate and highlight key elements of approaches and strategies; and,
- Stimulate dialogue and encourage collaboration.

Request for Best Practices

Using the framework of the eight areas of investment identified, AGAG is issuing a Request for Best Practices (RBP) to solicit case study examples of best practices and lessons learned in supporting education in Africa. On March 25, 2010 AGAG will host a meeting of education funders in New York where selected examples will be presented and discussed. We are inviting case study examples to include as part of the agenda and background materials for the meeting.

Guidelines

We are looking for case study examples in one of the following eight areas of education investment in Africa:

1. technical assistance
2. synthesis, analysis, and dissemination of best practices
3. technology to assist with knowledge sharing
4. teacher professional development
5. access for special populations, particularly girls
6. resources and text books
7. the inclusion of HIV/AIDS in the curriculum and system models
8. strengthening the “Brain Gain” (Brain Gain refers to efforts to keep individuals/nationals with technical or academic qualifications in their countries by giving them career support and opportunities to establish themselves.)

Criteria for Best Practice

The case study should answer the following questions:

1. What was the outcome sought (the goal) and how did you reach it (practice)?
2. What was the timeframe from start to project completion, or for data outcomes?
3. Why should this example be termed a best practice?
4. If a best practice outcome was not obtained, what was the “lesson learned” that will aid in reaching the outcome sought?
5. Identify the cross-cutting principles that were a part of this case. Cross-cutting principles that should be a part of every best practice include:
 - Human Rights
 - Equitable access to technology
 - Accountability
 - Collective responsibility,
 - Collaboration, to include public-private partnerships
 - Realistic timeframes for implementation within context

Submission

Submission should follow the criteria for best practice listed above and the submission must be in a word or rtf document format no longer than five pages. Case study should be presented in a concise format using bullets that can be easily converted to power point presentation. Submission should be sent via email to nmutima (at) agag.org as a word, RTF or text format.

The deadline for submissions for inclusion at the March 25, 2010 meeting is March 5, 2010.

For further information contact Niamani Mutima at nmutima (at) agag.org

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