

Spanish Trust Fund for Impact Evaluation and Results-based Management in  
Human Development Sectors  
(SIEF)



Cluster Fund

### Basic Education Service Delivery

*The Spanish Trust Fund for Impact Evaluation (SIEF) is a €10.4 million program funded by Spain, to support the World Bank in evaluating the impact of innovative programs to improve human development (HD) outcomes. The SIEF supports prospective, rigorous evaluations in eligible developing countries, impact evaluation training, publications, and dissemination of results. The program will run from July 2007– July 2010.*



#### Policy questions

- Does school-based management improve service delivery and learning outcomes?
- Does providing parents with better information about school quality have an impact on school performance?
- Can the use of contract teachers improve schooling access and student learning?
- Can linking teachers' pay to performance improve student learning?

#### Background & Context

School systems in most developing countries largely fail to deliver quality primary education to poor children. Over 100 million primary age children either never enter or fail to complete primary school, and studies show that even children who do complete may be functionally illiterate and innumerate.

Efforts to improve education in both the developed and developing world typically focus on providing more inputs to schools—increasing spending along existing allocation patterns. But, substantial evidence shows that increased funding is not sufficient for improved learning outcomes. Incremental funds may be allocated to inputs that have weak impacts on student learning. In the United States, a tripling of real education spending per student since 1960 has been absorbed by higher teacher salaries and lower class sizes but has had no measurable impact on either student numbers or average student learning levels.<sup>1</sup> Teachers and other education personnel (which typically represent 75% or more of education spending) may be poorly motivated to perform. A study of teacher absenteeism in nine developing countries found that, on any given day, 11-30% of teachers were absent from their posts.<sup>2</sup>

The 2004 World Development Report *Making Services Work for Poor People* argued that the underlying cause of such failures in basic service delivery in developing countries are weak accountability relationships between the state, service providers, and the citizens and clients they serve. In the education sector, efforts in both developed and developing countries to strengthen these accountability relationships through system reforms have been numerous. However, designs have

<sup>1</sup> Hanushek, Eric A. 2003. "The Failure of Input-based Schooling Policies" *The Economic Journal* 113(485):F64–F98.

<sup>2</sup> Chaudhury, Nazmul, Jeffrey S. Hammer, Michael Kremer, Karthik Muralidharan, and F. Halsey Rogers. 2006. "Missing in Action: Teacher and Health Worker Absence in Developing Countries." *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 20(1): 91-116.

varied considerably and there has been very little rigorous evaluation of impact. This impact evaluation cluster is promoting rigorous evaluations of three of the most common types of accountability-promoting reforms in basic education: school based management; information provision to empower school stakeholders; and teacher contracting and incentive reforms.

### **SIEF-funded Impact Evaluations**

#### *School-based Management*

**Mexico** – This IE is evaluating the impact of providing extra funding through the *Apoyo a la Gestion Escolar (AGEs)* – the SBM component of Mexico’s compensatory education program - to school committees on parental participation in committees and school/learning outcomes. This study is examining whether improved outcomes, as a result of AGEs, are attributable exclusively to increased parental participation, or if there is a relationship between increased resources and improved outcomes regardless of parental participation.

**Nepal** – This IE extends an ongoing evaluation that is measuring the impact of Nepal’s strong form of SBM – near complete transfer of power to community-managed schools – on learning. This extension is examining the effectiveness of a peer-to-peer networking strategy designed to strengthen communities’ capacity to monitor and manage local schools. Should it prove effective, this strategy holds high promise for developing countries as it is demand-driven and relatively low cost.

#### *Information for accountability projects*

**Liberia** – This IE is testing the impact of a new type of information intervention that is growing quickly in popularity: early grade reading assessment (EGRA). EGRAs (or timed reading tests) are a low-cost way of measuring the literacy progress of 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade children and providing early, easily understandable and useable feedback to teachers and parents. The study is testing EGRA’s effectiveness at improving reading scores with or without a teacher training component. The study is a randomized controlled trial of whether giving parents and teachers EGRA results increases schools’ focus on early grade literacy and improves learning.

#### *Teacher contracting and pay for performance projects*

**Sao Paulo and Pernambuco, Brazil** – These evaluations are examining how bonus pay linked to student performance affects teachers’ effort, training uptake, skills and classroom practice, and how much these, in turn, affect student learning outcomes. It is also studying whether linking pay to students’ test results promotes significant adverse behaviors, as critics claim, such as diverting curriculum time from non-tested subjects or manipulation of test results.

<b>Basic Education Accountability</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Budget</b>
Impact Evaluation of a Parental Empowerment Program	Mexico	\$ 220,136
Nepal Community Managed School Project	Nepal	\$ 150,000
What is the role of assessment in providing information for accountability?	Liberia	\$ 211,300
Pernambuco Teacher Bonus Program	Brazil	\$ 175,000
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 756,436</b>