

Multilingual Literacy Skill Development in Kenya: Results from Medium Scale Randomized Controlled Trials

Dr. Benjamin Piper

Abstract

If children do not learn how to read in the first few years of primary school, they are at greater risk of dropping out. It is therefore crucial to identify and test interventions that have the potential of making a large impact, can be implemented quickly, and are affordable to be taken to scale by the Kenyan government. This paper presents the findings of three randomized controlled trials designed to improve student literacy outcomes in Kenya. Two of the studies have multiple data points, two assessments measure outcomes in two languages, and the other in four languages. Random selection and assignment methods were utilized to assign clusters of schools to treatment and control conditions in Kenya. The treatment groups varied, but in several of them, the interventions implemented a targeted literacy and numeracy instructional program with student books, teachers' guides, ongoing teacher professional development and instructional supervision. The longitudinal results suggest that literacy acquisition in Kenya follows an unexpected path, and that additional research is required to understand what intervention points are available to more rapidly improve outcomes.

Keywords: multilingual literacy, skill development, Kenya, randomized controlled trials

Full text: <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED566991.pdf>