

THE MILLIONS LEARNING INITIATIVE

Taking Education to Scale in
Botswana, Côte d'Ivoire, and
Tanzania

Final Report

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Executive Summary

Globally, more children and adolescents are enrolled in pre-primary through secondary schools than ever before. Yet, an unacceptably large number show learning deficits—over 617 million are unable to reach the minimum levels of proficiency in reading and mathematics—or drop out of school altogether.¹ Efforts such as the Sustainable Development Goal 4 for Education and its encompassing targets now explicitly target the provision of quality education suggesting that providing widespread quality education remains a yet unmet challenge of the 21st century.

The Millions Learning Initiative (MLI) at the Brookings Institution is interested in how education initiatives can be scaled for all children and youth. Working with partner institutions and governments in five countries, the program seeks to support global education programs as they deepen and expand in order to ultimately understand how governments, civil society, and the private sector can collaborate in bringing about large-scale transformations to the quality of learning for children. To this end, MLI created the Real-time Scaling Labs which help initiatives to strengthen their scaling efforts, provide evidence-based guidance to participating organizations and suggest course-corrections, document each participant’s scaling experience, and generate evidence to fill gaps in the existing knowledge around scaling global education.

The student research team from SIPA (the SIPA Team, henceforth) has worked closely with the Brookings Institution and its partners to develop an in-depth understanding of three of the initiatives being supported by the Real-time Scaling Labs in Botswana, Côte d’Ivoire, and Tanzania. In Botswana, the team has studied the implementation of Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL), a remedial education approach that seeks to create individualized learning plans for children which has been implemented by Young 1ove, an NGO focused on improving outcomes for young people. In Côte d’Ivoire, the team has investigated how Transforming Education in Cocoa Communities (TRECC) has brought together a multi-stakeholder effort to improve education outcomes in cocoa communities across the country by using evidence-based programs. In Tanzania, the team has outlined how the CAMFED-developed² Learner Guide program has trained young women to deliver life skills to secondary school students within their communities.

While each of these initiatives has followed different approaches and models to achieve quality education outcomes for children, they all provide insights into some key lessons that are generally applicable to global education programs that seek to grow larger and scale their impact. First, it is crucial to build coalitions of stakeholders from civil society, the private sector, the government, and communities in order to achieve systemic change that is both scalable and sustainable. Second, programs must integrate adaptability into their frameworks so that they can course-correct as they encounter a range of communities and challenges as they grow larger. Third, innovations in delivery models - whether it be in how programs are financed, or how they are

¹ UNICEF. “Education.” Accessed December 7, 2020. <https://www.unicef.org/education>.

² CAMFED is short for Campaign for Female Education

implemented - should be encouraged so that programs are able to take risks when designing community and user-focused programs while having the ability to course-correct. Finally, it is imperative that programs generate and rely on good evidence to develop and scale their programs. Programs that are successful need to generate evidence in order to be replicated widely, and also to serve their own monitoring needs. Additionally, evidence on local and community-level processes is as important as quantitative evidence on outcomes so that the design of programs can be equitable, and their implementation can achieve active buy-in from local champions and the communities that they aim to serve.

These comparative insights are drawn from a synthesis report prepared by the SIPA Team based on their detailed case study reports on the three education initiatives. The Brookings MLI team reviewed the case study reports in detail, but not the synthesis report which was prepared for SIPA's Workshop in Development Practice.