From Impact Evaluation to Policy Change

John Floretta
CLEAR South Asia at J-PAL South Asia at IFMR
February 27, 2013
Presentation overview

- What is Impact Evaluation?
- Pathways to Policy Change
- IE → Policy Change: 5 actions J-PAL SA is taking
Impact: What is it?

Impact

Intervention

Counterfactual

Primary Outcome

Time

Impact
Impact: What is it?

- Impact
- Counterfactual
- Intervention

Primary Outcome vs. Time

Ifmr

Clear
Radomization

- Take a sample of program applicants
- **Randomly** assign them to either:
  - **Treatment Group** – is offered treatment
  - **Control Group** - not allowed to receive treatment (during the evaluation period)
Quantitative Impact Evaluation Methods

- Pre-Post
- Simple Difference
- Difference-in-Difference
- Multivariate Regression
- Statistical Matching
- Instrumental Variables
- Regression Discontinuity
- Randomized Evaluations
Pathways to Policy Change

- Leveraging Evidence by implementing organization to expand existing programs and garner more funding (e.g. Pratham)

- Governments evaluate their pilot programs to demonstrate usefulness to public, gather support for their expansion and learn lessons to make it more effective (e.g. Progresa)

- Independent organizations can use evidence to replicate or scale-up programs found to be impactful and cost-effective (e.g. Deworm the World)

- If an evaluation helps provide evidence on a very policy relevant and salient topic, it gets a huge amount of traction very easily (e.g. Microfinance)
From IE to Policy Change

5 actions J-PAL SA is taking
1. Quality evaluations answering policy relevant questions
2. Summarizing IEs for Policymakers

REMEDYING EDUCATION: EVIDENCE FROM TWO RANDOMIZED EXPERIMENTS IN INDIA

ABHIJIT V. BANERJEE
SHAWN COLE
ESTHER DUFLO
LEIGH LINDEN

This paper presents the results of two randomized experiments conducted in schools in urban India. A remedial education program hired young women to teach students lagging behind in basic literacy and numeracy skills. It increased average test scores of all children in treatment schools by 0.28 standard deviation, mostly due to large gains experienced by children at the bottom of the test-score distribution. A computer-assisted learning program focusing on math increased math scores by 0.47 standard deviation. One year after the programs were over.

BALSAKHI REMEDIAL TUTORING IN VADODARA AND MUMBAI, INDIA

RESEARCHERS: Abhijit Banerjee
Shawn Cole
Esther Duflo
Leigh Linden

PARTNERS: ICICI Bank
Pratham
World Bank

LOCATIONS: Vadodara
Mumbai

BOOKED FOR LEARNING


Like many developing countries, the Philippines has made considerable progress toward the Millennium Development Goal of universal access to primary school. In 2008, the country achieved a 95 percent primary school enrollment rate. However, the challenge for education policy does not end with increasing enrollment and filling classrooms. Helping schools find cost-effective ways to improve student learning is also vitally important in light of the resource constraints that many school systems face.

Literacy is an especially critical skill, given the importance of reading for learning in every subject, for future employment, and for children’s ability to navigate successfully through life. Simply providing more

THE PRICE IS WRONG

Charging small fees dramatically reduces access to important products for the poor.

Medical research has identified many cheap and simple life-saving and life-improving interventions that combat infectious and communicable disease, but even low-cost interventions are often prohibitively expensive for poor families in the developing world. Where families are unable to afford the full cost, governments and NGOs often provide health products either for free, or at highly subsidized prices under “user fee” or cost-sharing programs. In recent years, there has been substantial debate about whether to charge user fees or to distribute basic products for free.

Use fees and cost-sharing have been advocated for many years to promote sustainability of health services, to help ensure that goods and services are not wasted, and to provide a source of flexible revenue to those in frontline services to replenish supplies and pay for clinic repairs. More recently, social entrepreneurs have argued that
3. Selecting Programs to Advocate

- Agriculture
- Education
- Political Economy & Governance
- Environment & Energy
- Health
- Finance & Microfinance
- Labour Markets
4. Sharing Programs with Policymakers
5. Providing TA to Incubate the Program
Summary Points

- Usefulness of evidence from IE in starting policy conversations
- However, evidence is only a starting point
- Need of viable strategy to support policy adoption