Improving and Re-imagining Data Sources toward Achieving Equitable Quality Education

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4.5
By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations

4.a
Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all
Improving data collection and examining overlooked trends toward achieving SDG 4

1. Improving existing data sources
   • School attendance via the Truancy Assessment Project

2. Harnessing the power of data from more unlikely sources to better inform education policy
   • Taking a closer look at menstrual hygiene as it relates to school attendance
Why better data matters for the SDGs

Lack of reliable data hinders governments’ ability to make informed decisions and enact appropriate education policy.
IMPROVING EXISTING DATA SOURCES TOWARD ACHIEVING SDG 4

Truancy Assessment Project, Telangana, south India
School attendance data collection challenges

- Subject to human error
- Perverse incentives
- Different definitions of chronic absenteeism

Photo credit: JILAF
Truancy Assessment Project (TAP)

• Two major components:
  • An inexpensive and simple biometric tracking system called e-Attendance
    • A fingerprint scanner paired with a tablet running on a tracking software
  • Dedicated Education Extension Workers monitor data to identify students who are chronically absent and follow up with them at home
Study population

- 10-16 years old
- 10 schools
- Medak District, Telangana state, south India
- 6-10\textsuperscript{th} grade
- \sim 800 participants
eAttendance: Fingerprint scanner and tablet
School Admin Nishikant Dubey (HTSC2) logged in.

Put finger on device...

Finalize Roll Call

School Machine (HTSC)
School B
TAP trainers working with teachers about facilitating data collection
Outcome variables

• Baseline demographic indicators entered into eAttendance system
  • Name, age, grade, contact
  • Social support system, family background
• School attendance via fingerprint scanner
• Questionnaire administered by EEWs during home visits
EEW questionnaire: Why didn’t you go to school the last time?

- Had chores to do
- Had to care for family members
- School expenses
  - Books
  - Pencils/pens
  - Copy books
  - Uniforms
  - Or something else?
  ________________
- Transportation
  - Travel costs to school too high
  - Unable to reach school because of road condition
  - Distance to school
  - Unsafe to travel to school
  - Or something else?
  ________________
- Menstruation

- School facilities insufficient
  - Lack of toilets
  - Crowded classrooms
  - Or something else?
  ________________
- Teacher issue
  - Teachers don’t show up to school
  - Teachers are not supportive
  - Or something else?
  ________________
- Had to fetch water
- Had to help family on the farm
- Was ill
- Parent/guardian migrated for job
- Worried about being bullied
- Didn’t feel like it
- Or something else?
  ________________
Linking the SDGs

Lack of reliable data hinders governments’ ability to make informed decisions and enact appropriate education policy. To compensate, we can be employing biometric approaches that decrease room for error in the measurement of school attendance.

SDG 1.3:
Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable
HARNESSING THE POWER OF DATA FROM MORE UNLIKELY SOURCES TO BETTER INFORM EDUCATION POLICY

Menstrual hygiene management in rural Rwanda
4.5
By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations.

4.a
Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all.
Background and need

- 1/10 school-age African girls do not attend school during menstruation. (WHO & UNICEF, 2013)

- An average of 50 school days/yr/girl are missed due to menstruation in Rwanda. (Rwanda Ministry of Education, 2014)

- In low-income settings in Africa, school attendance drops dramatically as girls become adolescents, coinciding with the onset of menstruation. (Montgomery et al., 2012; WHO & UNICEF, 2013).

Source: eminyeeto.org
MHM and absenteeism: Sanitation facilities as a barrier

Source: UNICEF, 2013
MHM and absenteeism: Sanitation facilities as a barrier

School toilets, Southern Uganda

Source: waterjournalistsafrica.com
Study summary

This study aims to understand how gaining access to sanitary pads and/or reproductive health education affects the emotional well-being of 10-15 year old girls in rural Rwanda.
Objectives

Intervention component

1. Provide one free re-usable sanitary pad

1. Provide reproductive health education

Research component

1. Measure the effect of a reusable sanitary pad on participants’ mental health

1. Measure the effect of a reproductive health curriculum on participants’ understanding of key reproductive health issues
Study design

Four arms:

• Group A: Receives reusable pad only
• Group B: Receives reproductive health curriculum only
• Group C: Receives pad and curriculum
• Group D: Control. No intervention.
Intervention #1: Provide participants with one free reusable pad each
Intervention #2

Provide participants with courses about menstrual hygiene management and reproductive health
Mayange, Rwanda
200 girls
One of four intervention schools
Outcome measurement

• Self-administered questionnaire about their menstruation knowledge, attitudes and behaviors

• Quizzes for those in the curriculum intervention to measure comprehension
Best practices of data collection

• Challenges of qualitative studies

• Foster an environment in which students feel they can be free to answer genuinely
Principles of good repro health facilitation

- Approachable/open
- Empathy. Remember what it was like to be a teen. Be on their level
- Passionate
- Patient, caring
- Non-judgmental
- Compassionate
  - Considerate of others
  - Believe them
- No personal bias
  (How?)
  - Give them space to share
Linking SDGs

• We can be measuring on a larger scale data about the link between access to menstrual hygiene resources and school attendance. Currently this is being done almost exclusively in pilot studies conducted by UN bodies or non-profits, but efforts should be scaled up and taken on by governments to make the process more streamlined and sustainable.

• Menstrual hygiene has to be looked at as a barrier to attendance and therefore it needs to be added to the list of variables measured for excellence in the education sector.
  • Incorporated into WASH standards
  • DO NOT NEGLECT MENTAL HEALTH
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