School Management Training & School Grants in the Gambia

David Evans
(reporting on work with Nathalie Lahire & Moussa Blimpo)

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Once upon a time in a country called The Gambia...

...a bilateral donor agency promoted a program called Whole School Development.
That program consisted of **training in school leadership and management, community participation, curriculum management, teacher professional development, teaching and learning resources (e.g., textbooks and libraries), and the school environment,**

Re-organization from the Parent-Teacher Association to committees for these areas

Help in developing a school development plan

And a **seed grant** US$500

(about 5% of school budget or 16 months salary for a new teacher)
Together, the World Bank and The Gambia evaluated WSD.

If WSD was successful, the Bank would support it in the next Bank project.

- **273 schools**
  - Whole School Development with a grant! 90 schools
  - Just a seed grant! 94 schools
  - Keep on doing what you’re doing! (Control) 89 schools

Randomly assigned
After 18 months, Whole School Development did affect re-organization of the schools.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Committee in Place</th>
<th>WSD better?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leadership &amp; management committee</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community participation committee</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum management committee</td>
<td>✓</td>
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</tbody>
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After another year, both Whole School Development & Grant-only schools had broader participation in decisionmaking.
But the children didn’t learn any more!

Portrait of impact on learning after one year

Portrait of impact on learning after two years
If you look carefully at the communities, WSD had a better impact on learning in the most literate districts.

But not in the least literate districts.
So The Gambia and the World Bank said **NO** to Whole School Development

But **YES** to grants that would eliminate school fees.
And (hopefully) they lived happily ever after...

or we’ll see...