

Kenya's ICT Policy in Practice: The Effectiveness of Tablets and E-readers in Improving Student Outcomes

Benjamin Piper, Evelyn Jepkemei, Dunston Kwayumba and Kennedy Kibukho

Abstract

Kenya is investing in information and communication technology (ICT) to improve children's learning outcomes. However, the literature on ICT is pessimistic about the ability of ICT alone to improve outcomes, and few ICT programs have created the instructional change necessary to increase learning. The Primary Math and Reading (PRIMR) Initiative implemented a randomized controlled trial of three ICT interventions to enhance learning outcomes: tablets for instructional supervisors, tablets for teachers, and e-readers for students. All three showed significant impacts in English and Kiswahili above the results of the control group.

The impacts of the three interventions were not statistically significantly different from each other. Based on the findings, we recommend that Kenyan policy makers embed ICT interventions in a larger instructional reform, using ICT to support particular instructional improvement challenges. We also suggest that policy makers incorporate empirically derived cost-effectiveness analysis into investment decisions, to ensure that ICT provides value for money.

Keywords:

Kenya; literacy; ICT; information communications technology; tablet; e-reader; coaching

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