

A conversation with Loren Crary, January 10, 2017

Participants

- Loren Crary – Director of External Relations and Counsel, Educate!: Transforming education in Africa to teach youth the skills to solve poverty (Educate!)
- Josh Rosenberg – Senior Research Analyst, GiveWell

Note: These notes were compiled by GiveWell and give an overview of the major points made by Loren Crary.

Summary

GiveWell spoke with Ms. Loren Crary of Educate! to learn about Educate!'s work. Conversation topics included Educate!'s skills training program in Uganda, its teacher training program in Rwanda, monitoring & evaluation of its programs, and its room for more funding.

Introduction to Educate!'s work

Skills training program

Sub-Saharan Africa has a large and growing youth population, high unemployment, and insufficient job creation for the large amount of young people entering the job market. Additionally, schools in Sub-Saharan Africa tend to focus on theoretical instruction (e.g. rote memorization) rather than practical instruction. Educate! is working to resolve these problems by running business training programs for high school students which it hopes will enable young people to start businesses that create jobs and raise incomes.

The current iteration of the program runs for about 1.5 years as an elective course for students in their last two years of high school in Uganda. At each school, it includes:

- 80 minutes per week of intensive training for 40 students, typically delivered by a youth mentor who is a graduate of the program.
- A business club that is open to all students, which typically reaches 75 students.
- An intervention for teachers.

In total, Educate! reaches approximately 350 students per school. In 2016, Educate! ran business training programs at over 350 schools in Uganda; in 2017, it aims to reach 450 schools and expand to another country.

Educate! uses an experiential method of teaching in which students are encouraged to start businesses while they are enrolled in the program. Students are trained in basic business skills that enable them to start low-capital businesses such as making and selling liquid soap, shoe polish, chalk, paper bags, etc. Students are encouraged to use the savings generated by their small businesses to invest in creating a larger business later on.

Preliminary data indicate that a significant percentage of graduates of this program go on to run businesses and employ another person.

Program fee

Educate! charges a fee of about \$200 per school, which is approximately equivalent to one student's tuition at a high school in Uganda.

Teacher training program

To support government roll-out of skills-based curriculum reforms, Educate!, together with Rwandan NGO Akazi Kanoze, launched a teacher training program in Rwanda in 2016. The goal of this program is to support teachers in adopting experiential teaching methods, leading to the practice of entrepreneurship and 21st-century skills in schools. Educate! is currently working in 120 schools in Rwanda.

Government partnerships

Educate! works in partnership with governments, supporting them in integrating skills-based education in Africa. It does this by advising on curriculum reforms and supporting the roll-out of these reforms. Educate!'s work at the government level enables it to have broad, sustainable impact. It has advised the governments of Uganda and Rwanda on education reforms.

Monitoring & evaluation

Randomized controlled trials

Educate! has run a randomized controlled trial (RCT), the gold standard of impact evaluation, of its program in Uganda. This is the first RCT that Educate! has conducted. In evaluating its programs through RCTs and other methods, Educate! collects information on income, employment, business creation, job creation, and community engagement and leadership. It also assesses skills, though this is difficult to measure.

Ms. Cray is not aware of existing literature on programs that are similar to Educate!'s.

RCT of Uganda program

The RCT of the leadership, entrepreneurship, and work-readiness program in Uganda includes 1,080 students. This is a relatively small sample size, but is fairly representative of the population that Educate! is currently reaching. The students tracked in the RCT participated in a 2-year version of the training program. The RCT tracks the outcomes of the 40 students at each school who participate in the intensive training program.

Educate! partnered with Innovations for Poverty Action (IPA) to conduct a baseline survey, and collected data internally just after the end of the program.

Other monitoring & evaluation methods

Educate!'s monitoring & evaluation methods are broadly explained on a dashboard on its website (<http://www.experienceeducate.org/monitoring>). They include the following:

- Monitoring basic program indicators using SMS and smartphone evaluations in which students self-report to mentors whether they are running businesses and mentors send this data to Educate!. Educate!'s monitoring & evaluation staff periodically travel in and confirm the accuracy of the data. The metrics that field

staff provide populate a web-based dashboard that updates in real time and allows Educate! to monitor performance. Indicators measured this way include: the number of students running businesses outside of school while enrolled in the program, the number of classes taught by mentors, attendance, and enrollment.

Educate!'s external dashboard can be found here:

<http://www.experienceeducate.org/dashboard/>

- Using the concept of "build-measure-learn", Educate! runs many small experiments to test and improve programmatic and operational components of the program.

Room for more funding

Annual budget

Educate!'s budget for 2017 is \$3.9 million, which is a significant increase from previous years; its 2016 expenditure was \$2.66 million. Educate!'s primary expenditures are personnel costs (youth mentors are volunteers but are compensated with a stipend that serves as a capital injection for their businesses, and advanced business training and professional development). Other costs include transportation to send staff and mentors to schools, meals during events, and teaching materials.

Uses of additional funding

Educate! is typically able to use additional funding productively to expand its programs to more schools.

By 2024, Educate! aims to scale up to an annual budget of about \$10 million, and to use this to measurably impact 1 million youths per year and 4 million youths more broadly.

Educate! has been able to reach all of its fundraising goals so far, but is only able to do that after aggressive and strategic appeals.

All GiveWell conversations are available at <http://www.givewell.org/conversations>