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# EMBRACING PUBLIC PARTNERSHIPS TO IMPROVE LEARNING OUTCOMES IN EDUCATION

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The views expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the Centre for Policy Analysis nor its partners

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#### A. Introduction

Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) are best understood in the context of effective deployment and utilization of public infrastructure. Public infrastructure can be defined as facilities which are necessary for the functioning of the economy and society. In broad strokes, public infrastructure can be divided into: 'economic' infrastructure, such as transportation facilities and utility networks; and 'social' infrastructure such as schools, hospitals, libraries, prisons. A distinction can also be made between 'hard' infrastructure, whether economic or social, primarily involving provision of buildings or other physical facilities, and 'soft' infrastructure, involving the provision of services, either for economic infrastructure or for social infrastructure<sup>2</sup>.

The term 'public-private partnership' appears to have originated in the United States, initially relating to joint public- and private-sector funding for educational programs, and then in the 1950s to refer to similar funding for utilities but came into wider use in the 1960s to refer to public-private joint ventures for urban renewal. It is also used in the United States to refer to publicly-funded provision of social services by non-public-sector bodies, often from the voluntary (not-for-profit) sector, as well as public funding of private sector research and development in fields such as technology. In the international-development field the term is used when referring to joint government, aid agency and private-sector initiatives to combat diseases such as AIDS and malaria, introduce improvements in farming methods, or promote economic development generally. Most of these can be described as 'policy-based' or 'program-based' PPPs<sup>3</sup>.

There has been worldwide growth in interest in PPPs in recent years for several reasons. The public-sector reform movement known as 'New Public Management' provides the theoretical background for PPPs but the main driver for growth is that PPPs avoid limitations on public-sector budgets. The debate on merits and demerits of PPPs is quite complex but a variety of arguments is used by governments for promoting PPP projects though sometimes this is done after the fact to justify budgetary concerns. The main elements of the debate revolve around: whether PPPs provide 'additionality' of investment in public infrastructure, the higher financing costs implicit in PPPs, whether risk transfer and value for money from PPPs can be offset against higher; financing costs

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> E. R. Yescombe, *Public–Private Partnerships Principles of Policy and Finance*; Yescombe Consulting Ltd London, UK PDF page 13-14

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> ibid

economies of scale, the benefits of whole-life costing and maintenance; the value added through the use of private-sector skills, PPPs as a catalyst for public-sector reform, complexity and the effect of PPPs on public-sector flexibility<sup>4</sup>. It is not uncommon though for the debate to be influenced by the socio-political context at play.

#### B. The Case for Intervention

The education sector in Uganda is one that has generated a lot of debate since independence. These debates have informed reform and counter reform in curricula, pedagogy and unit cost of the service. The 1992 Government White Paper on Constitutional Review proposed changes in Article 34(2) of the 1967 Constitution to recognize the rights of a child to basic education<sup>5</sup>. Chapter 4 of the Constitution<sup>6</sup>, the Education Act<sup>7</sup> and Children Act<sup>8</sup> have been instrumental in driving minimum core obligations in education. The quality of education debate has not been unique to Uganda. Ministries of education and their partners—such as the Department for International Development (DFID), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have worked tirelessly to improve student enrollment in third world countries. Great strides have been made in achieving this objective but there remains a challenge on measuring learning outcomes. The boost to enrollment has not been accompanied by concomitant increases in input levels, straining resources and infrastructure. Large classes —with students-teacher ratios of 60 and above — may lead to poor learning environments. While the number of teachers on government payroll has increased by 14% since 2008, the country needs multiple interventions in order to accommodate rising enrollment and adequately address the problem of a crowded learning environment<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> E. R. Yescombe, *Public–Private Partnerships Principles of Policy and Finance*; Yescombe Consulting Ltd London, UK PDF page 15

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Government White Paper on: The report of the Commission of Inquiry (constitutional Review) and Government proposals not addressed by the report of the Commission of Inquiry (Constitutional review) accessed on the 12<sup>th</sup> of September 2017 at https://www.cmi.no/pdf/?file=/uganda/doc/government-whitepaper.pdf

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> The Constitution of the Republic of Uganda 1995

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Education Act (Pre Primary, Primary, Post Primary Act) 2008

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Children Act 2006 (as amended in 2016)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Barrera-Osorio, F., de Galbert, P., Habyarimana, J., & Sabarwal, S. (2015). The Impact of Public-Private Partnerships on Private School Performance: Evidence from a Randomized Controlled Trial in Uganda. *Policy Research Working Paper; No. 7905*. World Bank, Washington, DC. Accessed on 14<sup>th</sup> September at <a href="https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/25804">https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/25804</a>.

Studies suggest that massive enrolment has not necessarily resulted into actual learning in the classroom. Glewwe and Kremer note that the quality of schooling in developing countries is often very low. They note that grade repetition and leaving school at an early age are common, teachers are often absent from classrooms, and many children learn much less than the learning objectives set in the official curriculum. That many schools lack the most basic equipment and school supplies textbooks, blackboards, desks, benches, and sometimes even classrooms (in which case classes meet outside and are canceled when it rains 10. Uwezo's in-depth research and analyses present a daunting reality of struggling learning outcomes in East Africa. It notes keenly that budgets and other inputs to learning have been increasing steadily, but learning outcomes have remained essentially stagnant. In this sixth Uwezo report, a question is posed as to whether children are learning. The report shows a consistent trend of static results over the years. That there is still no significant improvement in learning outcomes: only 3 out of 10 children in Class 3 can do Class 2 work. On average, 1 out of 10 children in Kenyan primary schools are completing Class 8 without having acquired the basic competencies expected of a child completing Class 2<sup>11</sup>. These dire statistics about early primary literacy and numeracy in the developing world reflect a sector desperately in need of new, innovative ideas to reverse prevailing trends, and drive significant gains in learning amongst historicallyunderperforming students.

## C. Tried and Tested Option: Public Private Partnerships

Public-Private Partnerships in education is an innovation that promises great learning gains for students in third world countries. Public-private partnerships in education have existed in countries like the United States and United Kingdom for decades, where they are called "charter schools," and "academies," respectively. Such partnerships have been implemented in other developed countries as well. Examples include private management of public schools in countries like the United States and Spain; government purchase of educational services from private providers in Uganda, Côte d'Ivoire,

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Glewwe, P., & Kremer, M. (2006). Schools, Teachers, and Education Outcomes in Developing Countries. In Handbook of Economics of Education (Vol. 2). Amsterdam: North Holland.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup>Uwezo (2016): Are Our Children Learning? Uwezo Uganda 6th Learning Assessment Report. Kampala: Twaweza East Africa.

the Philippines, and Venezuela; voucher programs in New Zealand and The Netherlands; and adopta-school programs, capacity building initiatives, and school infrastructure partnerships<sup>12</sup>.

In structuring public-private partnerships, a non-governmental operator is contracted by the government to operate one or more state-funded schools on the government's behalf, but with some autonomy to innovate towards creating academic gains for students; and the government inspects and regulates the school. Despite the academic autonomy, public-private partnership schools must remain public schools that serve local students, like any other public school operated by the government. In practice, a government gives an operator access to capital and autonomy to operate one or more schools; the operator then uses that capital to pay teachers, develop curriculum, implement best practices in classrooms, and innovate towards improved student outcomes. The operator may have the autonomy to hire its own teachers, change the length of the school day or year, create a standards-aligned curriculum, implement technology-driven initiatives in classrooms, and engage in other innovations in schools<sup>13</sup>. Successful public-private partnership school models are regulated by governments and feature strong accountability and oversight. Schools that do not generate student outcomes risk being closed or restructured. The picture is that operators are released from some rules applied to other government schools, in exchange for government oversight and accountability, to ensure that they are driving student achievement gains.

In Uganda, the benefits of these arrangements have been noted. PPP arrangements provide a unique opportunity to wed the potentially inequality reducing impact of public financing of education to the efficient provision by private schools. Proponents of PPP's usually cite improved flexibility and accountability in education service delivery as major benefits of such programs. Generally, public school administrators have less autonomy in hiring teachers and organizing schools than the private sector does. In comparison, it has been argued that private schools deploy and use teachers more effectively<sup>14</sup>. Partnering with already-in-place private schools to increase access is cheaper than

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> LaRocque, Norman (2008). Public-Private Partnerships in Basic Education: An International Review. CfBT Education Trust Literature Review. Accessed on 14th September, 2017 at www.cfbt.com.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Patrinos, H. A., Barrera-Osorio, F., Guáqueta, J. (2009). The Role and Impact of Public-Private Partnerships in Education. *The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development / The World Bank*. Accessed on 14<sup>th</sup> September, 2017 at <a href="https://ppp.worldbank.org/public-private-partnership/library/role-and-impact-public-private-partnerships-education">https://ppp.worldbank.org/public-private-partnership/library/role-and-impact-public-private-partnerships-education</a>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Andrabi, T., Das, J., & Khwaja, A.I. (2008). A dime a day: The possibilities and limits of private schooling in Pakistan. Comparative Education Review 52(3):329–355.

building new schools or classrooms and training teachers<sup>15</sup>. Further, private schools are generally held to a high level of accountability by the parents because of the direct financial transactions involved. They ought to respond to demands of parents and provide high quality services to retain students. Another set of reasons for creating PPP's relates to their potential effects on public schools through increased competition. PPPs can create competition within education markets and thereby help promote innovative and more efficient approaches to education service delivery<sup>16</sup>.

# D. Public-Private Partnerships in Uganda

In 2007, the government of Uganda pioneered the implementation of Universal Secondary Education to accommodate the children graduating through the Universal Primary Education Initiative. All students who score an overall aggregate of 28 or better on the Primary Leaving Examination (PLE) are eligible to attend - at no cost to their families- participating public secondary schools and vocational institutions. With this, total enrollment increased by nearly 25% between 2007 and 2012<sup>17</sup>. (World Bank 2014). To address the short term needs of USE, government passed two policies: first, the government introduced double shifting in eligible and willing public secondary schools. Secondly, in sub-counties where (i) there were no participating public secondary schools, (ii) those government schools were crowded, or (iii) where the size of the sub-county would involve very long distances to public schools, the government contracted with private schools to provide schooling for USE students.

Recent studies have attempted to compare performance of two groups: students at private schools that absorbed new students under a public-private partnership program and students at private schools that did not participate in the program. Promisingly, students in the participating schools outperformed students in non-participating schools significantly, suggesting that public-private

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> Barrera-Osorio, F., Blakeslee, D. S., Hoover, M., Linden, L. L., & Raju, D. (2011). Expanding Educational Opportunities in Remote Parts of the World: Evidence from a RCT of a Public Private Partnership in Pakistan. In Third Institute for the Study of Labor (IZA) Workshop, "Child Labor in Developing Countries," Mexico City accessed on 12th September 2017 at http://www.iza.org/conference\_files/childl2011/blakeslee\_d6783.pdf

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Barrera-Osorio, F., de Galbert, P., Habyarimana, J., & Sabarwal, S. (2015). The Impact of Public-Private Partnerships on Private School Performance: Evidence from a Randomized Controlled Trial in Uganda. Policy Research Working Paper; No. 7905. World Bank, Washington, accessed on 12<sup>th</sup> September, 2017 at https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/25804.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Brans, Bo-Joe. (2011). Analyzing PPPs as a policy tool for Universal Secondary Education in Uganda. Accessed on 14<sup>th</sup> September, 2017, at https://educationanddevelopment.files.wordpress.com/2008/04/ppps-in-uganda-bo-joe-brans.pdf.

partnership schools can indeed generate more learning and a higher quality education for students. The study shows that despite this increase in enrollment, student performance in participating schools is significantly better. Particularly, the set of students exposed to more than a year of the PPP program had test scores in Math, English and Biology of about 0.2 standard deviations better than students in non-participating private schools. Evidence was found for both increased input availability as well as positive selection of government aided students. Participating schools were more likely to have a laboratory; slightly more teachers and more importantly, teachers present in the classroom teaching 18.

## E. Legal and Policy Framework for PPPs

In addition to the legal instruments referred to earlier, there is need for a comprehensive regulatory environment for PPPs in education to succeed. The right to education is enshrined in several international instruments to which Uganda is a signatory. These include the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Convention against Discrimination in Education, the International Covenant of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC).

At the local level, some relevant obligations are captured in the Constitution, Education and Children Acts (supra), Local Government Act cap 243, Guidelines for Universal Post Primary Education and Training (UPPET) and Universal Post O-level Education and Training (UPOLET) for PPP Schools. Some key policies in the PPP environment include the 1992 Government White Paper on Education, the National Development Plan II 2015/2016-2019/2020 (NDP); the Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) 2007-2015; the National PPP Policy Framework and PPPs in Context of Universal Secondary Education (USE) Policy.

Of particular note is the Public- Private Partnership (PPP) Act 2015 which governs relations between operators and government in PPPs. It sets out guidelines and procedures for development of PPPs and spells out obligations and expectations of different actors. Key to note is that the Act requires

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Barrera-Osorio, F., de Galbert, P., Habyarimana, J., & Sabarwal, S. (2015). The Impact of Public-Private Partnerships on Private School Performance: Evidence from a Randomized Controlled Trial in Uganda. Policy Research Working Paper; No. 7905. World Bank, Washington, DC. Accessed on 12<sup>th</sup> September, 2017, from https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/25804.

that parties conduct an economic cost-benefit analysis prior to signing of agreements and annual project audits after the commencement of the project<sup>19</sup>.

## F. Strengthening Government Accountability

A critical ingredient for the success of PPPs in education is government oversight and accountability. School operators should and must be subject to accountability and oversight from ministries of education, to ensure they generate gains for students in keeping with government priorities and regulations. One study of public-private partnership schools suggests a list of 15 actions governments can take to promote public-private partnerships in education; the list helpfully summarizes the types of organizing principles and accountability metrics needed to keep such programs functioning smoothly. Most crucial among these 15 points is that governments must "Establish appropriate performance measures and include performance incentives and sanctions for inadequate performance in public-private partnership contracts<sup>20</sup>, The selected performance measures must be appropriate and must reflect the outcomes required by the contracting authority because the contractor's behavior will be driven largely by what will be measured and rewarded under the terms of the contract. Performance indicators should be specified as much as possible in terms of measurable outcomes (for example, learning improvements as measured by test scores, reading levels, reduced dropout rates, and reduced teacher-student absenteeism) rather than inputs (for example, hiring additional staff or spending more on particular activities). Empirically, such performance incentives and sanctions will be utterly ineffective if the education authority lacks the ability or capacity to monitor contractors' performance<sup>21</sup>.

Also, crucial in public-private partnership design is that the program should be "accompanied by a well-designed, rigorous evaluation". The best evaluations of programs involve experiments that randomly assign benefits and include a true control group. In the absence of a random design or some form of natural experiment, it is preferable to use such rigorous techniques as propensity score matching, local average treatment effects, and regression discontinuities. Education PPPs are highly amenable to proper impact evaluations because many of the interventions are output-driven. Having

<sup>19</sup> Section 39

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup>Patrinos, H. A., Barrera-Osorio, F., Guáqueta, J. (2009). The Role and Impact of Public-Private Partnerships in Education. *The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development / The World Bank*. Accessed on 14<sup>th</sup> September 2017 at <a href="https://ppp.worldbank.org/public-private-partnership/library/role-and-impact-public-private-partnerships-education">https://ppp.worldbank.org/public-private-partnership/library/role-and-impact-public-private-partnerships-education</a>

<sup>21</sup> ibid

more rigorous impact evaluations is important because this would increase the amount of information available to policymakers when they make decisions about program design as well as expanding the international knowledge about the circumstances under which particular types of on education PPPs work best<sup>22</sup>. The foregoing observations are compelling. Governments must be able to monitor the efficacy of public-private partnership interventions, and should do so by focusing on measurable student outcomes rather than inputs; and randomized controlled trials using true control groups are the best measure to evaluate the efficacy of a public-private partnership school model.

### G. Comparative Cases for Public Private Partnerships in Education

## (1) "No Excuses" Charter Schools

Over the last decade, social scientists have been studying the learning outcomes of charter schools and their best practices. Within the U.S., charter schools often serve as incubators for innovation. They are publicly funded and privately managed, trading more flexibility around rules and regulations for heightened accountability. However, one type of charter school, often referred to as a "No Excuses" school, has consistently shown large learning outcomes. These charter schools operate with a set of best practices: high academic expectations for their pupils, a longer school day, frequent coaching, monitoring and support for their teachers, a consistent disciplinary code, etc. Estimates of learning gains range from 0.16 SD in English Language Arts to 0.25 in a recent meta-analysis of several studies<sup>23</sup>. This type of innovation and associated academic gains are not unique to the charter school movement in the U.S. Public-private partnerships around the world have catalyzed large learning gains, as well. Some schools have shown substantial student academic gains from their interventions compared to the academic gains of traditional public schools, while some have showed more anemic results<sup>24</sup>.

<sup>22</sup> ibid

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> Cheng, A., Hitt, C., Kisida, B., & Mills, J. N. (July 2015). No Excuses Charter Schools: A Meta-Analysis of the Experimental Evidence on Student Achievement. *EDRE Working Paper No. 2014-11*, 1-48. Accessed on 14<sup>th</sup> September 2017 at <a href="http://ssrn.com/abstract=2652401">http://ssrn.com/abstract=2652401</a>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> Patrinos, H. A., Barrera-Osorio, F., Guáqueta, J. (2009). The Role and Impact of Public-Private Partnerships in Education. The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development / The World Bank. Retrieved March 29, 2017 from https://ppp.worldbank.org/public-private-partnership/library/role-and-impact-public-private-partnerships-education

No Excuses charter schools are characterized by holding consistently high academic expectations for their students, and embracing those expectations without making any "excuses" for children who underperform (hence the name). Also, critical among no excuses charter schools is a focus on improving academic outcomes in literacy and numeracy, with the aim of helping students advance towards higher education. Indeed, many No Excuses charter schools place a heavy focus upon students going to university upon graduation. In furtherance of these core attitudes, No Excuses charter schools often implement several innovative "best practices": an extended school day and year; frequent, individualized academic support for low-performing students; regular monitoring and support for their teachers, especially as relates to curriculum, lesson planning, and instructional practice; and a consistently-implemented, often stringent disciplinary code.

When measured in rigorous, independent randomized controlled trials, No Excuses charter schools perform extremely well in generating student learning. One recent survey, conducted by Stanford's Center for Research on Education Outcomes, found that while some charter schools did not uniformly create outsized gains for students, a subset of urban charter schools do create these gains—many of which follow the No Excuses mode. The study showed that urban charter schools in the aggregate provide significantly higher levels of annual growth in both math and reading compared to their TPS [typical public school] peers. Specifically, students enrolled in urban charter schools experience 0.055 standard deviations (SDs) greater growth in math and 0.039 SDs greater growth in reading per year than their matched peers in TPS. These results translate to urban charter students receiving the equivalent of roughly 40 days of additional learning per year in math and 28 additional days of learning per year in reading<sup>25</sup>.

A recent meta-analysis of several studies focusing specifically on the No Excuses model found even more impressive learning gains at No Excuses schools, in the range of 0.15 SDs in reading and 0.25 SDs in math. Per the study, both oversubscribed No Excuses charter schools and charter schools more generally appear to have positive effects on student math and ELA achievement. Results highlight the relative success of No Excuses charter schools, as the estimated grand effect sizes for the sample of No Excuses charter schools are consistently higher than those estimated for the more general sample of random assignment charter school studies. Math achievement for students who

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> Urban Charter School Study Report on 41 Regions. (2015). *Center for Research on Education Outcomes*, 2-45. Accessed on 14<sup>th</sup> of September 2017 at <a href="https://credo.stanford.edu">https://credo.stanford.edu</a>

attend No Excuses charter schools is 0.25 standard deviations higher than those who attend traditional public schools. Reading achievement for students who attend No Excuses charter schools is 0.15 standard deviations higher than those who attend traditional public schools. Analogous differences for students who attend other types of charter schools are 0.15 standard deviations for math achievement and 0.07 standard deviations for reading achievement<sup>26</sup>. The study accurately reveals that such schools focus intensely upon "raising the math and literacy scores of their students, who primarily come from low-income and racial minority backgrounds, in a deliberately regimented attempt to narrow the Black-White achievement gap that has defined debates over American education policy for over two decades"

Given the remarkable, proven successes of No Excuses charter schools in driving learning gains in the United States, the implementation of this model in the developing world is imperative—it is both a promising innovation, as well as a natural outgrowth of a proven intervention. Where No Excuses charter schools have successfully closed the achievement gap in some communities where they operate, the model can very likely do the same for historically-underperforming populations in developing world contexts, to ensure that they perform at or above the level of their historically-successful, often-wealthier peers. Several early efforts are already underway to bring No Excuses schools to the developing world. In South Africa, "Collaboration Schools," launched in January 2016, paired five government schools with three school operators, to raise student achievement at a sustainable cost<sup>28</sup> More ambitiously, the landmark Partnership Schools for Liberia project implements a public-private partnership school model in 94 schools across the country<sup>29</sup>.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup>Cheng, A., Hitt, C., Kisida, B., & Mills, J. N. (July 2015). No Excuses Charter Schools: A Meta-Analysis of the Experimental Evidence on Student Achievement. *EDRE Working Paper No. 2014-11*, 1-48. Accessed on 14<sup>th</sup> of September 2017 at <a href="http://ssrn.com/abstract=2652401">http://ssrn.com/abstract=2652401</a>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> Hares, S. (26 November 2016). When Schools Fail: Taking Radical Steps To Improve Education. The Huffington Post. Accessed on 14<sup>th</sup> September 2017 at http://www.huffingtonpost.com/susannah-hares/when-schools-fail-taking-\_b\_13228914.html.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> Romero, M., Sandefur, J., & Sandholtz, W. (2016). "Partnership Schools for Liberia (PSL) program evaluation." AEA RCT Registry. September

<sup>02.</sup> https://www.socialscienceregistrv.org/trials/1501/history/10539

### (2) Partnership Schools for Liberia

In the Partnership Schools for Liberia project, Liberia's Ministry of Education selected 8 different operators—ranging from international organizations like Omega Schools and Bridge International Academies, to regional and local organizations such as Rising Academies, More Than Me, and the Liberian Youth Network. Each operator has been allocated several public schools, which they operate in partnership with the Ministry of Education of the Government of Liberia, towards improved learning outcomes for students. All the schools in the program could rightly be considered charter schools; several, most notably Bridge International Academies, follow the No Excuses model in their implementation.

Like any policy intervention, public-private partnership schools can and should be rigorously measured based upon learning outcomes. Appropriately, the operators of this Liberian intervention have been evaluated in a rigorous randomized controlled trial—a "gold standard" evaluation—by an independent, outside evaluator working in partnership with the Ministry of Education. The September report shows that students in partnership schools learn twice as fast as their peers in traditional public schools, receiving the equivalent of a full year of additional schooling. The yearlong study was designed to measure whether a radical new approach to delivering Liberian primary education could improve learning for students in a country which needed surgical recovery from civil war and epidemic. In Liberia, only 38% of children attend elementary education and 46% of young people are illiterate. After one school year, the 93 public schools in the program had increased student learning by 60%. One of the operators had doubled the learning. Key findings from the report showed that Students at partnership schools learned significantly more than students at traditional public schools, nearly twice as much in reading and more than twice as much in maths. This is the equivalent of an additional year of schooling. Across select partnership operated schools, teachers were 50% more likely to be in school (60% attendance at PSL schools versus 40% attendance at traditional schools). When compared to traditional schools, parents of students in the select partnership schools are more satisfied with school and students are happier<sup>30</sup>.

<sup>1. 30</sup> Mauricio Romero, Justin Sandefur and Wayne Aaron Sandholtz, Can Outsourcing Improve Liberia's Schools? - Preliminary Results from Year One of a Three-Year Randomized Evaluation of

#### H. Conclusion

Policy interventions such as Universal Primary Education (UPE) and Universal Secondary Education (USE) have contributed greatly to increasing access to basic education and transitioning primary school leavers into skills training at levels close to introducing them to the development market. The government has been bold in working with private education providers to bridge the quality education gap and leveraging private and public resources to improve learning outcomes in USE. Though not with its share of challenges, the PPP approach if embraced with the requisite government oversight and accountability presents great opportunities not only in the USE space but in basic education as well. Regulation and accountability from governments driven by outcomes-based measures and rigorous evaluation is crucial for the success of any PPP model. Studies in the United States to date present promising results from the No Excuses charter school model, and suggest that among charter school innovations, the model creates outsized learning gains for students when compared to both traditional public schools and even other charter school models. Implementing this model in Uganda is a quintessential example of the sort of innovation. The public-private partnership work underway in Liberia and Uganda are the first of what will be likely many instances by ministries of education across the developing world to create similar systems, towards driving academic gains for historicallyunderperforming populations of students.

Partnership Schools for Liberia Working Paper 462 9/7/17, accessed on the 14<sup>th</sup> of September 2017 at <a href="https://www.cgdev.org/publication/partnership-schools-for-liberia">https://www.cgdev.org/publication/partnership-schools-for-liberia</a>

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