Data Must Speak (DMS)
About Positive Deviance Approaches to Learning

Research Snapshot
UNICEF Office of Research-Innocenti
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Data Must Speak (DMS) Initiative - History

- **Objective:** maximizing the use of existing data for policy making, systems management and social accountability (community engagement)

- **Started in 2014, active in 13 countries**
  (different stages of implementation)

- **Focused on Foundational Literacy and Numeracy** (primary education)

- **Technical support components**
  - Datasets merging; District, school, and community profile cards
  - School/District indices for equitable resource allocation/school grant formulae

**Guiding Principles | DNA of DMS**

- Country Ownership
  - No « One Size Fits All »

- Sustainability
  - Learning By Doing
**DMS – Research Component**

- **Same Guiding Principles (DNA)** as for the other DMS components & also focused on **Foundational Literacy and Numeracy**

- **Objective**: Finding out and understanding positive deviant behaviors/practices in best performing schools and ways to scale them in more schools

- **Methodologies**: Quantitative research, Behavioral science, Implementation research & Scaling science

- Co-funded by **Internal UNICEF resources** (global and country level), **Hewlett Foundation, KIX** (IDRC/GPE), **NORAD, Schools2030**, and **Jacobs Foundation**

- Tapping on **UNICEF unique field presence** (900 education staff) and their trusted partnerships w/ Ministries

**13 participating countries** in Africa/Asia: Brazil, Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, Lao PDR, Madagascar, Mali, Nepal, Niger, Tanzania, Togo, and Zambia
What is Positive Deviance?

It is a methodology used to understand what makes certain schools perform better than others even though they operate in the same context & with the same resources, by analyzing their behaviors and practices.

**Argentina** – By improving the relationship between communities and schools, students are much more likely to graduate primary school.  
*Dura, L. & Singhal, A. (2009)*

**Namibia** – Students learning outcomes increased when the head-teacher act as a role-model and foster a strong team spirit.  
*UNICEF (2015)*

**U.S.A** – When receiving positive feedback from teachers, parents, and friends, students with learning disabilities are much less likely to drop-out.  
*Singhal, A. (2013)*
Domains of Practices/Behaviors under Study

- School Leadership; Relations between Teachers & School Leaders; Teachers & Teachers
- Classroom Practices (incl. pedagogical approaches)
- School/District Relations & Dynamics
- School & Community Relations & Dynamics
- Teachers & Students Relations & Dynamics
Co-Creation & Co-Implementation from the Outset for Improved Uptake

A participatory research project from and for ministries’ officials, school leaders, teachers, communities, and children
Stage 0: Global Methodological Review

Stage 1: Analysis of resources and context associated with school performance [Quantitative Research]

Stage 2: Identification of Positive Deviant Schools and School Typology [Quantitative Research]


Stage 4: Investigating Levers for Optimum Scale [Participatory Implementation Research & Scaling Science]

Stage 5: Country-level Knowledge Use & Global Mobilization
Valuing Country-Level Capacity and Solutions

Grassroot solutions to national education issues

- Strengthening in-country technical capacity to manage education data and generate evidence
- Leveraging national existing datasets to analyze the education ecosystem
- Listening to schools to identify local positive deviant behaviors and practices in their context
Thank you! Questions?

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