



DATA MUST SPEAK

Determining the best resources for the Togolese education system

Research on positive deviant schools to improve learning in Togo

Key findings



Textbook availability and a higher ratio of seats per student are associated with better promotion rates at the primary and secondary levels.



The presence of latrines in schools is associated with lower dropout rates for girls.



Receiving a food supplement is associated with better promotion rates in primary schools.

Context

Despite government efforts and several recent educational reforms (including curriculum reforms and policies on secondary-school teaching, school meals and teachers), there are still **challenges in access, equity, quality and management in the Togolese education system**. Despite these challenges, some schools perform better than others, even in disadvantaged areas. By identifying these positive deviant schools and the good practices that make them successful, important lessons can be learned to improve learning in Togo and contribute to the efficient implementation of the Education Sector Plan 2020–2030.



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Research on positive deviant schools

Against this background, the **Data Must Speak (DMS) research on positive deviant schools** explores local solutions for improving the quality of education in Togo. The first stage of the research was to conduct **a statistical analysis using the Education Management Information System (EMIS) and national examination scores** to identify factors associated with school performance and quantify their effects. The analysis presented in this brief focuses on the main findings of this stage.¹

Research results

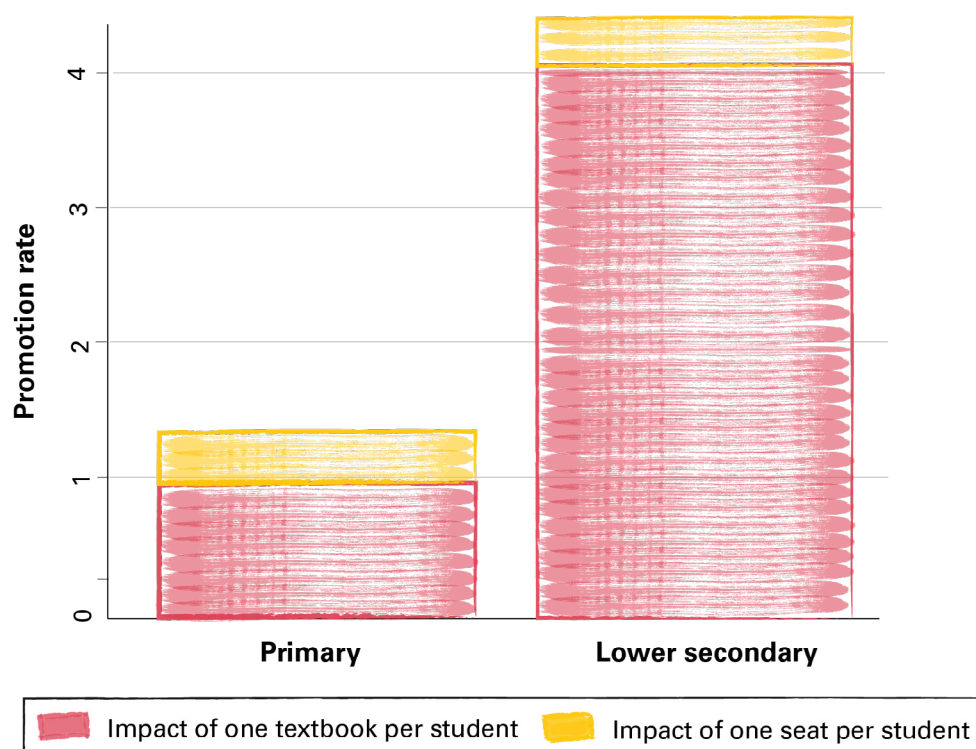
Textbook availability is correlated with better promotion rates at the primary and secondary levels.

One additional textbook per student is associated with an increase in promotion rates (by 1.1 percentage points at the primary level and 2.6 percentage points at the lower secondary level). The availability of textbooks is also correlated with a better average on the Lower Secondary Completion Certificate (BEPC) examinations taken at the end of lower secondary school. This is not the case, however, for the Primary School Completion Certificate (CEPD). More generally, there is a lack of textbooks in Togo, with a ratio of only 0.7 reading books per student in primary school and 0.3 French books in lower secondary school. In addition, there is a significant gap in the distribution of textbooks. For example, 25 per cent of primary school students do not have reading textbooks, while only 15 per cent of students are enrolled in a school with more textbooks than students.

The number of seats per student is strongly correlated with promotion rates in primary and lower secondary schools.

On average, nearly eight out of 10 students have a seat in primary school. If all students had a seat, the estimated promotion rate would increase by 0.4 percentage points. The same is true in lower secondary schools, where nearly nine out of 10 students have a seat.

¹ Although rigorous, this analysis has its limitations, since it is based on observational data. The statistical models account for school fixed effects and involve numerous controls to reduce the likelihood that the estimated relationships are based on systematic differences between schools. However, additional studies will be required to verify that the observed effects are causal and not simply correlations.

Figure 1: Estimated impact of one French and mathematics textbook and one seat per student

Source: EMIS data for 2020–2021.

The presence of latrines is associated with better promotion rates for girls, including lower dropout rates. In schools with latrines, the estimated dropout rate for girls is 0.1 percentage points lower in primary and 0.6 percentage points lower than in lower secondary schools.

Finally, around 3 per cent of elementary schools received a food supplement, which had positive effects on promotion rates. Receiving a food supplement is associated with a 0.7 percentage point increase in promotion rates.

While infrastructure investments can be costly, there is a case for assessing their cost-effectiveness. Actions related to the factors described above have the potential to improve student promotion rates. Investments in textbooks could be particularly effective and efficient. Providing one French and mathematics textbook per student would cost about 1 billion West African CFA francs (XOF) and could increase the promotion rate by 0.9 percentage points. At the lower secondary level, the impact of purchasing a French and mathematics textbook is even greater (a 4 percentage point increase in the promotion rate), but the cost is much higher (about XOF 5 billion), especially since secondary school textbooks are seven times more expensive than those for primary school. Better control of secondary school textbook prices would improve access to textbooks at a lower cost.

Education policy areas for further exploration



Analyse how to better control the textbook distribution gap and reduce the cost of textbooks in secondary school.



Review current ministerial plans and policies regarding resource-related factors (for example, textbooks, increased seating capacity, building of latrines and food supplementation) and reflect critically on how they might be improved.



Ensure that schools have functional latrines to promote girls' access to education.

About the Data Must Speak research on positive deviant schools

The DMS research on positive deviant schools in Togo was developed jointly by the Ministry of Primary, Secondary, Technical and Artisanal Education of Togo (MEPSTA), local project partners, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Togo country office, and the UNICEF Innocenti – Global Office of Research and Foresight. This global research project is being implemented in 14 countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. It is co-funded by the *Knowledge and Innovation Exchange* (KIX) programme of the Global Partnership for Education/International Development Research Centre, the Hewlett Foundation, the Jacobs Foundation, the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation, the Schools2030 programme (led by the Aga Khan Foundation), and UNICEF's Thematic Fund for Education.

Series of thematic briefs

This brief is the third in a series of documents produced as part of the DMS research in Togo. It focuses primarily on the issue of school resources. The other briefs focus on teaching staff and gender issues. It aims to inform the dialogue on educational policies in Togo and other countries.

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