The Problem

Education is universally accepted as a necessary building block to greater development. Education is highly correlated with higher household incomes, and societies with an educated labor force are more productive, faster to adopt new technology, and quicker to innovate.¹

Hundreds of millions of people in the world do not have adequate access to effective education.² D-Prize is interested in innovative new solutions that would result in step-change improvements to the rapid spread of education in resource-limited settings, as well as improvements in tracking the quality and consistency of education delivery. There are two education challenges:

1. **Flip the Classroom in Resource-Limited Settings**

   Learning is impossible without adequate classroom resources, particularly when the resource is a teacher. Teaching positions can be difficult to fill – one East African minister of education notes a current country-wide deficit of 35,000 teachers.³ This situation becomes even worse when teacher absenteeism is considered. Up to 25 percent of teachers in the developing world will be absent from work on any given day.⁴

   D-Prize is interested in solutions that bridge this resource gap – enabling education to be delivered consistently and in a high-quality fashion using a trained facilitator, instead of an expert teacher. Possible solutions include “flipped” classrooms: where lessons are learned at home, and classroom time is used to do activity-style homework assignments. Another example would be a simple “de-skilled” paper curriculum that trained facilitators could use to deliver lessons.

   **THE CHALLENGE:** We will award $10,000-$20,000 to a social entrepreneur who can launch a new organization that identifies an effective curriculum and distributes it to at least 250 students (5 classrooms), and scales to 50,000 students (1,000 classrooms) within two years.

   Quality matters. A winning idea will include a strong focus on measuring impact on student performance, by comparing test scores to a control group, for example. Flipped classrooms and de-skilled curriculums are relatively new, and there is not yet a strong consensus on what model delivers the greatest impact to students.

   More context on M&E in education initiatives: http://www.givewell.org/international/education

¹ [http://www.unesco.org/education/gmr_download/chapter2.pdf](http://www.unesco.org/education/gmr_download/chapter2.pdf)
⁴ [http://www.academia.edu/2380578/Teacher_Absenteeism_and_Teacher_Accountability_USAID_Paper](http://www.academia.edu/2380578/Teacher_Absenteeism_and_Teacher_Accountability_USAID_Paper)
2. **Improve Accountability in Education**

In order for education to be a true solution to poverty, it must be effective. Yet many students who attend school are not given a quality education. In sub-Saharan Africa, 40 percent of children remain illiterate even after five years of education. By 2015, 72 percent of youth are expected to be literate in sub-Saharan Africa, whereas the majority of global regions will be nearing 100 percent.\(^5\)

Studies have found that weak accountability is a root cause of low-quality and inequitable public services.\(^6\) One proven solution to increase accountability in schools (and increase school performance) is to increase information about school performance, and to make this information accessible to the public. Although controversial in the United States, publicly reporting average test scores of schools led to an increase in school performance. Similar outcomes have been seen in the developing world in other sectors: “citizen report cards” in India have shared information and helped improve public services, and a similar approach has been used in Uganda to report information on health clinics to villages.

**THE CHALLENGE:** We will award $10,000-$20,000 to a social entrepreneur who can launch an organization that tests student and school performance, and makes the information publicly available to local communities. The venture should reach 100 schools within three months, with a vision to scale to country-wide within two years.

A winning idea will likely have two components: collecting data through testing, and making information available for public consumption. Testing models should be based off of already-successful models, fit with any already-existing testing in the country, and be cost effective to administer. Afterward, information gained from testing should be distributed in a way that will create the most amount of change (for example, by sharing results with student’s parents).

There is enormous opportunity for a social entrepreneur to succeed by adapting already-existing testing models and transplanting them to a country in need.

**Ready to Apply?**

Find instructions at: [http://fletcher.tufts.edu/D-Prize/Apply/Application](http://fletcher.tufts.edu/D-Prize/Apply/Application)

Email questions to Nicholas Fusso at nicholas@d-prize.org.

---
