

## DeliverEd

### Researching how to deliver education reforms

#### The learning crisis

We are just 10 years away from the 2030 deadline to meet the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 4 of ensuring inclusive, equitable, quality education for all – but over 800 million children and youth are not on track to learn the skills needed to thrive now and in the future. The global learning crisis demands urgent action, and implementation of that action is critical to reform. But as the Education Commission's landmark *Learning Generation* report highlights, the delivery of policy reforms remains one of the primary challenges to addressing the learning crisis.

#### Addressing not only *what* but *how*

While the international community has built knowledge on *what* needs to happen to improve learning, less progress has been made in understanding *how* to do it at a systems level. Governments, donors, researchers, multilateral agencies, NGOs, and the private sector have used various approaches to improve education results, including education sector planning processes and addressing inclusivity, gender sensitivity, and conflict vulnerability. *RISE*, a multi-country research initiative, is looking at which education system reforms improve learning effectively at large scale. But governments still lack rigorous evidence on how to implement these solutions and this is a challenge affecting many countries. In 2019, the Global Partnership for Education concluded that one third of education sector plans should be rated as 'not achievable' due to financial constraints and implementation challenges.

One strategy to improving the *how* is to use delivery approaches. Multi-year 'delivery units' or shorter (and often more problem-solving focused) 'delivery labs' are the most commonly cited examples of such approaches, including the Prime Minister's Delivery Unit in UK, *Big Results Now!* in Tanzania, the Chief Minister's Special Monitoring Unit in Punjab, Pakistan, the Pernambuco state 'learning pacts' in Brazil, and PEMANDU in Malaysia. More than 40 countries have undertaken such initiatives across a variety of sectors, including health, education, and at the center of government. Despite this reach, fewer than 10 peer-reviewed articles exist on the impact of these approaches, and there is very little independent research on the topic in low- and middle-income countries.

Although delivery units and delivery labs are widely recognized, they are only one species of a broader class of *delivery approaches* that governments can adopt. Many of the functions performed by delivery units can and often are also carried out by other parts of the government. In this initiative, DeliverEd aims to broaden the scope beyond delivery units to consider a range of approaches to improving policy delivery.

## **A demand for greater evidence**

During the dissemination of *The Learning Generation* report, the Education Commission encountered high demand from policymakers for evidence-based practices around implementation of learning reforms. Government representatives, development partners, and civil society stakeholders expressed strong interest in better understanding how and under what conditions delivery approaches are effective for achieving education system reforms. Thanks to support from DFID, the Education Commission and Oxford University's Blavatnik School of Government are working with the University of Toronto to direct research across five countries. Leading research organizations are responsible for each country study, contributing additional local expertise.

## **DeliverEd's objectives**

The DeliverEd initiative will explore what structures, processes, and practices governments are establishing to more effectively focus their bureaucracies and frontline professionals to achieve desired education policy goals. This will create a better understanding of what tools leaders can use to guide their reform efforts. DeliverEd will also define what different delivery approaches entail and what evidence exists for their efficacy in improving education outcomes.

Case studies across five research countries using a delivery approach – Ghana, Pakistan, Tanzania, Jordan, and India – will investigate how national education priorities in these governments are translated into desired outcomes and what mechanisms are most effective in improving implementation practices at the center of government, district, and school level to actually result in policies reaching schools, teachers, and students. By building a greater understanding of how governments can achieve their policy priorities along the delivery chain, DeliverEd will provide evidence to help governments which are grappling with how to improve their systems. Ultimately, this will strengthen their ability to implement reforms which could improve learning outcomes.

DeliverEd will produce both academic articles and policy briefs accessible to decision-makers interested in learning from this research. Stakeholder engagement will inform the research, integrate the perspectives of practitioners, and build a community of engagement around learning from the research. A high-level advisory group will support this engagement by providing guidance on the program's content and outputs, and by connecting DeliverEd to other relevant initiatives and partners, particularly policymakers in developing countries.

If you are interested in learning more about the research or in engaging with the initiative, please email [deliver.ed@educationcommission.org](mailto:deliver.ed@educationcommission.org).