

## INNOVATIONS IN EDUCATION IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA: INTRODUCTION TO THE SERIES

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### KEY MESSAGES:

- Through its Community Connections Program, the World Bank Group contributes to its twin goals of eradicating poverty and building shared prosperity in the Washington, DC, area.
- This brief series on innovations in education showcases interventions aiming to improve education and employment opportunities for children and youth. The focus is on innovative interventions with solid monitoring and evaluation data that demonstrate impact.

### Introduction

The mission of the World Bank Group is to end extreme poverty and boost shared prosperity around the world. Washington, DC (DC stands for the District of Columbia) where World Bank Group Headquarters are located is also an area with relatively high poverty. Innovations are needed to improve education and employment outcomes for children and youth from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Through its Community Connections Program, the World Bank Group contributes to its twin goals of eradicating poverty and building shared prosperity in the Greater Washington, DC, area. Different types of support are provided to local nonprofits, one of which consists in strengthening their monitoring and evaluation capacity. This series of briefs is being launched as a pilot together with the World Bank's Education Global Practice and the Rotary Club of Capitol Hill. The series provides practical and accessible examples of solid monitoring and evaluation work done by local non-profits aiming to improve education and employment opportunities for disadvantaged children and youth. The series showcases innovative interventions that should be of interest not only to the Greater Washington, DC, community, but also to other communities, including in developing countries.

### Box 1: District of Columbia Education Series Primer

**Why a series of briefs on innovations in education in the District of Columbia?** While much of the work of the Education Practice at the World Bank focuses on low and middle income countries, insights from innovations in OECD countries can also be highly valuable when thinking about education policy. This series focuses on innovative programs in Washington, DC.

**What are the topics discussed in the series?** The series looks at a number of innovative programs related among others to the curriculum, student learning, tutoring, and skills for the labor market. Private provision through charter schools is also discussed. Many of the programs have received support from the World Bank Community Connections or individual Bank staff.

**What is the question asked in this brief?** The question is: Why is the World Bank Group launching a series of briefs documenting innovative approaches to improve education outcomes for children and youth in the Greater Washington, DC, area?

**How is the question answered?** The briefs series is part of a broader effort by the Community Connections Program of the World Bank Group to strengthen the monitoring and evaluation capacity of nonprofits in the Greater Washington, DC, area.

**This series of briefs is co-sponsored by the World Bank Group's Community Connections Program which supports local nonprofits in several ways, including through capacity building for monitoring and evaluation.**

The World Bank Group's headquarters are located in the District of Columbia. World Bank Group support to the local community is managed through the Community Connections Program or Outreach. Five different types of support are being provided to local nonprofits.

- *Giving through general operations support:* The World Bank's giving strategy in the local community is informed by the Bank's mission, the values of its staff, and the needs of the organizations they support. In the last fiscal year (2015), the World Bank and staff gave over \$6.5 to nonprofits through the Community Connections Program. Approximately 80 percent of the Bank's giving each year is provided through its workplace giving program, the Community Connections Campaign (CCC), which collects staff donations for specific nonprofits and is matched by the World Bank Group. In keeping with the needs of nonprofits and philanthropy best practices, those gifts support general operations of organizations. While most of the nonprofits that benefit from funding from the CCC work principally in the Greater Washington, DC, area, a number also implement programs in developing countries.
- *Contributions to capital projects:* During the CCC, staff can also donate to the Community Connections General Fund. The Fund finances one-time capital projects by nonprofits in the Washington DC metropolitan region. The Fund has recently supported a medical clinic in a low-income neighborhood; permanent supportive housing units with wrap-around services for families; the renovation of a youth center to facilitate the personal and professional growth of young people; a database to increase the efficiency of service delivery for a nutrition and health organization; and a sonogram clinic to provide high-level prenatal care for expecting mothers. The Fund also provides grants to nonprofits where large numbers of staff volunteer.
- *Funding collaboratives:* The Community Connections Program collaborates with other funders. These partnerships allow the program to benefit from others' expertise, share its own, and work in partnership to greater effect. The Communications Connections Program is part of the Washington AIDS Partnership and the Washington Area Women's Foundation Early Care and Education Funders Collaborative.

- *Disaster relief drives:* During large international disasters, World Bank staff often want to be part of the global humanitarian response. The Community Connections program help them create vehicles to make contributions to NGOs on the ground in the affected areas. These gifts may also be matched by the World Bank Group. This is one example of how the Community Connections Program supports communities beyond the local Washington, DC, area.
- *Capacity building for monitoring and evaluation:* In an effort to meet nonprofit demand for building capacity around performance measurement and evaluation, the Community Connections Program has partnered with the Urban Institute to launch Measure4Change. The initiative provides grants, technical assistance, knowledge briefs, and a community of practice for nonprofit performance measurement professionals in the DC region. Measure4Change uses two approaches: for grantees, financial support and one-on-one, technical assistance help build a sustainable performance measurement program; more broadly, a regional community of practice and knowledge briefs share lessons learned and best practices (see Box 1). The two-year pilot received very positive feedback, with feedback from grantees used to prepare for year three.

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Nonprofits recognize the importance of measuring their program effectiveness, but their abilities vary widely, and resources for improvement are scarce. This calls for effort to strengthen monitoring and evaluation capability.

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In addition to Measure4Change, this series of briefs is being launched as a pilot together with the World Bank's Education Global Practice. The series represents an additional effort to help local nonprofits in the Greater Washington, DC, area measure their contributions to the local community. Nonprofits recognize the importance of measuring their program effectiveness, but their abilities vary widely, and resources for improvement are scarce. As is the case for Measure4Change, this briefs series contributes to filling this long-standing gap between what nonprofits in the Washington DC metropolitan region want and what they can do. The series aims to provide practical and accessible examples of solid monitoring and evaluation work done by local non-profits (at times with pro bono support from World Bank staff).

An additional aim of the briefs series is to showcase innovative interventions in education that could be replicated elsewhere. The programs and policies being featured should be of interest not only to the Greater Washington, DC, community, but also to other communities, including in developing countries.

**Box 1: Measure4Change**

Measure4Change provides two years of grant support and one-on-one, intensive technical assistance for competitively selected local nonprofits. The grantees use their funds and technical assistance to build a robust performance measurement system. The technical assistance is guided by a curriculum, but is tailored to meet the individual needs of each nonprofit. The first cohort was made up of Cornerstones, Inc.; DC SCORES; Horton's Kids; and Martha's Table. The grantees selected for the second Measure4Change cohort are:

1. Academy of Hope: Provides adult education, case management, and career services to low-income adults in Washington, DC.
2. Centronia: Provides affordable bilingual early childhood education and supportive services to low-income children and families in the Washington, DC, region.
3. DC Central Kitchen: Provides meals to children and families, offers culinary job training services in Washington, DC, and coordinates a national network of food security programs through high schools and colleges.
4. Miriam's Kitchen: Provides meals, case management, advocacy, and permanent supportive housing services to help end chronic homelessness in Washington, DC.

Measure4Change also hosts a community of practice that meets quarterly. This series of seminars creates learning opportunities and exposes nonprofits to the tools they need to build their performance measurement program. The sessions also make performance measurement more accessible by helping nonprofit leaders learn from their peers, understand the range of performance management practices, where they fit into that continuum, and how they can advance their own programs. Topics covered have included: Developing logic models and results frameworks; Building a high performance culture around measurement and evaluation; Displaying data and data visualization; Survey design; Communicating data to clients; Performance management and measurement software; Working with secondary data, and making use of mapping (GIS) tools. If you would like to join this Community of Practice, please contact [measure4change@urban.org](mailto:measure4change@urban.org).

Finally, Measure4change produces knowledge briefs. Nonprofit leaders need more resources about the early stages of performance measurement programs and how to overcome the practical challenges they will face as they build their program. Complementing the community of practice, the Measure4Change team has published a series of knowledge briefs that explain key concepts and address relevant topics in performance measurement. The briefs are: (1) Starting Small and Thinking Long-Term: Q&A with Performance Measurement and Evaluation Professionals; (2) Navigating Performance Management Software Options; (3) Expanding Audience and Impact Nonprofits Communicating Data to External Audiences; (4) Performance Measurement to Evaluation.

While this briefs series on innovations in education in DC is not formally part of the Measure4Change program, it shares many of the objectives of the program.

**Some of the briefs in the series will feature results of monitoring and evaluation work done by World Bank Group staff with local nonprofits on a pro bono basis.**

World Bank Group staff often give their time and expertise to their communities, echoing the World Bank Group mission in their own neighborhoods by volunteering thousands of hours annually in the cities where they work, from Ankara to Yaoundé. They have among others build websites in Washington, distributed food in Manila, planted trees in Almaty, evaluated programs in Arlington, mentored students in Johannesburg, and much more. In 2015, the Washington Business Journal recognized World Bank staff for total hours volunteered. All World Bank Group staff are eligible to receive a paid day off each year in order to volunteer for an organization of their choice.

World Bank Group staff volunteer in their community in many different capacities, with volunteering not necessarily based on the professional expertise of individual staff. But in some cases, in addition to traditional volunteering, World Bank staff also provide pro bono services to local nonprofits by volunteering their expertise. While the term pro bono is often associated with free legal advice, pro bono work can be done in many other areas, building on a wide range of expertise that volunteers may have. The benefits of the time that volunteers allocate to pro bono consulting or advising can be high for local nonprofits, with potentially large impacts for communities.

The brief series will include a few briefs reflecting the result of pro bono work done by World Bank staff with local nonprofits, and it may help promote the idea of pro bono work in the community. The briefs series came in part from a brainstorming between staff in the Community Connections Program and World Bank staff members of the Rotary club of Capitol Hill which is providing pro bono services to a few organizations in the District of Columbia. The basic assumption is that pro bono initiatives can be a win-win for local nonprofits and volunteers helping them.

**The briefs series initially focuses on education and skills. It is being implemented as a pilot jointly with the Education Global Practice at the World Bank.**

The topics of education and skills are important in the greater Washington, DC, area. Many children do not do well enough in school and in the District of Columbia a third of students drop out before completing high school. Lack of skills for youth entering the labor market is also a major policy issues. At the same time, a wide range of innovative programs are being implemented by the school system as well as nonprofit. Insights from these programs can be beneficial not only for the local community, but also for other communities in the United States and abroad, including in developing countries.

### Box 2: Three Examples of Programs Featured

The briefs series will cover a wide range of topics related to innovations in education in the Greater Washington, DC, area, but the first few briefs will focus on programs that received support from the World Bank Group's Community Connections Program or individual World Bank Group staff.

1. Latin America Youth Center (LAYC): Some 17,400 young adults aged 18 – 24 in the Washington Metropolitan Area are considered as disconnected from work and school. These youth are often from low-income families. They are not in school and out of work. They typically face multiple challenges, including homelessness, issues with the courts, or substance abuse. These challenges prevent them from successfully transitioning into adulthood. LAYC uses an innovative approach to address the needs of this high risk youth. The Promotor Pathway is a long-term, intensive, holistic case management and mentorship intervention. Data from a five year randomized controlled trial evaluation suggest that the program has led to positive changes in school enrollment, birth rates, and homelessness.

2. One World Education: During the 2015-16 school year, One World Education worked with District of Columbia Public Schools as a partner for the Cornerstone initiative. Cornerstones are high-quality, in-depth core curricular experiences that students engage in through DCPS units of study. Cornerstones aim to provide rigorous content to students, improved professional development for teachers, and continuity and consistency across grades and subjects. Some 5,200 students in 15 DC Public Schools in grades 10 and 12 participated in the One World Education argumentative writing program. Analysis of the performance of students before and after the program suggests that the program improves student writing skills, especially for initially weaker students.

3. Urban Alliance: Urban Alliance is a nonprofit organization that aims to facilitate the transition from high school to college and employment for disadvantaged youth in the District of Columbia, Baltimore, Chicago, and Northern Virginia. It does so by running a comprehensive early employment program that provides access and exposure to professional networks for youth enrolled in the program. Urban Alliance staff train and mentor the students through their first professional employment opportunities, which help propel them to future success. Over 90 percent of Urban Alliance alumni go on to college. The World Bank has participated in the Urban Alliance program since 1997, and supported over 300 students through internships. Results from an external evaluation suggest that the Urban Alliance program improves high school graduation rates and the likelihood that students will go to college after graduation.

The briefs series will look at a number of innovative programs in education related among others to the curriculum, student learning, tutoring, and skills for the labor market. Private provision through charter schools will also be discussed. Many but not all of the programs and policies that will be reviewed in the series have received support from the World Bank Group through the Community Connections Program or individual Bank staff. Three examples are provided in Box 2.

### Conclusion

While education and employment outcomes for disadvantaged children and youth remain poor in Washington, DC, the good news is that efforts are being undertaken by the school system as well as nonprofits to improve these outcomes. A wide range of innovative programs are being implemented, and in some cases assessed rigorously.

The objective of this series of briefs is to document some of these successful programs, so that they can inform education policy and practice not only in the Greater Washington, DC, area, but also in other areas in the United States and even in developing countries. This series of briefs on innovation in education in the District of Columbia is being launched as a pilot to which World Bank Group staff as well as others may contribute.

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*The authors are with the World Bank Group. This series of briefs was launched as a collaborative effort between the Education Practice at the World Bank, the Community Outreach Program at the World Bank Group, and the Rotary Club of Capitol Hill. Please contact Quentin Wodon at [qwodon@worldbank.org](mailto:qwodon@worldbank.org) for information. The brief series is part of the SABER Equity and Inclusion program that benefitted from the support of the Global Partnership for Education. The opinions expressed in this brief are those of the author only. They may not represent the views of the World Bank Group, its Executive Directors, or the countries they represent.*