

ACARA D-PRIZE CHALLENGE

2015-2016 Academic Year

Improve Accountability in Education

Student testing can be used to create a school-wide score card. When made public, these score cards help hold educational institutions accountable to parents and students. Create scorecards for 25 schools in a three month pilot, with a vision to drive accountability at a country-wide scale within two years.

The Problem: Accountability in educational institutions is woefully inadequate. In sub-Saharan Africa, 40 percent of children remain illiterate even after five years of education.¹ By 2015, 38 percent of sub-Saharan Africa youth are expected to be illiterate, compared to 0 percent in the majority of other global regions.² The root cause of low-quality and inequitable public services is often weak accountability.³

The Proven Solution: One proven solution is to increase information about school performance, and to make this information accessible to the public. A citizen report card works by gathering data on the effectiveness of an educational system, and sharing the results with key stakeholders (e.g., parents, school management, public officials).

Report cards create change by publicly rewarding good performance, and shaming poor performance. Over a five year period, 30 percent of schools in Bangalore noted an increase in school infrastructure due to scorecards.⁴ Since then, report cards have been proven effective in India, Kenya, Mozambique, South Africa, Uganda, and the Philippines.⁵

Your Challenge: We will award up to \$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 new organization should have a vision to reach country-wide scale within two years. A three-month pilot should target at least 25 schools.

Additional Information:

- A winning idea will likely have two components: collecting data through testing, and making information available for public consumption. Testing should be based off of already-successful models, fit with any already-existing testing in the country, and be cost effective to administer.

¹ http://www.unesco.org/education/GMR2006/full/annex2_eng.pdf

² *ibid*

³ <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EDUCATION/Resources/278200-1298568319076/makingschoolswork.pdf>

⁴ "Citizen Report Cards" page 43, Box 2.3. <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EDUCATION/Resources/278200-1298568319076/makingschoolswork.pdf>

⁵ *ibid*

- 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). “Making Schools Work, a Human Development Perspective report by the World Bank offers several robust frameworks for data collection and public reporting.⁶
- Past winners of this challenge include [Arvind Nagarajan](#).

Ready To Apply?

Visit the Acara Challenge website to get started.

<http://acara.environment.umn.edu/acarachallenge/>

⁶ <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EDUCATION/Resources/278200-1298568319076/makingschoolswork.pdf>