

## Conversation with the Hewlett Foundation on November 19, 2012

Participants:

- Linda Frey, Program Officer, Hewlett Foundation
- Cari Tuna, President, Good Ventures,
- Holden Karnofsky, Co-Executive Director, GiveWell

**Note:** This set of notes was compiled by GiveWell and gives an overview of the major points made by Linda Frey.

**Summary:** Good Ventures spoke with the Hewlett Foundation in order to learn more about the possibility of co-funding the World Bank's Service Delivery Indicators project. This is a project designed to collect data from many different countries in Africa about the quality of health and educational services in those countries, and make this information public.

**Overview:** The Service Delivery Indicators project is an initiative that tracks service delivery quality in health and education in Africa across countries and over time. Some sample indicators are "Children per classroom," "Student-teacher ratio," "Teachers absent on a given day," "Clinics with electricity, water and sanitation," "Medical personnel absent on a given day," and "Cases diagnosed accurately by clinicians."

The project conducted pilot surveys in Tanzania and Senegal, and is currently conducting a survey in Kenya. It will subsequently be doing surveys in additional countries, most likely Nigeria, Mozambique, Togo, Côte d'Ivoire and Uganda, as well as a second survey in Tanzania. The health survey in Nigeria is being funded in part by the Gates Foundation. These surveys will begin over the next 6-12 months. The World Bank is carrying out the project and is working closely with individual countries on the project.

The Hewlett Foundation is providing \$4 million in funding for the project over the next 5 years.

**Co-funding:** Given the transaction costs to join a Multi-Donor Trust Fund, and given the desire to scale up this effort throughout Africa, it might not make sense to join at a level below \$500k. That said, the fact that the Trust Fund has already been established should reduce the transaction costs for new donors willing to provide general (non-earmarked) support.

**Funders:** The World Bank is seeking funding from the UK's Department for International Development (DFID) and the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) and is optimistic that at least one of NORAD or DFID will join. The World Bank has not put significant effort into soliciting funding from other organizations, but it is likely that the Gates Foundation will want to fund the health survey in additional countries.

## **The historical background**

The World Bank has been shifting toward doing more facility level surveys since the late 1990's. Examples are Public Expenditure Tracking Surveys and Quantitative Service Delivery Surveys. The Service Delivery Indicators project is a natural outgrowth of these. One reason for its initiation was that the African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) was trying to fund research on institutions and service delivery in African countries, but researchers weren't able to find suitable data sets because the relevant data had not been collected.

## **How this project differs from others**

In the past, the World Bank has collected some of these indicators for certain countries, but has done so via one-off surveys designed for particular sectors in particular countries. As such, it is not possible to compare the data from multiple countries, nor is it possible to look at trends over time. One purpose of the Service Delivery Indicators project is to provide comparable data on the quality of service delivery across countries and over time.

The Service Delivery Indicators project is designed to be transparent: all data and survey instruments will be made public. When individual countries collect data, they sometimes do not make the data public, so it can be hard for researchers to learn from it.

In general, the project's goal is to make survey data public and digestible.

The project is collecting relevant information that has not been collected at scale, such as data on absenteeism of teachers and of health workers.

Ms. Frey is fairly confident that there are no comparable efforts to collect these particular indicators in either the health or education sector. She recommends speaking with the Project Lead, Gayle Martin, at the World Bank to learn more about how the Service Delivery Indicators relate to and complement other data collection efforts in the health sector in particular (Gayle is a health economist).