



CapPlus 'Education Markets Impact Initiative' (EMII), Côte d'Ivoire

Request for Proposals: (i) Education Quality Approaches, (ii) Evaluation of Education Quality Approaches

14th March 2019

Background

Capital Plus Exchange (CapPlus) is a US-based not-for-profit organization that enables financial institutions in emerging markets to serve small businesses more effectively and profitably. Building on existing programs and existing relationships with African financial institutions, CapPlus is establishing the Education Markets Impact Initiative (EMII) to improve educational outcomes in African low-fee private schools¹. CapPlus is preparing to launch EMII in Côte d'Ivoire. Annex 1 shows the EMII Theory of Change, including four basic program components:

- **Equip financial institutions** with both digital and traditional capacity building methods to finance pre-primary, primary and secondary schools for infrastructure and quality improvements.
- **Spur higher-quality education** by testing a range of traditional and cutting-edge interventions and incentives to improve learning outcomes, accompanied by evaluation; these will also be embedded into the lending process where possible to increase sustainability.
- **Engage the government** in its regulatory capacity, as well as other stakeholders in the education ecosystem, to provide the regulatory and enabling environment for these markets to function efficiently and better serve the poor; including potentially the provision of subsidies through PPP mechanisms to schools or parents to widen access for the poorest.
- **Provide affordable, patient debt** (if needed and available) to financial institutions to catalyze lending to locally-owned schools, with embedded conditions and incentives for improving learning outcomes.

The CapPlus team conducted market research (available [here](#)) in Abidjan in early 2018 which confirmed market conditions conducive to the success of the program, e.g.:

- 82% of schools in the survey areas were private, serving low income communities;
- only 11% of schools surveyed had ever taken a bank loan, but 87% of schools wanted to; this represents a large market opportunity for banks.

¹ "Low-fee" private schools are located in or adjacent to low-income districts and serve primarily poor and lower-middle families. In Côte d' Ivoire, based on our market study in low-income districts in Abidjan, low-fee private schools typically charge less than \$208 per child for Primary 4 in total costs (regular fees + registration fees and extra fees + other fees)..

Following the completed market survey of schools and school proprietors, EMII is now moving to capacity-building of financial institutions in Côte d'Ivoire to support them to develop the products and systems to start lending to low-fee private schools. The capacity-building started in January 2019, with first loan client schools anticipated in early summer.

Programs such as the IDP Rising Schools Program² in Ghana and work done by Varthana and by the India School Finance Company in India have demonstrated that it is possible to create a viable loan market for low-fee private schools, and for lending and associated inputs to support the expansion of education infrastructure and *student enrolments*. What is less known is whether access to capital and associated inputs can improve *learning outcomes*; and do so in a way that is sustainable, ideally through market mechanisms. CapPlus wishes to explore this through the EMII program in Côte d'Ivoire.

Our research suggest three types of approaches that have had success in other countries:

- i. **Quality-oriented conditions attached to loans:** incorporating conditions into the loans terms that can positively influence schools management, such as requiring separate and secure toilets for girls, requiring schools to share data about students learning outcomes to parents, etc.
- ii. **Quality-oriented incentives attached to loans:** there is evidence from some contexts that different forms of financial incentive can raise learning outcomes. These can be built into the loan structure – for example through discounts on loan repayments for improved learning outcomes.
- iii. **Quality-oriented interventions:** there is evidence on a wide range of interventions delivered to schools that can improve learning outcomes, such as improving pedagogy, increasing instructional time, and, under some conditions, increasing the supply of teaching and learning materials.

Details on the EMII program pilot in Côte d'Ivoire

- **Timeline:** we plan on launching the EMII program in two steps. First, an iterative testing of education quality approaches to determine optimum designs for deployment at scale, which is the focus of this RFP. Second, a scale-up of selected approaches. This pilot phase will last over 2 or 3 years, starting in the fall of 2019. Schools will enter the EMII program on a rolling basis as they take up loans from banks. The quality approaches may start as the school obtains loans and/or following the school calendar, as appropriate. The evaluation will follow the quality approach timeline.
- **Geographic coverage:** it is anticipated that most schools will be located in or peripheral to Abidjan.
- **Size:** during this pilot period, we anticipate at least 100 schools financed by EMII. The quality approaches will be conducted in a sample of primary schools, on an experimental basis, i.e. not in all EMII schools participating in the loan program. Based on our market survey, overall average school enrollment is 336 students, although primary schools have lower enrollments.

To this end, CapPlus is seeking to contract with firms for two separate packages of work, described further below:

- i. **Education Quality Incentives and Interventions;**
- ii. **Evaluation of Education Quality Approaches.**

² 'Understanding Household and School Proprietor Needs in Low-Fee Private Schools in Ghana – a Needs and Impact Assessment of the IDP Rising Schools Program', Results for Development Institute, 2016, for IDP Foundation Inc.

Scope of Work: Education Quality Incentives and Interventions

EMII is seeking to partner with an expert provider or providers of education quality services to test up to three approaches to improving learning outcomes in low-fee private primary schools, using the financial services platform created by the lending program (i.e. loan clients of the banks).

The quality education service providers (QESP) should propose a program of incentives and/or interventions as described above. For the incentives, the provider would work with the financial institution. For instance, the QESP would be in charge of measuring students outcomes to inform the financial institution on schools' performance so that the incentive can be calculated. For the third approach, we expect the QESP to propose direct interventions such as: school owner and leadership training; teacher training; online learning platforms; improvement of pedagogy; supply of teaching and learning material; remedial sessions; parents information campaigns; bringing education quality service providers, like EdTech and/or other solutions, together with school proprietors in a marketplace; or other.

The evaluation of the proposed approach(es) will be conducted by CapPlus with the support of a firm to be selected under the second package, described below. It is proposed that incentives and interventions will be assessed against three criteria:

- i. **Outputs and potential for impact:** successful delivery of outputs and measurable increases in learning outcomes as validated by a pre- and post-test to be administered in a sample of schools (for further detail, see below).
- ii. **Costs:** reasonable costs of implementation and effective operations. Efficiency is important for the affordability and sustainability of any approach to be tested.
- iii. **Sustainability:** whether the approach has a plausible route to sustainability in financial terms (how will it be financed going forward, e.g. school purchasing services or an external revenue stream?), in terms of implementation (e.g. how and by whom will the intervention be administered going forward? capacity to scale-up operations?) and in terms of duration of benefits over time.

Proposals are sought for the design and administration of education quality approaches over a two-year period, up to a total value of \$77,000 (or CFA equivalent, currently at CFA 44million). Given that the number and location of the sampled schools still being unknown at this point, **financial proposals should include:**

- detailed budgets that include the unit cost (in USD) of implementing the approach per student and/or per school for one school year (about 9 months) in or proximal to Abidjan (include additional explanations if the approach doesn't necessarily follow the school calendar);
- the list of assumptions supporting this estimate;
- the portion to be covered by the grant if it is a fully or partially market-based solution;
- discussion around economies of scale (e.g. whether the unit cost decreases with the number of students/schools served and how).

Firm selection criteria will include the following:

- **Experience:** strong track record in implementing education quality education approaches in a similar context.
- **Relevancy:** the proposed approach should be relevant to the context of Côte d'Ivoire including feasibility, interest of donors and decision-makers, and meeting the specific needs of low-fee private schools, their students and the communities they serve.

- **M&E systems:** we expect the QESP to implement strong Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) systems to be able to track and report its progress on an ongoing basis.
- **Evidence:** preference will be given to approaches for which there is existing evidence of impact based on previous rigorous evaluation(s) in Côte d'Ivoire or similar context.
- **Costs and financial sustainability:** a grant is available for this pilot phase but CapPlus has a strong preference for approaches that are or will be sustainable on a market basis.

Next Steps for the Education Quality Approaches firms

Applicants may be for-profit or not-for profit organisations, and should be registered to work in Côte d'Ivoire with the appropriate authorities. We are expecting to contract two separate firms for the two packages of work. However, under exceptional circumstances, the firm conducting the Education Quality Approaches may be the same as the firm conducting the Evaluation (i.e. one firm could therefore bid for both packages together). This would probably only be the case if the firm was a specialist evaluation firm with no vested / continuing interest in the success of the approach(es) to be tested.

Interested parties should prepare a short proposal of no more than 10 pages (excluding attachments) in English, and submit **no later than Friday 29th^h of March** to CapPlus Vice-President Lynn Railsback at lrailsback@capplus.org with consultant Henriette Hanicotte in copy at hhanicotte@capplus.org. **Proposals should cover, at a minimum, the following components:**

- methodology of the approach
- discussion on existing evidence of impact of that approach
- qualifications and relevant experience of the firm
- financial proposal with a budget per unit cost, as described above
- CVs of key personnel and other relevant attachment(s)

Questions on this request for proposals can be sent to Henriette Hanicotte at hhanicotte@capplus.org.

The proposals will be reviewed by the CapPlus team and successful applicants invited to discuss further their proposed concept, after which a firm will be preliminarily selected and a final scope of work negotiated. Program activities are expected to commence in the fall of 2019.

Scope of Work: Evaluation of Education Quality Approaches

We are seeking to contract a specialist firm in Côte d'Ivoire to design and administer an evaluation of the education quality approaches in primary schools. This will be done in part by collaborating with the successful firm or firms conducting the education quality approach(es).

The purpose of the evaluation administered by the Evaluator is to test the learning outcomes of the students and track the activities and outputs achieved by the education quality provider. The key evaluation questions are:

- i. Are there signs of evidence that the education quality approach led to an **increase in learning outcomes** as validated by a pre- and post-test to be administered in a sample of schools receiving incentives or interventions. The results can be interpreted in light of similar data collected in a sample of financed schools that receive neither, but we do not expect an experimental design to demonstrate causality.
- ii. Were the expected **activities and outputs** achieved, and at what cost.
- iii. What was the **feedback from direct and indirect beneficiaries** (schools leadership, teachers, parents, students, etc.) and relevant stakeholders (education officers, local authorities, etc.); what lessons can be learned for future projects.

Consideration should be given to the following design features, which will partially be determined by the design of the education quality approaches, e.g. what type of approach, what level of education, what locations:

- **Learning test design:** consideration should be given as to whether we test learning outcomes at a single level (our preference) or at multiple levels within primary schools. Related to this is the choice / development of the testing instrument or instruments; we have a preference for instruments already in use in Côte d'Ivoire. We are envisioning a simple, low cost and easily administered test of literacy and numeracy, such as those developed by ASER / Uwezo or a reduced EGRA/ EGMA test. The test needs to be sensitive to small improvements. Preference will be given to the use of digital methods in testing and data collection for cost efficiencies.
- **Sampling:** a sampling framework will need to be developed that is proportionate and appropriate for providing indicative results, and includes schools receiving only financing as well as those participating in incentives or interventions.
- **Timing & frequency of measurement:** consideration should be given to timing and frequency of measurement in light of the education quality approaches that are implemented, when schools begin participating and the school calendar. It is envisaged that testing under this package of work would be over a two or three year period, with testing at inception for a baseline and endline (24-36 months).
- **Mixed methods:** the evaluation firm will be expected to use both quantitative and qualitative methods, conducting qualitative interviews and/or focus group discussions as well as quantitative tests.
- **Operational considerations:** the Evaluator should give careful consideration to operational realities in the design and implementation of the evaluation. CapPlus has a strong preference for pragmatic and simple delivery solutions.
- **Ethical considerations** such as relevant permissions and client data protection.

The measurement of learning outcomes for the evaluation of the pilot phase of the education quality approaches will feed into an overall measurement of learning outcomes for EMII.

Proposals are sought for the design and administration of the evaluation of education quality approaches, up to a total value of \$39,000 (currently CFA 20 million).

Firm selection criteria will include the following:

- **Relevant experience:** with large scale quantitative and qualitative data collection, including appropriate sampling strategy; testing numeracy and literacy of primary students; using digital methods for data collection; with data cleaning and data analysis; and writing analytic reports.
- **Contextual knowledge** of Côte d'Ivoire and experience conducting evaluations in Côte d'Ivoire; strong knowledge of the education sector in Côte d'Ivoire; team of enumerators speaking local languages.
- Working proficiency in **English and French**.
- **Affordability** of the financial proposition.

Next Steps for the evaluation firms

Applicants may be for-profit or not-for profit organisations, and should be registered to work in Côte d'Ivoire with the appropriate authorities. We are expecting to contract two separate firms for the two packages of work. However, under exceptional circumstances, the firm conducting the Education Quality Approaches may be the same as the firm conducting the Evaluation (i.e. one firm could therefore bid for both packages together).

Interested parties should prepare a proposal of no more than 10 pages (excluding attachments) in English, and submit **no later than Friday 29th of March** to CapPlus Vice-President Lynn Railsback at lrailsback@capplus.org with consultant Henriette Hanicotte in copy at hhanicotte@capplus.org. **Proposals should cover, at a minimum, the following components:**

- Proposed methodology, based on the budget and upon following assumptions:
 - 100 schools with an average enrolment of 200 primary school students will receive financing
 - Some schools will only receive financing, others will receive one of three education quality approaches;
- Number of schools and students whose learning outcomes would be tested at the beginning and end;
- Detailed budget for up to \$39,000;
- Qualifications and relevant experience of the firm;
- Attachments: CVs of key personnel and an example of an analytical report written by the firm for a former client.

Questions on this request for proposals can be sent to Henriette Hanicotte at hhanicotte@capplus.org.

Proposals will be reviewed by the CapPlus team and a firm preliminarily selected. Once the Education Quality Approach provider has been selected and more information is known about the approaches, the timeline, and the sample size, CapPlus and the firm will negotiate a final scope of work. Program activities are expected to commence in the fall of 2019.

Annex 1. EMII Theory of Change

