Scaling up education interventions in Kenya: the importance of institutions
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Key findings and conclusions
Overall, when comparing pupils’ performance between schools of the control group with both groups of treatment schools, the researchers find significant positive effect of the treatments, especially for math and English scores, but all of which was due to the increase of the performance in schools assigned to NGO implementation.

Disaggregated analysis of the samples show no further distinctions between schools of various types, characteristics or locations (e.g. class size, high or low-intensity areas, etc.)

Policy recommendations
The empirical evidence that results from this evaluation provides important guidance to policymakers, especially in regards to the political economy issues that arise when scaling up interventions, based on the success of small-scale NGO trials.

The results show indeed that, no matter how carefully and rigorously an intervention is designed, the end results and effectiveness in reaching targets may just as largely depend on the nature of the program implementer, and the institutional context or constraints:

- A “contract teacher program” implemented by a government agency – i.e. subject of the organization constraints of the public sector bureaucracy – or by an international NGO with foreign technical assistance and careful monitoring – will achieve completely different results.

- In small-scale trials, contract teachers were effective at raising pupil performance. When scaled-up nationally, contract teachers paid at half the rate of civil service teachers led to a backlash by the teacher unions, the salient features of teacher contracts were compromised, and the effectiveness of the program was undermined.

While the authors have managed to demonstrate that extrapolating results from an NGO program to national government policy is not a valid option, they recommend that, in all cases:

- Government implementers should be involved in such projects, right from the initial “pilot” stage
- Researchers involved in policy evaluation should work in close collaboration with the institution whose policies they wish to inform