

Educational performance of the poor: lessons from rural Northeast Brazil.

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Educational performance of the poor: lessons from rural northeast Brazil.

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Book : [Educational performance of the poor: lessons from rural northeast Brazil.](#) pp.362pp. ref.144

Abstract : Designing and implementing strategies to improve education in developing countries is not easy. Evidence on the efficiency of alternative development strategies, namely, on effectiveness of input mixes relative to their costs, is scarce and inconclusive. Thus the basic information on which to build educational policies is lacking. This report reports on one sizeable effort to develop the essential ingredients for informed

educational policy. It presents results from an eight year investigation into the relationship between inputs to primary schools and educational performance in one of the poorest regions, the rural areas of the northeastern states of Brazil. The study aims. The first was to determine whether the specific educational intervention, the northeast Rural Primary Project (EDURURAL) accomplished its goals. The second is a detailed effort to build on knowledge of what works in education and what educational policies flow from this. The objective here is to develop information about how educational programmes might be designed. Chapter two summarizes what is generally known about the determinants of educational achievement and about student flows. Chapter three describes the EDURURAL project, an effort of the Brazilian government that has received support from the World Bank. The research and programme evaluation findings on educational performance in the Brazilian north east, are explored. Topics discussed include how much schooling children receive, determinants of access to schooling, school promotion within them, the relationship between inputs to schooling and learning, educational achievement and student progress and cost in terms of the comparative efficiency of different inputs to schooling to their relative efficiency. Chapter seven assesses the impact of EDURURAL as an educational improvement programme had a discernible effect. The final chapter discusses the findings in terms of policy implications.

ISBN : [0195208781](#)

Record Number : 19921801990

Publisher : [Oxford University Press](#)

Location of publication : [Oxford](#)

Country of publication : [UK](#)

Language of text : [English](#)

Language of summary : [English](#)

Indexing terms for this abstract:

Descriptor(s) : educational policy, primary education, projects, rural development

Identifier(s) : Third World, Underdeveloped Countries

Geographical Location(s) : Brazil, Developing Countries

Broader term(s) : Community of Portuguese Language Countries, Developing Countries, Latin America, America, South America, Threshold Countries

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