

Understanding the “how” of Adaptive Learning

Three practical tools to inform and improve implementation

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**RESULTS FOR
DEVELOPMENT**

Session Presenters



Luke Heinkel
*Rigorous monitoring in
India*



Erin Fletcher
*Applied research in refugee
camps in Tanzania*



Cammie Lee
*Rapid experimentation in
East Africa*





Rigorous Monitoring

Rigorous Monitoring in Concept

Near-real time data that partners can use to make decisions

- When it is working well:
 - Implementers know how they are performing against expectations
 - Implementers know how to use the information to improve their work
- Tools include:
 - Data dashboards
 - Data visualizations
 - Dedicated M&E specialist(s)



Rigorous Monitoring in Practice

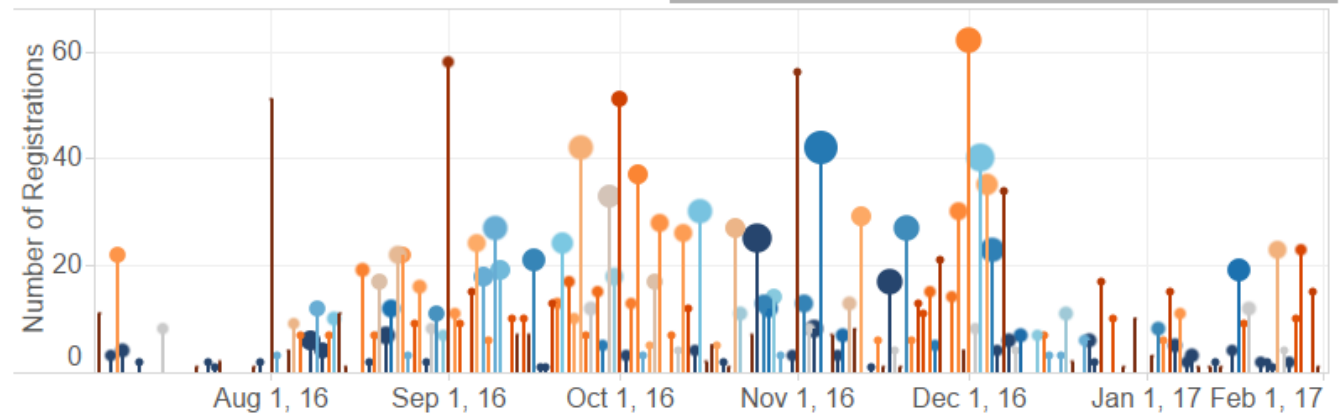
Read to Kids pilot in India

- **Goal:** Get parents to read to their children to build early literacy skills
- **Activities:** Group or 1-on-1, reading on mobile phones
- **Outcomes:** Continued usage of phones for reading
- **Learning:** Group activities were more effective than 1-on-1, in some contexts

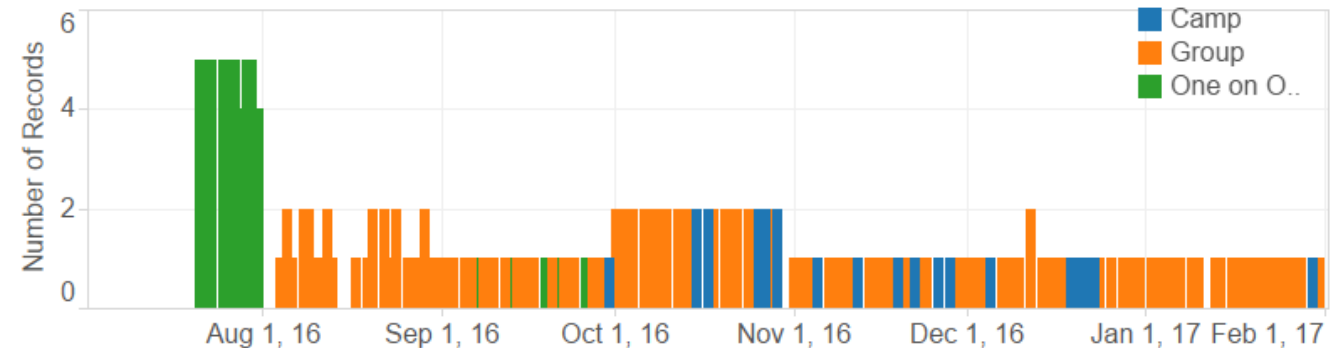
Activities Dashboard

Organi.. HLPPT

Activit.. Activity Category



Activities



Group activities were
more effective than
one-on-one...

...but it depended on the context

- Peer pressure was needed when working in new contexts
- Individual communication works well when your reputation is strong
- In all cases, follow-ups were key
 - 4 visits to 1 person > 1 visit to 4 people



Lessons Learned from Rigorous Monitoring

- Ground presence was key to data quality
- Data cleaning and visualization is resource intensive,
 - Good for a pilot, but difficult to sustain
- Implementers were thirsty for these data, even when the news was bad
- Prioritize time for data sharing and action planning



Applied Research



Applied Research in Concept

How can existing theory/research be put into practice?

- Implementers working in low-information environments
- Emerging research suggests avenues for behavioral change
- Applied research identifies
 - Descriptive statistics
 - Potential Interventions
 - Spaces amenable to Interventions



Applied Research in Practice

Social Norms of Violence in Nyarugusu Refugees Camp

- Implementers have a mandate to provide education in camps
- Tasked with student safety in/around schools
- Growing body of evidence that social norms may guide behavior
- But, little information on either behaviors or norms
- So, how to describe social norms?
- Use survey experiments and visual scales to measure social norms on descriptive level



Social Norms around
Violence have a strong
intergenerational
component



Parents' and Children's Perceptions of Reporting Norms are highly correlated

- Kids more likely to report violence when parents say the same
- Large portion of “unexplained” variation can be explained by family fixed effects
- Some differences: Kids do not distinguish levels of violence like parents do

Lessons Learned from Applied Research

Existing Theoretical Evidence Should be Contextualized

- Use Vignettes, List Experiments & Visual Scales to Measure Social Norms
- Mixed Methods: Qualitative Research informs Quantitative Research
- Work with Implementers and local populations to ensure research:
 - Answers relevant questions
 - Is context-sensitive
 - Identifies pathways for future work



Rapid Experimentation

An aerial photograph of a village nestled in a valley, surrounded by lush green hills and mountains under a cloudy sky. The foreground shows several buildings, including a prominent two-story structure with a flat roof. The image is partially obscured by a large teal graphic on the left side, which contains the text 'Rapid Experimentation'.

Rapid Experimentation in Concept

Implementing an unproven intervention at a **small scale**,
usually over a short amount of time

Goals that are in-scope

- Testing for the **acceptability and feasibility** of an intervention
- Trying out different approaches to the intervention to **answer questions about its design**

Goals that are *out-of-scope*

- Conducting a study that is rigorous
- Proving that something works



Rapid Experimentation in Practice: Tanzania pneumonia program

Objective: understand **feasibility** of different intervention designs and their **potential to improve pneumonia-related knowledge** amongst Tanzanian public healthcare providers

Activities: tested **three interventions** in 39 public health facilities **over one month**

- Held **focus groups** at the start
- Experimented with **different variants** of interventions – clinical mentoring, mobile messaging, and visual aids
- **Measured knowledge** in a **low-touch** manner with a short pre- and post-test
- Complemented knowledge tests with **surveys that included qualitative questions** on acceptability



Interventions are **feasible**,
healthcare providers'
learning is possible with
interventions, and we have
evidence to guide changes to
intervention designs

Providers knew more about pneumonia
at the end of the intervention

- Providers started with little knowledge
- Able to answer twice as many questions correctly on knowledge test
- There were similar gains in knowledge across interventions



Lessons Learned from Rapid Experimentation

- Learnings on intervention design – content and delivery:
 - *Mentoring*: Able to conduct sessions remotely; case scenarios added value
 - *Mobile messages*: Images preferred vs. text; consistent engagement in “2-way plus response” mode
 - *Visual aids*: More orientation is needed for visual aids and there are questions about usage
- Learnings for measurement at next level of rigor
 - **More robust assessment of provider knowledge** levels required – including knowledge decay point
 - Greater understanding of **impact on provider behavior** needed

The design of interventions can be improved through rapid experimentation before testing them at a larger, more resource-intensive, scale with greater rigor



Iteration based on formative research

Intervention design (content and delivery)

- *Mentoring*: Able to conduct sessions remotely; case scenarios added value
- *Mobile messages*: Images preferred vs. text; consistent engagement in “2-way plus response” mode
- *Visual aids*: More orientation is needed for visual aids and there are questions about usage

Measurement

- More robust assessment of provider knowledge levels required – including knowledge decay point
- Greater understanding of impact on provider behavior needed

The design of interventions can be improved through rapid experimentation before testing them at a larger, more resource-intensive, scale with greater rigor



Discussion

We welcome your questions!



THANKS FOR LISTENING

CONTACT US

EMAIL

clee@r4d.org

efletcher@r4d.org

lheinkel@r4d.org



Discussion Questions

- How do you decide when to use each of these tools? Can you use them in combination?
- This sounds a lot like consulting, but it also sounds like evaluation. Which is it?
- It is difficult to see how adaptive learning ‘fits’ within the framework of funding implementers and then funding impact evaluations to understand results. Does adaptive learning require a whole new approach for donors?
- What types of partners make a good or bad match for adaptive learning?
- For an organization like yours, with limited field presence, what do you do to ‘shorten the distance?’
- [Take audience questions]

