



Press Release
7th September 2017

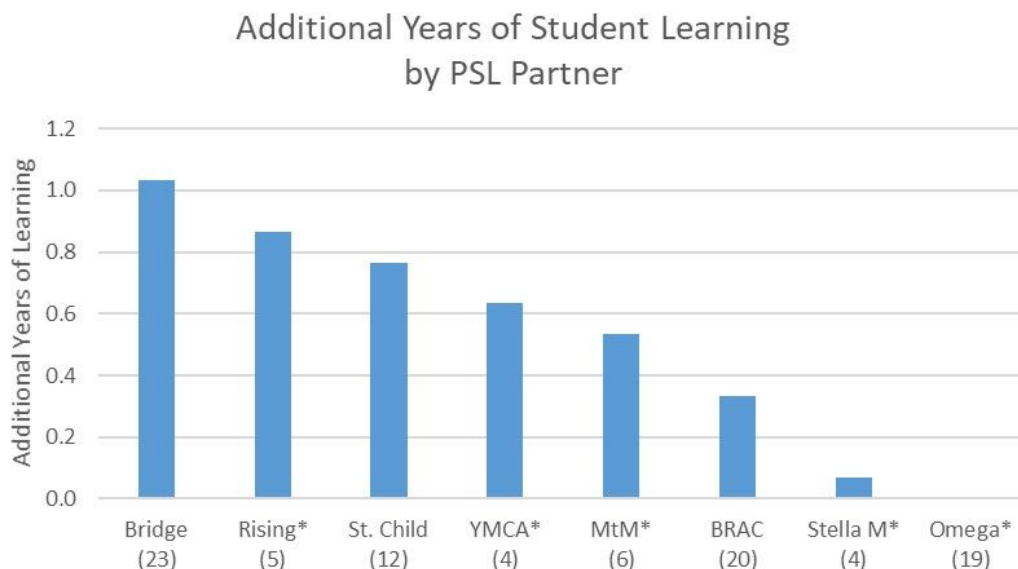
Independent report proves Liberia's bold education innovation is working

- Bridge PSL public school students learn twice as fast as their peers
- Teachers inside the scheme are 50% more likely to be in class

A new study released today shows that students in Bridge run Partnership Schools for Liberia (PSL) public schools learn twice as fast as their peers in traditional public schools, receiving the equivalent of a full year of additional schooling.

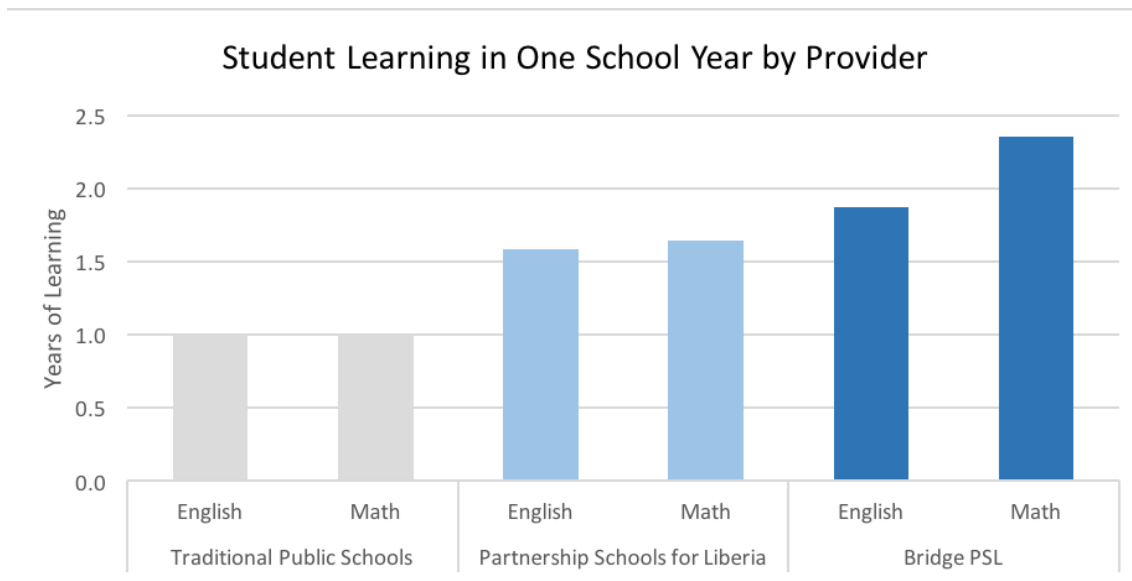
The year long study was designed to measure whether a radical new approach to delivering Liberian primary education could improve learning for students in a country decimated by Ebola and civil war. The answer has been a conclusive yes.

The report ranked Bridge student performance best among all eight PSL partners. It also found that students were learning more, teachers were less likely to be absent and families were happier.



**The effect sizes for these operators are not statistically different from zero. This can result from a small effect size and/or the small sample size. The number of schools assigned for operation by each provider is shown in parentheses.*

In Liberia, only 38% of children attend elementary education and 46% of young people are illiterate. After one school year, the 93 public schools in the PSL program had increased student learning by 60%. Bridge run PSL public schools had doubled the learning.



Key findings from the report reveal:

- Students at Bridge run PSL public schools learned significantly more than students at traditional public schools, nearly twice as much in reading and more than twice as much in maths. This is the equivalent of an additional year of schooling.
- Across all PSL schools, teachers were 50% more likely to be in school (60% attendance at PSL schools versus 40% attendance at traditional schools).
- When compared to traditional schools, parents of students in Bridge run PSL schools public schools are more satisfied with school and students are happier.

These results are even more impressive given operators had less than 2 months to visit their schools, engage the community and teachers, conduct teacher training, and set up their management systems. Furthermore, according to the World Bank, there are only 16 countries in the world where it is harder to set up an organisation than Liberia.

Commenting on the report, **Marcus Wleh, Head of Bridge PSL in Monrovia**, said, “These learning gains are outstanding and offer real hope and opportunity for the thousands of Liberian children who will be joining PSL this year. We are proud that our students have significantly outperformed their peers in ‘traditional’ public schools. We want to congratulate every single teacher and pupil in all 25 Bridge run PSL public schools for their hard work. These extraordinary results are due to the bold vision of the Liberian Ministry of Education, the hard work of pupils and teachers, and Bridge’s innovative model.”

The report authors at Center for Global Development, said, “There is solid evidence of positive effects for Liberian children during the first year of PSL. Students at PSL schools

learned more, received more instruction, and were happier at school than students at traditional public schools. Teachers in PSL schools were more likely to be at school, on-task, and engaged in instruction.”

Dr Shannon May, co-founder of Bridge, said, “The world was watching to see whether Liberia’s education system could be transformed, and the answer is yes. Liberia’s innovative PSL public school program has been validated. I’m delighted that the Government has decided to expand the programme to the southeast and build on this success. The report proves that teacher accountability, improved operating capacity, a full day of learning for pupils, and class sizes conducive to learning, produce great results. The success of this program gives a generation of children hope and Liberia itself a brighter future.”

Further findings from the report about PSL as a whole, which includes 8 government partners:

- **More Learning:** Over one school year, learning gains for students in PSL public schools were equivalent to 0.56 extra years of schooling for English and 0.66 extra years for maths.
- **More Teaching:** Teachers in PSL public schools were 20 percentage points more likely to be in school and 16 percentage points more likely to be engaged in actual teaching. This is a radical improvement in areas where teacher absenteeism is at 60%.
- **Better Managed Schools:** PSL public schools are better managed - inclusion in the PSL program moves the average public school from the 50th to the 66th percentile in management practices -- in just one school year.
- **Happier Parents and Teachers:** Over 80% of parents and teachers at traditional public schools wish Bridge and other PSL partners would open more PSL public schools.
- **Happier, More Educated, More Civic Minded Students:** Students are happier in PSL public schools than in traditional public schools, and less likely to be absent. They are also more likely to think school is useful, more likely to think elections are the best way to choose a president, and less likely to think some tribes in Liberia are bad.

The second year of the three year Partnership Schools for Liberia pilot will start in September 2017. The Ministry of Education has extended the PSL program to include an additional 107 schools, bringing the total schools in PSL to 200. Bridge PSL has been asked by the government to support an additional 43 public schools, taking the total to 68 public schools. All the pupils in these schools will attend Bridge PSL public schools for free.

END

For more information please contact:

Ben Rudd

ben.rudd@bridgeinternationalacademies.com

+44 2038 138 236

Notes to Editors

Interviews are available with:

- Dr Steven Cantrell, Vice President of Bridge Measurement and Evaluation
- Marcus Wleh, Head of Bridge PSL Liberia

Bridge is one of eight partners who are helping the Liberian government to explore how independent organisations can help the government to reform the Liberian education system and meet the urgent need for quality schools and nurseries. The policies governing the PSL programme are designed by the Liberian Ministry of Education, and the eight independent operators are implementing a government curriculum in all the schools.

The Center for Global Development (CGD) the [Center for Global Development](#) and research NGO [Innovations for Poverty Action](#) were commissioned to conduct a randomised control trial (RCT) to examine whether the Partnership Schools for Liberia (PSL) program was effective at delivering learning gains at the end of the first year of the pilot. Find the Center for Global Development study [here](#).

27,000 children have benefited from year one of PSL as a whole, of this 8,999 are students at Bridge run PSL public schools. In 2017/18 approximately 70,000 children are forecast to benefit from the PSL program in total.

Liberia education and literacy statistics from [UNICEF data](#) 2017.

More information about PSL is available on the [Liberia Ministry of Education website](#).

About Bridge

Bridge believes every child has the right to high quality education and works in partnership with governments, communities, parents and teachers to ensure access to quality education. Bridge has served over 250,000 children to date.

Bridge leverages in-depth teacher training and support, advanced lesson plans and wireless technology to provide pupils with a meaningful and life-changing education.

Globally, there is an education crisis. 600 million children are either not in school at all, or in school and not learning. Bridge is committed to helping tackle this through a data driven, evidence based approach that delivers strong schools and a great education for all.

www.bridgeinternationalacademies.com