

To cite this output:

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 ESRC Impact Report, RES-167-25-0217. Swindon: ESRC

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RESEARCH COUNCIL IMPACT REPORT



For awards ending on or after 1 November 2009

This Impact Report should be completed and submitted using the **grant reference** as the email subject to **reportsofficer@esrc.ac.uk** on or before the due date.

Completion of this Impact Report is mandatory. It will not be possible to edit this Impact Report at a later date, as it is designed to provide a statement of the impacts of your project to date 12 months after your grant ends.

Please note that the Impact Report will only be accepted if all sections have been completed in full. If a section does not apply to you, please enter 'n/a'. Grant holders will not be eligible for further ESRC funding until the Report is accepted. (Please see Section 5 of the ESRC Research Funding Guide for details.)

Please refer to the Guidance notes when completing this Impact Report. In particular, the notes explain what the ESRC means by 'impact'.

Grant Reference	RES-167-25-0217		
Grant Title	Strengthening Open distance Flexible Learning (ODFL) systems to increase education access and attainment for young people in high HIV prevalence SADC countries		
Grant Start Date	April 1 st 2007	Total Amount Expended:	£ 245,495
Grant End Date	July 31 st 2010		
Grant holding Institution	Institute of Education, University of London		
Grant Holder	Dr. Pat Pridmore		
Grant Holder's Contact Details	Address	Email	
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Co-Investigators (as per project application):		Institution	
Mr. Christopher Yates		Institute of Education	
Dr. Matthew Jukes (co-researcher)		Graduate School of Education, Harvard University	
Dr. Thabiso Nyabanyaba (co-researcher)		Institute of Education, National University of Lesotho	
Ms Catherine Jere (co-researcher)		Centre for Educational Research and Training, University of Malawi	
Dr. Ephraim Mhlanga (co-researcher)		South African Institute for Distance Education (SAIDE)	

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1. SCIENTIFIC IMPACT

A Please **summarise** below the scientific impact(s) your project has had. [*Max 250 words*]

- i. A synthesis of existing knowledge on
 - factors that disrupt schooling for vulnerable children living in high HIV prevalence areas of Malawi and Lesotho;
 - successful ODFL initiatives and structures that can increase access to education for school-aged students;
 - the policy context for ODFL in the Southern African Region.
- ii. The generation of new knowledge from case-studies to describe factors that disrupt conventional schooling and learning in the study-sites and demonstrate that the challenges are social as well as economic and are also linked to discriminatory school policies and practices.
- iii. The development and implementation of innovative school-based interventions (in collaboration with school teachers, school management committee (SMC) members and local youth workers), which complement conventional schooling with more open and flexible delivery of the curriculum and increased school and community support.
- iv. Evidence from a randomised controlled trial that this intervention can significantly reduce school drop-out and improve student attendance, grade-repetition and achievement.
- v. Creation of new research capacity and networks.
- vi. A higher profile for ODFL within education policy.
- vii. Commitment from teacher education institutions to expand curricula to develop the knowledge and skills needed to provide additional education and welfare support.
- viii. Creation of new capacity in head-teachers and class-teachers, SMC members, district-level Primary Education Advisers (PEAs) and youth club leaders
 - to collaborate;
 - to track student attendance/progress;
 - to deliver the curriculum through both face-to-face and distance learning;
 - to provide adequate psychosocial and welfare support.

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B Please outline the **findings and outputs** from your project which have had the scientific impact(s) outlined in 1A. [*Max 250 words*]

Main findings from literature reviews and case study research:

- (i) Schooling for vulnerable children in high HIV prevalence areas of Malawi and Lesotho was not only disrupted by poverty but also by other factors operating at household and school levels.
- (ii) Interventions in the Region provided either ODFL, or psychosocial support or welfare support but no school-based interventions provided all of these.
- (iii) Policy to support multi-mode (face-to-face and distance learning) delivery of the national curriculum was lacking in most countries in the Region.

Main findings from intervention research:

- (i) A relatively low-cost, school-based intervention could be designed and implemented (in collaboration with stakeholders at all levels) to tackle the factors that disrupt schooling.
- (ii) In a randomised controlled trial this intervention could significantly reduce student drop-out, improve grade progression and positively impact student achievement.

Project outputs:

- (i) Published articles in international academic journals: x 1 (+ 1 submitted and at least 2 forthcoming).
- (ii) Published reviews and reports (on project and ESRC websites): literature reviews x 5; country case studies x 2; intervention study reports x 2.
- (iii) International conference papers: published x 2, unpublished x 2.
- (iv) National/regional conference papers: unpublished x 9.
- (v) Doctoral thesis x 1 (forthcoming in 2011).
- (vi) Policy briefs x 2
- (vii) National policy seminars x 3 (Malawi, Lesotho, South Africa).
- (viii) Local seminars to academic audiences (numerous) in London, Malawi, Lesotho, South Africa and America.
- (ix) Other materials (e.g. self-study learner guides for Maths and English, training materials, newsletters).

C Please outline **how** these impacts were achieved. [*Max 250 words*]

- (i) Collaborative teamwork - each researcher contributed specialist knowledge/skills and networks to ensure good engagement with home institutions, the MOE and civil society in each project country.
- (ii) Wide dissemination of research findings to different audiences at all stages through publications, conference presentations, policy seminars networking and newsletter.
- (iii) Ongoing support from advisory group members, e.g. the Chief Education officer for Curriculum and Assessment from the MOE in Lesotho used the research findings to raise the profile of ODFL and made provision for its wider application within the current MOE education policy document.

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- (iv) University of Lesotho used the training materials and project experience to develop a formal qualification for teachers on guidance and counselling.
- (v) Hits on the project website to access newsletters, review papers, country case-studies, intervention reports, training materials and links to conference papers and other websites.
- (vi) Buy-in from other stakeholders. In Malawi, textbooks were provided free by MOE and supplementary readers by a local NGO. Test items were provided by MOE and adapted by the Malawi Examination Board and PEAs helped administer research instruments. In Lesotho, teachers helped administer research instruments and, together with civil society members, supported youth-club member. Self-study learner-guides were written by IOE staff and students and translated at the University of Malawi. UK charities gave wind-up radios and bicycles.

D Please outline **who** the findings and outputs outlined above had an impact upon. This can include specific academics/researchers through to broader academic groups. *[Max 250 words]*

- (i) The academic and policy community working in the fields of education, health or social development who are interested in findings new ways to:
 - increase access to education for children who cannot attend school regularly because they have to help their families;
 - make schools more inclusive of vulnerable children;
 - use open, distance and flexible learning to complement traditional schooling.
- (ii) Individual academics in the five home institutions of the research team members in the UK, Malawi, Lesotho, South Africa and USA.
- (iii) Academics in the research centres and training colleges to which these home institutions are linked where dissemination activities have taken place e.g. the London International Development Centre (LIDC), Chancellor College's Faculty of Education in Malawi and the Malawi Institute of Education (MIE).
- (iv) Policy makers in the MOE in Malawi and Lesotho and education advisers in DFID who were in the project advisory group.
- (v) Academics and others attending the conferences, seminars and meetings at which presentations and panel discussions were held - including the
 - Annual Conference of the Comparative and International Education Society (CIES), 2011;
 - 2nd Paris International Conference on Education, Economy and Society, 2010;
 - British Association of International and Comparative Education (BAICE), 2010 and 2007;
 - 13th International BOLESWANA Biennial Symposium, 2009;
 - Distance Education Association of Southern Africa (DEASA), 2009;
 - 5th Pan Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning, 2007;
 - UK Forum for International Education and Training (UKFIET), 2007.

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2. ECONOMIC AND SOCIETAL IMPACT

A Please **summarise** below the economic and societal impact(s) your project has had. [*Max 250 words*]

- (i) Increased effectiveness and efficiency of the educational provision in the project intervention schools – achieved through
 - increasing the level of engagement and motivation of teachers;
 - strengthening links between the school (head-teachers, class-teachers) the SMC members, local community-based organisations (CBOs) and the students and their families;
 - strengthening links between the schools and the PEAs.
 - encouraging schools to become more inclusive of all learners.
- (ii) Enhanced quality of life for children in the intervention classes resulting from improved psychosocial health and wellbeing and increased collaboration and co-operation between pupils to support learning.
- (iii) Wider uptake of the findings beyond the two project countries.

B Please outline the **findings and outputs** from your project which have had the economic and societal impact(s) outlined in 2A. [*Max 250 words*]

- (i) In Malawi, findings from the analysis of the qualitative evaluation data suggested that students in the intervention classes had improved motivation and capacity for independent learning and higher self-esteem resulting from an improved reading culture and stronger social networks. The school 'buddy' system appeared to have increased co-operative learning and support between students.
- (ii) In Malawi, teachers in the intervention classes showed increased motivation and engagement and after the intervention finished all the intervention schools decided to sustain implementation using the project materials and the capacity that had been built.
- (iv) In Lesotho, mathematics teachers in the intervention classes showed increased motivation and engagement due to provision of the self-study learner guides which they also found useful for planning their face-to-face lessons.
- (v) In Malawi, the post intervention follow-up has shown that eight of the schools in the intervention group have now changed their exclusionary policies and discipline practices. For example, children who came to school late or without school uniform were no longer being excluded from class, school rules to reduce bullying were being more strictly enforced and discrimination against vulnerable learners had been reduced through regular sensitisation.
- (vi) In South Africa, SAIDE has used the research findings to develop a school management strategy and tool-kit to implement the South African inclusive education policy.

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C Please outline **how** these impacts were achieved. [*Max 250 words*]

These impacts were achieved through:

- (i) Participation of the schools in the design and delivery of the intervention, which involved training of head-teachers and class-teachers, SMC members, PEAs and youth club leaders and monitoring and support during implementation.
- (ii) Post-intervention workshops in each study site for stakeholders at community, school, district and provincial levels to carry out a participatory evaluation of the intervention and decide on their next steps.
- (iii) The research team member from SAIDE disseminating the SOFIE findings and building support for their uptake.

Outputs

The outputs listed in section 1B also refer here.

D Please outline **who** the findings and outputs outlined above had an impact upon. This can be at a broad societal level through to specific individuals or groups. [*Max 250 words*]

These findings and outputs have had an impact upon the whole school community including:

- (i) The students and their families/households who are in the intervention classes.
- (ii) The head teachers, class-teachers and CBO youth club leaders who have worked with these students, their class-buddies, the class-teachers and the SMC members.
- (iii) The PEAs
- (iv) Policy-makers and planners in the MOE and others working in education and education related agencies who have responsibility for devising, testing and implementing policy and practice to increase educational access and attainment.

3. UNEXPECTED AND POTENTIAL FUTURE IMPACTS

A Unexpected Impacts

Please note which, if any, of the impacts that your research has had were *unexpected* at the outset of the research, explaining where possible why you think this was the case. [*Max 250 words*]

None to date.

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B Potential Future Impacts

If you have a clear idea of the impact your research is likely to have in the future please detail these below.
[Max 250 words]

The new knowledge generated has the potential to make a significant impact on the scientific community and on the policy community which focuses increasingly on evidence from RCTs to inform policy.

Potential impacts within project countries could therefore include :

- (i) Further development of an enabling education policy framework to support multi-mode delivery of the national curriculum through schools.
- (ii) Further development of the curriculum for teacher education to strengthen the capacity of teacher educators and their trainees to write and use high quality self-study learner-guides and provide more effective support for learning.
- (iii) Establishment of a core team of trained ODFL practitioners within teacher training colleges and supporting institutions.

Impacts from uptake of the research findings beyond the project countries could include:

- (i) Capacity building of teachers to strengthen multi-mode delivery of the national curriculum and strengthen support for learning through the SADC-wide capacity building initiative and NEPAD's e-schools and Open Education Resources (OER) projects.
- (ii) Further development by of the Child Friendly Schools approach to strengthening multi-mode curriculum delivery in line with interest expressed by UNICEF.

4. IMPACT LIMITATIONS

A Limited scientific impact

Please state below any major scientific difficulties that have limited the scientific impact of your research. The statement should refer to an effect on *impact* rather than simply detail research difficulties. [Max 250 words]

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B Limited economic and societal impact

ESRC recognises that some of the research it funds will not have an economic or societal impact in the short term. Please explain briefly below if this is the case for your project, and refer to your grant application where relevant. *[Max 250 words]*

Difficulty of institutionalising research findings and of extending policy changes when senior Ministry staff retire or move on and the mechanisms which retain and transmit the institutional memory are in their infancy and/or remain only weakly developed and utilised.

C No impact to date

This project has had no impact to date

Please note that ESRC projects are evaluated on the basis of their scientific and/or economic and societal impact. Grant holders are expected to report any future impacts as they occur using the Impact Record, downloadable from the ESRC website.

If you have no impacts at this stage, please give reasons below. *[Max 250 words]*

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5. DECLARATIONS

Please read the statements below. Submitting this Impact Report to **reportsofficer@esrc.ac.uk** confirms your agreement.

- i) This Impact Report is an accurate statement of the impacts of the research project to date. All co-investigators named in the proposal to ESRC or appointed subsequently have seen and approved the Report.
- ii) Details of any subsequent impacts will be submitted via an Impact Record as they occur.

Thank you for completing this Impact Report. Your Impact Report will be considered along with your End of Award Report in the evaluation of your research.

You are now invited to complete the confidential Nominations form, which will assist with the evaluation of your project.

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NOMINATED OUTPUTS

Please nominate a maximum of two outputs from your research which you would like to be considered as part of the evaluation.

Output type (eg journal article, book, newspaper article, conference proceedings)	Publication details (eg author name, date,, title, publisher details)	Uploaded toESRC website? (Yes/No)
Academic journal article	Pridmore P., and Jere, C. (2011) Disrupting patterns of educational inequality, and disadvantage in Malawi. <i>COMPARE</i> , 41(4) 513-531.	No - due to copyright – but final proof uploaded
Academic journal article	Jukes, M., Jere, K. and Pridmore, P. Evaluating the provision of flexible learning for children at risk of primary school drop-out in areas of high HIV prevalence.	Submitted to Comparative Education Review but not yet accepted

Please email your completed Impact Report with electronic copies of your nominated outputs to reportsofficer@esrc.ac.uk, using your **grant reference number** as the email subject.