

## 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'.

<b>Grant Reference</b>	RES-167-25-0076		
<b>Grant Title</b>	Demographic and poverty dynamics in an African population with high AIDS mortality and implications for social policy		
<b>Grant Start Date</b>	9 <sup>th</sup> October, 2006	<b>Total Amount Expended:</b>	£519,680.35
<b>Grant End Date</b>	8 <sup>th</sup> March, 2010		
<b>Grant holding Institution</b>	London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine		
<b>Grant Holder</b>	Professor Ian Timæus		
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<b>Co-Investigators (as per project application):</b>		<b>Institution</b>	
Professor Jane Falkingham		University of Southampton	
Professor Julian May		University of KwaZulu-Natal	

## 1. SCIENTIFIC IMPACT

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

The project has advanced study of three topics. It forms part of a revisionist body of work (including that of Gillespie, Seeley et al., Grimm, and others) finding that the medium-term impact of AIDS and other adult deaths on households is less severe than was feared. Second, it contributes to research revealing that, although being orphaned has severe consequences for children, the primary mechanism involved is not heightened poverty. Third, our research on welfare policy and AIDS in South Africa adds to growing evidence that the government's major fiscal commitment to social grants has been of substantial benefit to poor households.

The research has improved methods for assessing the impact on households of adult deaths by taking advantage of two longitudinal datasets that have collected three waves of data, to pioneer the use of dynamic panel models in this field of study.

The holder of the linked ESRC studentship has had her PhD thesis examined and is completing the minor revisions required for her to be awarded the degree. She has obtained a research post with the Human Sciences Research Council in Durban. As only a handful of South Africans hold a PhD in demography or a related field, her training represents a significant contribution to the country's research capacity.

The full-time researcher has completed a final draft of a PhD thesis based around her work for this project and will submit it for examination within weeks. On this basis, she has obtained a post-doctoral research post at the International Institute for Systems Analysis, Laxenberg, Austria.

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

Our findings emphasize the complexity of the interactions between the demographic and economic dynamics of households and that the consequences of adult deaths vary with the characteristics of dead person, their household, and their cause of death. The South African context is distinguished by the unimportance of own-account farming in rural livelihoods, high unemployment, and the lack of benefits for unemployed adults. Thus, those poor households whose income derives largely from pensions and welfare grants to children can benefit from the death of working-age adults. By contrast, adult deaths reduce consumption in better-off households, especially when a young adult dies or the death is from AIDS. But even better-off households hit by deaths regain their earlier standard of living within a few years.

The qualitative research also shows that, while poor households can suffer extreme hardship when caring for one or more sick adults, either the recovery of the sick person following their enrolment in the anti-retroviral therapy programme or, more sadly, their death markedly reduces households' difficulties.

This project revealed the inadequacy of both cross-sectional data and longitudinal studies in which one cannot control for unmeasured attributes of households for the

measurement of the economic impact of AIDS deaths. Although fitting household fixed effects models removes one source of bias, it is also important to control for initial household expenditure to reduce simultaneity bias. This involves fitting a dynamic panel model and risks introducing further bias due to temporal autocorrelation in the residuals. Our research pioneers the application of models that address all these biases to the study of the impact of adult deaths.

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

Findings from the literature reviews conducted in initial stages of the project and of the initial research addressing the objectives of the project that the named investigators initiated between their submission of the proposal and the formal start of the project have all been published in refereed journals (Carter et al., 2007; Timæus and Boler, 2007; Hosegood, 2009).

The findings of the research initiated from 2007 onward have been disseminated widely within the academic community by being presented at conferences and seminars in the UK, South Africa and the USA and at the four-yearly International Population Conference in Morocco. In these presentations we strove to disseminate our research to both South African and international audiences and to diverse academic communities, including both demographers and economists and both AIDS researchers and those working in development studies. For example, we delivered seminar presentations to the Department of Economics at the University of Cape Town, but also the Brooks World Poverty Institute at the University of Manchester; and conference papers to the Population Association of America Annual Meeting, but also the biennial South African AIDS Conference.

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]*

Impact on academic audiences for the research has spread across multiple disciplines and fields of study, including both South African and international researchers, both demographers and economists, and both AIDS researchers and those working in development studies.

The most immediate increase in research capacity that has resulted from the project has been its contribution to developing the research skills and experience of the linked research student and full-time project researcher, who are both obtaining PhDs as a result of the project.

More generally, the multi-disciplinary nature of the research has benefited the capacity of the entire research team, with the demographers acquiring knowledge and skills relating to the conceptualisation and measurement of poverty dynamics and econometric modelling from the economists and the economists acquiring knowledge and skills relating to the conceptualisation and measurement of household composition and dynamics over the life course and of their inter-linkages with poverty dynamics from the demographers. In particular, the modelling of the fiscal implications of different grant regimes in the context of the changing demography of South Africa as a result of the AIDS epidemic could not have been completed except in the context of a collaboration between the two disciplines.

## 2. ECONOMIC AND SOCIETAL IMPACT

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

Our research has influenced policy debates within South Africa, both inside and government. Viewed as part of a bigger picture, our findings have contributed to the mainstreaming of HIV and AIDS issues across government, and particularly in the Social Protection and Community Development Cluster of Ministries, after the lack of attention that they received from President Mbeki's administration.

Despite positive verbal feedback from various senior individuals on the value of our presentations, it is difficult to gauge the scale of our impact given that the policy implications of some of our findings are quite diffuse, rather than targeted at a single measurable policy change, and given that, although governments consult on policy issues, they make their decisions in private.

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]

Orphans in South Africa do less well at school and in other ways than other children, but this results not from poverty alone but from bereavement itself and the accompanying disruption in children's living and schooling arrangements. Thus, our research indicates that orphans' problems can only be addressed by targeted support services. This finding fits with other research and the existing view within the Department of Social Development that financial support should be directed toward poor children and not orphans *per se*.

On the other hand, our modelling indicates that the State could afford to extend eligibility for the Foster Care Grant to all orphans whose parents have both died even though their number is rising.

The findings of this project are consistent with the campaign within South Africa in favour of providing support to the chronically ill by means of a grant designed for them, rather than through the Disability Grant. In economic terms, poor households find it harder to cope with illness than death and our modelling suggest that a Chronic Illness Grant would not represent a fiscally unsustainable burden on the State. Moreover, even today, receipt of the Disability Grant synergistically benefits individuals enrolling in the antiretroviral therapy programme, improving adherence and treatment outcomes. Given the similarity of the eligibility criteria for the social grant and for therapy, and that both require a medical assessment, an integrated applications process could both reduce transaction costs and further increase the benefit gained from the expenditure on pharmaceuticals.

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

Throughout the project we have sought to disseminate our research findings at meetings attended by policymakers and professional audiences as well as at academic conferences and seminars. Often the same results have been presented in different formats to both

audiences. Where possible we have leveraged our access and impact by working through existing initiatives to encourage better communication of research to audiences outside the higher education sector. These fora include both those operating in a South African context (e.g. the Programme to Support Pro-Poor Policy Development, Strengthening Analytical Capacity and Evidence Based Decision Making (SACED), and Economic Research South Africa) and those operating internationally (e.g. the Annual Bank Conference on Development Economics and the India-Brazil-South Africa Academic Forum).

With partial financial support from SACED, the main results emerging from the project were presented at a day meeting on 18 May 2010 in Pretoria to an audience of about 85, comprised mainly of civil servants from the Department of Social Development and other government departments and agencies, but also including representatives of the aid agencies and researchers.

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]*

Policymakers, senior managers and applied researchers within the South African civil service and associated agencies; staff of national and bilateral aid agencies; various civil society organisations in South Africa and internationally (lobby groups, think tanks, and development charities). The focus of our research on inter-relationships between demographic shocks, household expenditure and social welfare interventions means that our results are of particular interest to the Department of Social Development and the South African Social Security Agency.

### 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 of the team would claim to be expert econometricians – though we all know far more econometrics than we did when we wrote the proposal - and we did not understand at the outset of the research just how inappropriate and vulnerable to bias were the econometric models that previous researchers had used to estimate the impact on households of adult deaths. We had expected to be applying well-established econometric methods to new datasets, not making an original contribution by pioneering the use of dynamic panel models fitted by GMM to this field of study.

#### 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]*

We have no clear idea what the future will bring.

#### 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]

While the key findings of the research have been disseminated quite widely at conferences and academic and professional meetings in the UK, South Africa and the USA, the most important of these findings have only been published as working papers and/or have yet to be accepted for publication, rather than having appeared in refereed journals. These delays in publishing our findings built up because writing up the research became bound up with the production of the PhD theses of the linked research student and full-time research officer respectively. This has undoubtedly limited the impact to date of both the substantive findings of the research and our methodological work. The two individuals are now on the point of completing their PhDs and have remained committed to pursuing careers in research. Thus, they are highly motivated to publish their work in academic journals and this log jam should be resolved over the next year.

##### 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]

One year is a very short time in which to see evidence of impact.

##### 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]

N/A

## 5. DECLARATIONS

Please read the statements below. Submitting this Impact Report to [reportsofficer@esrc.ac.uk](mailto: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.

proceedings)		
Conference proceedings	Timæus, I.M. and May, J.D. (2009) Death and the African family : the economic impact of adult mortality in South Africa <a href="http://paa2009.princeton.edu/download.aspx?submissionId=90414">http://paa2009.princeton.edu/download.aspx?submissionId=90414</a>	No
Seminar proceedings	ADaPT/SACED workshop <a href="http://www.lshtm.ac.uk/psd/adapt/Adapt_presentations.pdf">http://www.lshtm.ac.uk/psd/adapt/Adapt_presentations.pdf</a>	No

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.