

**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RESEARCH COUNCIL
IMPACT RECORD**



Thank you for updating your Impact Record. This Record should be completed and uploaded to your ESRC grant page (on the website).

An Impact Record can be submitted and edited at any time, during or after your grant. It is designed to record the impact of your research as and when it happens.

The Impact Record may be used to complement the information given on the *Impact Report* which is required 12 months after the end of your grant.

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

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|-------------------------|---|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| 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 | Grant End Date | July 31 st 2010 |

DETAILS OF IMPACT

Please tick:

| | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| This is a scientific impact | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| This is an economic and societal impact | <input type="checkbox"/> |

A Please **summarise** below the impact(s) your project has had. *[Max 200 words]*

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| <p>i. A synthesis of existing knowledge on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — 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; |
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— the policy context for ODFL in the Southern African Region.

- ii. New knowledge on 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. Development of innovative school-based interventions 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.

Creation of new capacity at school and district level

- 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.

B Please outline the **findings and outputs** from your project which have had the impact(s) outlined in A above. *[Max 200 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 (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 learning and training materials.

C Please outline **how** these impacts were achieved. [*Max 200 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.
- (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.

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. [*Max 200 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.