

Impact case study (REF3b)

<p>Institution: University of Cambridge</p>
<p>Unit of Assessment: UoA25</p>
<p>Title of case study: RECOUP research impacts on the volume of UK aid allocated for education in developing countries and on the quality of the education aid process.</p>
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words) The Research Consortium on Educational Outcomes and Poverty (RECOUP) examined the effects of education on the lives and livelihoods of people in four developing countries – India, Pakistan, Kenya and Ghana. It also investigated how best to improve education and poverty-reduction strategies in and for developing countries. Its research outcomes influenced the volume of UK aid to education between 2008-13. It helped to improve the allocation of UK aid, resulting in greater emphasis being placed on the most needy countries. It brought particular benefits for the aid process in the case of India. It also helped refine international approaches to the education of the disabled.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words) Key Researchers Christopher Colclough, (RECOUP Director) Commonwealth Professor of Education and Development, University of Cambridge (2004-present) Madeleine Arnot, Professor of the Sociology of Education, University of Cambridge (1988-present) Nidhi Singal, Senior Lecturer in Education, University of Cambridge (2005-present) Shailaja Fennell, Lecturer, Development Studies, University of Cambridge, (2005-present). Underpinning Research Project The Research Consortium on Educational Outcomes and Poverty (RECOUP) project (2005/10) was conducted in partnership with seven institutions – three from UK and four from Africa and South Asia – led by Professor Colclough at the University of Cambridge. Its funding was awarded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID), following an international competitive process amongst more than 100 research consortia. One of the objectives of the research was to provide ‘better knowledge of how to promote good outcomes of education for the poor, and how to optimise the role of educational systems in promoting socio-economic transformation’. It was intended to help DFID and its partners address its central objectives of poverty reduction in the poorest countries. Primary research was conducted by national researchers in the four countries (2006-10), with leadership provided by the above Cambridge staff in collaboration with staff from Oxford and Edinburgh. Quantitative and qualitative household surveys, conducted in both urban and rural areas examined the impact of schooling on social, economic and learning outcomes of households, and the ways in which the experience of, and attitudes towards, schooling differed between different families and family members. RECOUP studied the effects of education along three dimensions. Work under its first theme explored the benefits of education for poor, or otherwise disadvantaged, young people as regards their gender relations, health and fertility behaviour, and civic engagement. <i>Inter alia</i>, findings showed that across all four countries, the disabled poor were aware of the opportunities opened up by education. They generally wished to attend conventional rather than special schools, but social or administrative barriers often prevented this. Although ‘better’ fertility and health practices in these countries is responsive to the number of years women spend in school, the amount of schooling needed to achieve such behavioural change appears to be increasing (3.1, 3.6). A second theme investigated the link between education and labour-market outcomes. Results showed that, whilst technical and vocational skills help the poor there is no simple relationship between improved training and overall poverty reduction. Private returns to education in developing countries no longer peak at primary level, but increase monotonically with the number of years of education undertaken, implying that primary schooling <i>per se</i> is now a less effective means of targeting poverty than in earlier decades (3.4). A third theme assessed the impact of aid on education provision. It demonstrated the financing requirements to meet the international education goals (3.5) and indicated the ways in which the allocation of aid to education (both its direction and magnitude) could be improved (3.2). It showed that aid to education has had greater impact upon policy reform in Kenya than in India, but in both</p>

Impact case study (REF3b)

countries it has strongly affected the transparency and accountability of planning and spending in the sector. It also showed that, whilst useful reforms to the aid process have occurred over the past decade, the burden of change has fallen more heavily on recipients than donors (3.1, 3.3, 3.5).

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

Grant

Department for International Development, UK Government. Grant HD8, awarded to Christopher Colclough of Cambridge University for the Research Consortium on Education Outcomes and Poverty, 2005-10, Value: £2,500,000

Publications

- 3.1 Colclough, C., (ed.) (2012) *Education Outcomes and Poverty: a reassessment* London: Routledge. (This is a volume of key research papers produced under the RECOUP programme).
- 3.2 Colclough, C., (2011) "Challenges for the optimal allocation of educational aid: Should MDG Priorities be more prominent?" RECOUP Working Paper Series, No.40, University of Cambridge. March 2011. Available from: <http://recoup.educ.cam.ac.uk/publications/workingpapers.html>
- 3.3 Colclough, C. and De, A. (2010) The Impact of aid on education policy in India. *International Journal of Educational Development* 30, 4, 497-507. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2010.03.008>
- 3.4 Colclough, C., Kingdon, G. and Patrinos, H. (2010). The Changing Pattern of Wage Returns to Education and its Implications. *Development Policy Review* 28, 6, 733-747. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-7679.2010.00507.x>
- 3.5 Department for International Development and HM Treasury (2005) *From Commitment to Action: Education*, September. http://www.fasid.or.jp/files/seminar_detail/H17/135-3.pdf
- 3.6 Singal, N. (2010). Doing disability research in a Southern context: challenges and possibilities. *Disability & Society*, 25 (4), 415-426. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09687591003755807>

All the above outputs were rigorously peer-reviewed before publication.

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

The RECOUP Director's work on aid to education had a significant influence on DFID aid policy during 2008-13. In 2005 he conducted, at DFID's invitation, a study which led to a substantial increase in British aid to education over subsequent years (3.5) The details of its impact are described by Steer and Wathne (2009), as follows: "Professor Colclough of Cambridge University was asked to carry out a detailed analysis of the financing needs for primary education,...to provide a credible estimate of the financing needs for the other EFA goals, including lower secondary, literacy and some estimate of a viable contribution to begin to rebuild the depleted higher education sector in Africa. ... The result was a joint DFID/Treasury document *From Commitment to Action: Education* (2005) which provided the evidence base for a substantial increase in UK aid for education. This increase was announced by Gordon Brown and Hilary Benn in Maputo in the spring of 2006 in the form of a 10-year pledge to provide £8.5 billion to support education"The combination of "high level *political will* and pragmatic *organisational and managerial interests* was supported by *substantive technical analysis and evidence*... The lack of any one of these factors would have meant that the announcement – described by Hilary Benn as 'DFID at its best' – might never have happened." Steer and Wathne 2009:25 (5.1) (emphasis in original). This increased commitment resulted in UK aid to education increasing from £360mn in 2007/8 to £625mn in 2011/12 – an average growth rate of some 15% per year over the period (UK Government, 2013: Table 21 (5.2)).

A second study in 2007 (revised in 2011 (3.2)) identified ways in which aid to education was being misallocated, and it underpinned a substantial reform in 2008/9 of the criteria used by DFID for deciding the distribution of educational aid amongst countries. In particular it provided, according to DFID, "the underpinning analysis which supported DFID in assessing how to meet its then public commitment of spending £1 billion on basic education by 2010... It provided an initial lens with which to assess education allocations, and it allowed DFID to identify where it would be desirable and feasible to scale up education activity. The approach was further refined in DFID's Education

Portfolio Review (2009/10) where ‘need’ (as per the approach in the RECOUP paper) was weighed against the potential ‘effectiveness’ of intervening. DFID’s current spread of education programmes broadly reflect these deliberations” (memo from DFID Head of Profession (Education) 6 April 2012 (5.3)).

RECOUP’s evidence on returns to education (3.4) influenced the content of DFID’s education strategy (*Learning for All: DFID’s education strategy 2010-2015*, DFID 2010) and was used to support that paper’s expressed confidence in the productive value of education. It was widely circulated in DFID and was used by DFID in both internal and external briefings (as stated in memo from DFID Head of Profession, 6 April 2012 (5.3))

RECOUP’s research on aid to education in India (3.3), helped the DFID Delhi office in its dialogue with the Indian government during 2010/11 and formed an input to external reviews of DFID’s aid impact. It is judged by DFID India to have been “an immensely influential article – provided as a key reading to both the International Development Committee and the Independent Commission on Aid Impact during their reviews of DFID India’s work in 2011 and 2012 respectively” (memo of 25/04/12 from Senior Education Adviser, DFID, Delhi office (5.4)).

RECOUP’s research on disability informed UNESCO’s Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2010: a background paper on India drew on these findings. (5.5). Singal’s work was included by the World Bank in their *Inter-Agency Disability Knowledge Base* (2011) for circulation to other UN and external agencies (5.6) and was featured on the DFID R4D website from 2011 (www.DFID.gov.uk/R4D). Her open access qualitative training manual (Singal and Jeffery 2009 (5.7)) was used in Pakistan as the frame for a course organized by the Human Resource Development Network/Institute of Rural Management, Islamabad, Feb 9-11, 2009, which included participants from NGOs, public sector organizations, businesses and universities. It provided the basis for a similar workshop, on "Qualitative Research Methods", conducted by the Sustainable Development Policy Research Institute, Islamabad, June 12-13, 2012 (e-m from Visiting Associate, Sustainable Development Policy Research Institute, 22-11-12 (5.8)).

RECOUP has influenced DFID thinking on research priorities: the Director’s advice was judged by DFID to be “valuable and gratefully received.... The contributions made at the meeting will help shape the Education Research Group’s future research priorities and DFID’s position on post-primary education” (letter from Senior Research Adviser DFID 11/6/13 (5.9)).

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

5.1 See Box 6, p.25 entitled, ‘From commitments to action: The story of the UK £ 8.5 billion commitment to education’ of Steer, L., and Wathne, C. (2009) “Achieving Universal Basic Education: Constraints and Opportunities in Donor Financing”, Overseas Development Institute, London. [<http://www.odi.org.uk/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/events-documents/3674.pdf>] (This confirms the role of the RECOUP Director’s work in increasing the resources allocated by the Treasury for aid to education.)

5.2 UK Government 2013, ‘Statistics on International Development 2012’ Table 21 [<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-international-development/about/statistics>].

5.3 DFID Head of Profession (Education), e-mail note dated 06 04 12. (This confirms the impact of (3.2) on country-level aid allocations and of (3.4) on DFID’s education strategy). [Supporting document 1]. See also Box 1 fn. 3, p.11 of DFID 2010, ‘Learning for All: DFID’s education strategy 2010-2015’. [<http://consultation.dfid.gov.uk/education2010/files/2010/04/learning-for-all-strategy.pdf>]

5.4 DFID Senior Education Adviser, India e-mail note dated 25.04.12, reports on the value and impact of (3.3) for the aid dialogue in India. [Supporting document 2]

5.5 Singal, N., ‘Education of Children with Disabilities in India’, background paper, UNESCO EFA Global Monitoring Report 2010 [<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/themes/leading-the-international-agenda/efareport/background-papers/2010/>].

5.6 World Bank Sector Manager, social protection and labour, e-mail dated 14.03.08 (confirming the inclusion of Dr. Singal’s work on disability and education in the World Bank’s inter-agency

Impact case study (REF3b)

disability knowledge sharing system). [Supporting document 3]

5.7 Singal, N., and Jeffery, R., (2009) Qualitative Research Skills Workshop: A Facilitators Manual
[\[http://manual.recoup.educ.cam.ac.uk/wiki/index.php/Main_Page\]](http://manual.recoup.educ.cam.ac.uk/wiki/index.php/Main_Page).

5.8 Evidence for use of the training manual in Pakistan (e-m from Visiting Associate at Sustainable Development Policy Institute to Prof. Colclough dated 22.11.12). [Supporting document 4]

5.9 DFID Senior Education Adviser (of the Research & Evidence Division) letter to Prof. Colclough dated 11.06.13. [Supporting document 5]