

# EdQual

The Newsletter for people interested  
in Education Quality issues



# EdQual

A Research Programme Consortium on  
Implementing Education Quality in Low Income Countries

Issue 1  
October 2006

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## Letter from The Editor

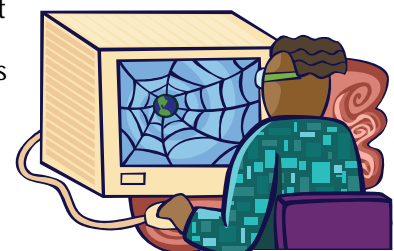
Welcome the first issue of EdQual. EdQual is a consortium of six African and British universities, sponsored by UK's Department for International Development to carry out research into the implementation of education quality in low income countries. Our newsletter is a vehicle for sharing news across all people who come into contact with EdQual's projects and a forum for debating issues related to education quality in Sub-Saharan Africa. It is aimed at people with a professional interest in education quality, including staff of ministries of education and other government agencies concerned with education, people working for donor agencies or international advocacy organisations concerned with education in Africa, teachers, teacher educators, education administrators at all levels, civil society organisations and local NGOs advocating education quality.

This first issue features a welcome from our director, Prof. Leon Tikly, in which he tackles the theme of education quality and its meaning for Africa head on. On page 3 we introduce the senior management team, which includes one representative from each of our member institutions. EdQual is running five large research projects. Four of these involve working closely with schools, teachers and communities to learn from existing best practices and develop initiatives to implement education quality. The *School Effectiveness and Education Quality* project (SeeQ) is unique in generating new knowledge through analysis of a large existing data set. Guoxing tells us more in the 'from our projects' section on page 4. In its first year, the *Use of ICT to support Basic Education* project has consulted policy makers and visited schools to identify the main issues in Rwanda. The lead researcher, Edmond Were, summarises the views of diverse stakeholders in the section 'in their own words' on page 5. This first issue also includes reports of international events EdQual researchers have attended and brings us news from the University of Dar es Salaam on its plans for institutional transformation.



Finally, many thanks to our administrator Ellie Tucker-based at Bristol, who has worked hard designing, compiling and formatting our newsletter. We hope all our readers will learn something new and a few will be stimulated to contribute their own perspectives on education quality issues to our next issue, which will be available in March 2007.

Dr Angeline Barrett,  
Institutional Coordinator/  
Communications Manager,  
EdQual Bristol



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information on  
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[www.edqual.org](http://www.edqual.org)

Please send news and reviews for our next issue to [Ellie.Tucker@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:Ellie.Tucker@bristol.ac.uk) or to your in-country institutional coordinator see page 8. for contact details.

## A Message from the RPC Director—Prof. Leon Tikly

I am writing to you in my role as Director of the research programme consortium (RPC) on education quality (EdQual). It gives me great pleasure to extend a warm welcome to all of our readers. Whether you are a teacher or a lecturer, a teacher trainer or advisor, work for the government or for an NGO or for the international development community we hope you will find something of interest for you in this newsletter.

First, a little bit about us. We are a partnership of higher education institutions from the UK, South Africa, Tanzania, Ghana, Rwanda, Pakistan and Chile. We started work in September 2005 and are funded by the UK Department of International Development (DfID) until 2010. Our mission is to come up with new practical initiatives based on research that can assist governments and practitioners to raise the quality of education, particularly for the most disadvantaged learners. The aim of this newsletter is to keep the educational community in our partner countries informed of what we are doing and what findings we come up with. We also hope to feature thought provoking articles and information relevant to education quality.

By quality, we mean simply everything that is experienced by a learner from the moment he/she enters a classroom until the time he/she leaves education. We think it is important in the fight against poverty and disease. For example, parents are more likely to send their children to school and to keep them there if they feel that they will be exposed to a quality education and that what they learn is of relevance. Providing accessible and practical life skills can play a very important role in supporting community development. Likewise, raising awareness of health issues, especially amongst women and girls can help in the fight against disease. A quality education is also important for the economic development of a country because training the scientists, engineers, doctors, lawyers and teachers of tomorrow relies on exposure to a quality education from early childhood onwards.

We have focused our research on the relevance of what is taught and the effectiveness of different strategies for teaching and learning. We look at the quality of the learning materials including books and computers but, more especially, how these are made use of in practice. Our research interests include the role of language in teaching and learning including the mother tongue and languages of wider communication and the role of leadership and the community served by a school in bringing about change. A key issue is the training and experience of the teaching force to deliver quality education and the effectiveness of support that educational organisations receive from governments and donors. All of these are important for raising academic achievement and giving learners the necessary life skills and attitudes that will enable them to get on in life and contribute to the well being of their families and communities.

You may say quite rightly that this all sounds good in theory but what are you going to do it in practice? To begin with we are very keen to listen to the points of view of practitioners and policy makers in order to make our research more relevant. Our first step last year was to hold a series of exciting workshops where we invited participants from these backgrounds to tell us what they understand by a quality education and the issues that they think are the most important. These consultations informed the development of our research plans. We will continue our dialogue with policy makers and practitioners throughout the programme. This newsletter and our website ([www.edqual.org](http://www.edqual.org)) are a part of that conversation!

As for the research itself, for the most part we will be working closely with practitioners in schools and other educational settings to identify the barriers that get in the way of them implementing quality education and to develop practical solutions that enable them to overcome these barriers. We will ensure that the initiatives we develop have a wider relevance through testing them in other schools and even in other countries. For example, we hope to develop tool kits and learning materials that can help teachers in South Africa, Rwanda and Pakistan to implement new approaches to science and maths education; we will learn from the inroads that our Chilean partners have made in introducing ICTs into schools and how they can be used to improve teaching and learning in Rwanda and South Africa. In Ghana and Tanzania our focus is on language and literacy and on effective leadership for change and our Pakistani colleagues will also be involved in both these projects. We will work closely with policy makers to find ways in which successful initiatives can be mainstreamed. In the UK the main focus will be on looking at data collected by the Southern and East African Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality (SACMEQ) to identify the factors that are most effective in raising the quality of education for the most disadvantaged learners and we will feed the findings from this data into our other projects (see article on p.4).

I hope that I have given you a flavour of what we hope to offer in our research and in this newsletter. We hope you will share our view of the importance of raising education quality for disadvantaged learners and in finding practical solutions. Whilst we hope you will benefit from some of the insights in this newsletter we are also very interested to learn from you. After all education is an issue that affects all of us. Please write and tell us what you think are the burning issues in your region and examples of any exciting initiatives you know of to raise the quality.

Professor Leon Tikly, EdQual Director

Please send news and reviews for our next issue to [Ellie.Tucker@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:Ellie.Tucker@bristol.ac.uk) or to your in-country institutional coordinator see page 8. for contact details.

## People—Introducing the Senior Management Team (SMT)



Prof. Leon Tikly Director

Prof. Tikly is a lecturer in Education (Management and Policy) and Deputy Director of Research, University of Bristol, Graduate School of Education. Leon started his career as a science teacher first in London comprehensives and then in a school for South African refugees in Morogoro, Tanzania. He completed his postgraduate studies at the University of Glasgow. His PhD thesis is on *Education Policy in South Africa since 1947*. Leon worked as a policy researcher at the Education Policy Unit, University of the Witwatersrand during the transition period between apartheid and democracy **Research Interests:** Education quality in low income countries; globalisation and education policy; the achievement of minority ethnic learners in the UK; education management and policy in South Africa.



Jolly Rubagiza  
Institutional  
Coordinator, Rwanda

Ms Rubagiza is a lecturer in the Department of Education Foundations, Kigali Institute of Education. She taught briefly in a secondary school in Uganda. Later she worked with different NGOs in the field of HIV/AIDS Counselling and Education.

### Special Interests:

Ms Rubagiza has a particular interest in the promotion of gender equality and belongs to a number of women's associations in Rwanda.



Mario Pillay Institutional  
Coordinator, South Af-  
rica

Mr Pillay qualified as a secondary school educator for Mathematics and Science and introduced these subjects using computer programs at high schools. He was then promoted to lecturer at a Higher Education institution that provided courses for educators. He moved on to the inspection service in education and evaluated the teaching of maths, science and computer science. Mr Pillay later joined the Department of Education to do research in education provision, assessment and funding. During the turbulent years for education in South Africa. He joined a non-government education research organization called The Education Foundation Trust and researched education in South Africa and 14 other African countries.



Dr George Oduro  
Institutional  
Coordinator, Ghana

Between 2003 and 2004, Dr Oduro served as a Research Associate at the University of Cambridge's Faculty of Education on three leadership-related projects directed by Prof. John MacBeath. These are the NCSL-sponsored projects on (a) Distributed Leadership, (b) recruitment & retention of headteachers and (c) an NUT-sponsored project on school self-evaluation. He is currently a lecturer at the Institute for Educational Planning & Administration (IEPA), University of Cape Coast, Ghana.

**Research interests:** The cultural and gender dimensions of school leadership, improving leadership development in rural deprived schools in Africa, school leadership for peace building and social cohesion, and strategies for enhancing performance management in deprived schools.



Dr Hillary Dachi Institu-  
tional Coordinator,  
Tanzania

Dr Dachi holds a Diploma in Education obtained at Morogoro Teachers College (1987); B.ED (1991) M.A (ED) (1994) from the University of Dar es Salaam Tanzania and an EdD from the Graduate School of Education, University of Bristol (2000).

Hillary was employed at the University of Dar es Salaam as Assistant Lecturer in the Department of Educational Planning and Administration in September 1994.

He is now a senior lecturer and Head, Department of Educational Planning and Administration, Faculty of Education University of Dar es Salaam and Chairman of the Faculty of Education Strategic Planning Committee.



Dr Angeline Barrett  
Communications  
Manager/Institutional  
Coordinator, Bristol

Dr Barrett worked for a number of years as a Maths and Physics teacher in Further Education colleges in England and in secondary schools in Tanzania, before studying a M.Ed. in International Education Management at Leeds University, UK. In 2005, she was awarded a Ph.D. by the University of Bristol for her research comparing Tanzanian with English primary school teacher identity (Dr. Hillary Dachi was her field supervisor). **Research Interests:** Primary education and educational quality in Sub Saharan Africa especially Tanzania; teacher professionalism and identity; comparative education.

## From Our Research Projects

### SeeQ: School Effectiveness and Education

The Southern and Eastern African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) ([www.sacmeq.org](http://www.sacmeq.org)) has collected extensive data from 3000 schools across 14 countries in Southern and Eastern Africa. Literacy and numeracy tests and pupil, teacher and head-teacher questionnaires were used to collect the data. Data on pupils awareness of HIV/AIDS risks and prevention are also being collected. The School Effectiveness and Educational Quality (SeeQ) project is using state of the art statistical techniques to perform secondary analyses of these rich datasets. The findings will inform the design of a number of school case studies to be conducted in South Africa and Tanzania (Mainland & Zanzibar), which will explore the process factors that make a school more/less/mixed effective. The SeeQ project aims to generate new knowledge on the indicators of school quality that will assist governments in Sub-Saharan

Africa countries and the international development community to improve the monitoring and the implementation of school effectiveness initiatives for academic achievement and HIV/AIDS awareness.

Lead Researchers: Dr. Sally Thomas Dr. Guoxing Yu, (both Graduate School of Education, University of Bristol); Key Researcher: Dr. Angeline Barrett (GSoE, Bristol); Mario Pillay (Education Policy Unit, University of the Witwatersrand , Johannesburg).

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## Events

### Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA)

ADEA is an association for education ministers and donors who support education in Africa. Its meetings, held every two years, are one of the foremost forums for the senior staff of ministries of education and staff of donor agencies to discuss education policy. This year's Biennial Meeting focused on the theme "*Characteristics, Conditions and Factors underlying Effective Learning in Schools and Literacy and Early Childhood Development Programs*". Held in Libreville, Gabon from 27 -31 March 2006 it examined numerous issues relating to the improvement of educational quality in schools. Dr. George K.T. Oduro, the Institutional Coordinator for the University of Cape Coast, Ghana went along to represent *EdQual* and learn more about the knowledge needs of governments and donors across Africa. Speakers at the meeting included the President of Gabon, Omar Bongo Ondimba, and the Vice-President of the African Development Bank (ADB), Zeinab El Bakri.

The meeting underscored the importance of quality education for children in Africa. As President Bongo puts it, "It is they who will be called on to work for the construction and the greatness of African nations, in order to ensure that tomorrow will be better than today". He saw education as the most effective weapon against the challenges of poverty and HIV/AIDS facing Africa.

Dr George Oduro,  
Institutional Coordinator,  
Ghana

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*"It is they [children] who will be called on to work for the construction and the greatness of African nations, in order to ensure that tomorrow will be better than today". (President Bongo on the importance of quality Education for Children in Africa)*



## “In Their Own Words”

### Immersion into Rwandan Schools, 14-23 May 2006

The immersion into Rwandan schools has been the most exciting phase of EdQual's large-scale research project on the *Use of ICT to support Basic Education*. It followed a six month inception phase during which an extensive literature review identified a number of innovative national, pan-African and international initiatives using ICT to support educational development, from which EdQual can learn. The immersion phase was essentially a *'getting to know phase'* in which the team comprising Bristol, Universidad de La Frontera, Wits and KIE researchers, visited selected primary and secondary schools in three provinces in Rwanda. The impression that the team got was that the government and donors have done what they could to equip schools in Rwanda with ICT and have tried to train selected teachers on the use of the equipment. Programmes and projects of this magnitude nevertheless have



Students in an ICT class Rwanda May 06—  
photograph by Prof. Rosamund Sutherland

their own drawbacks as well as successes.

The Government of Rwanda has committed itself to exploiting the potential that ICT can provide for development. It has been recognised as a cross cutting issue for development and it has in particular been a growth sector in its own right as well as emerging as a key tool for the development of the ser-

vice sector. The government has recognised that *'without many natural resources to boast of, the strategic development of the service industry based on ICT is imperative'* (Vision 2020).

The uses of ICT in teaching and learning are emerging as a prominent challenge for educationists at all levels of the education system. ICT falls within the category of science and technology that the government of Rwanda is currently emphasising for its development. *ICTs to Support Basic Education* is hence relevant to current policy as it focuses on how the hardware and software available to schools can enhance the teaching and learning of science and mathematics. The Education Sector Policy for Rwanda states that *'science and mathematics teaching and ICT shall be at the heart of the education system. This shall be taught at all levels of education ... The objective therefore will be to promote science and technology with special attention to ICT'* (Education Sector Policy 2002)

To realise this objective the government has been at the forefront in creating an ICT infrastructure and supplying at least ten computers to every secondary school and two to every primary school (through the World Links programme). Most of the schools have received the computers while others are still waiting. Yet others use their own initiative to procure computers from other sources.

*'We have four computers at the moment but we have a promise of 180 computers from one of our benefactors in the UK. When that happens we hope to impart computer skills to all the children in the school'* (Business Manager, Sonrise Primary School).

The commitment to supply the computers has been acknowledged at the higher levels of the government.

*'We have a definite relationship with schools through the Ministry of Education. We have a programme through which we supply desktops valued at 50000 Rwanda Francs (100 USD) per*

## “In Their Own Words”

*piece to any school which can afford the cost. This is in addition to the 10 computers that the government supplies to the secondary schools’* (Interview with representative of Rwanda Information Technology Authority May 2006)

The implementation of the ICT in education project is of course daunting. The level of skills acquisition is still low. Teachers who are expected to train other teachers and pupils still lack the basic skills for manipulating the technology. Most of them are hence handicapped and very many computers gather dust in some forlorn room or never emerge from under a sheet in the principal’s office, where they are kept safe from ‘spoiling’ by computer illiterate learners, both pupils and teachers.

*“We need to learn how to operate the small computers first and then we can start learning to work with the big ones”.*

(Headmistress of Rwamagana B primary school in Eastern Province on why she could not use the desktop computers in the neighbouring secondary school and why she practices computer skills on the donated solar powered lap top.)

A lack of technical support was observed to be a problem for most schools. A cloud of hopelessness hangs wide and even the most basic tasks such as ‘plug in the cable and restart the computer’ sounded galactic.

*“ These computers were brought here by the government and they don’t work well. Actually they broke down immediately we touched them.”* (Teacher EER Primary School in Ruhengeri, Northern Province on why the desktop computer could not open and cursor could not move).

The use of ICT in supporting basic education is very noble. Notwithstanding the costs involved it was recognised that it can play a big role in empowering learners and instil in them a sense of confidence that they have not had for a long time. ICT emerges then as a teaching and learning tool and arrives just in time to engage most learners. A few well-equipped schools like the NEPAD schools and the FAWE Girls School have gone a notch higher by conducting most of their lessons without the tradition ‘chalk and talk’.

*‘Three learners are grouped together per computer and use the Internet to access learning materials that the students use to study, make notes and write group projects especially in the sciences’* (Biology teacher during one teaching session at FAWE Girls)

In one new school with ten new computers but no internet connection a pupil responded to one of the questions: *‘Yes, I go to the Cybercafe and exchange emails with my penfriend in Belgium’* (A grade 8 pupil in Rugando Secondary School).

Dr Edmond Were,  
Lead Researcher,  
Use of ICT to support Basic Education



Students in an ICT class Rwanda May 06—Photograph by Prof. Rosamund Sutherland

## From Our Institutions

### The 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Consultative Meeting on Institutional Transformation Programmes (ITP), University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM), 17-18 August 2006.

The University of Dar es Salaam is involved in the process of building a new identity with its own distinctive characteristics in an effort to achieve and maintain a reputable regional and international position in terms of relevance and quality of its prime outputs. This is being made possible through the Institutional Transformation Programme (ITP) aimed at facilitating the University of Dar es Salaam to operate with a clear vision of its present and future role in the globalizing world. The ITP is implemented within the framework of the Corporate Strategic Plan (2004-2013) with an emphasis on capacity development, quality assurance and outreach activities closely focused on the UDSM core mission functions of teaching, research and public service.

The Annual Consultative Meeting on ITP is an event that takes place once a year. It offers an open forum for discussion on progress made in implementing the UDSM Five Year Rolling Strategic Plan and other key developments of relevance to the ITP.

#### Objectives

The objectives of the 13<sup>th</sup> ACM were summarized as follows:

- Review implementation of the Corporate and Five-Year Rolling Strategic Plan at the University and College levels;
- Discuss implementation of the National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty
- Discuss cross-cutting issues including, HIV/AIDS, gender, quality of education etc;
- Discuss effective teaching and learning and enhancing access to higher education through distance mode;
- Discuss entrepreneurship and skills development.

#### Rationale

The UDSM has managed to realize significant achievements in a number of areas through various supports from the government, private sectors and partner institutions/organizations from

within and outside Tanzania. Annual Consultative Meetings were therefore introduced to offer the University of Dar es Salaam's key stakeholders and development partners an open forum to hear and discuss in a much more transparent and participatory manner the progress on implementation of the ITP. Comments and suggestions from the discussions are analysed and used to roll the strategic plan of the UDSM one year forward. Currently, UDSM is implementing the 2005/06-2009/10 Rolling Strategic Plan. It is envisaged that comments and recommendations from the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Consultative Meeting will be used to as inputs to the Five Year Rolling Strategic Plan 2006/07-2010/11.

#### Relevance to the RPC-EDQUAL

The RPC-EDQUAL Institutional Coordinator at the UDSM, Dr. H.A.Dachi and two researchers, namely Prof. Casmir Rubagumya and Dr. Ndibalema Alphonse attended the two day meeting at the Main Campus University of Dar es Salaam. Some of the interesting discussions were centred on the following papers:

Role of Universities in Global Partnership for development

- Mini-Tiger Plan 2002: Its role in the National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty in Tanzania
- Enhancing Access to higher education through distance mode
- Enhancing Research Capacity at UDSM
- HIV/AIDS status at UDSM
- Towards Gender Balance as UDSM

Hard and/or electronic copies of the above papers are available on request. Contact [dpd@admin.udsm.ac.tz](mailto:dpd@admin.udsm.ac.tz)

Dr H.A.Dachi,  
Institutional Coordinator,  
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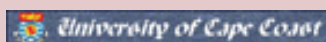
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We also collaborate  
with other  
universities in Asia  
and Africa.

## Events

### The 1st eLearning Africa Conference, UNCC Addis Ababa, 24-26 May 2006

This was the first E-Learning conference in Africa and on Africa. It was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in May 24 to 26 2006 at the United Nations Conference Centre. More than 230 international ICT experts presented papers in five themes and thirteen pre-conference workshops. The participants came from all over the world, which indicated the interest that exists in the role of ICT in supporting education and development.

The EdQual research team working on the *Use of ICT to support Basic Education* project attended the conference. The team comprised Edmond Were, the lead researcher from Kigali Institute of Education, key researchers Mphela Motimele from Wits, Ros Sutherland from Bristol and our associate partner Juan Enrique Hinostroza from the Universidad de La Frontera, Chile. The team presented a paper on *the Use of ICT to Support Basic Education in Marginalised Communities and Schools in Rwanda and South Africa*. This was a paper arising from the activities we had completed as at May 2006 (see p.6). The team attended different workshops, which were of relevance to its mission. They ranged from the readiness in Africa for educational development to European-African Research and Development Projects or bridging the digital divide.



Mphela Motimele, Dr Enrique Hinostroza, Dr. Nicolas Balacheff, Prof. Rosamund Sutherland, Dr. Edmond Were; ICT

The ICT team benefited from the presence of various actors and stakeholders in the ICT realm. Quite strong networking contacts were established and we came to know that there are so many other initiatives on ICT in education that are taking place in different parts of the world and from which the ICT team can learn. The conference organisers promised to put the presentations online. The next conference is scheduled for Nairobi, Kenya in 2007.

To read the full report and see more photographs visit:

<http://www.elearning-africa.com/>

Dr Edmond Were,  
Lead Researcher,  
Rwanda

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