

EdQual – Summary of our research programme

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EdQual is one of the three research programme consortia funded by the Department for International Development (DFID) in the area of education for the period 2005-2010. As our long title, **Implementing Education Quality in Low Income Countries**, suggests, our primary aim is to develop new practical initiatives that will contribute towards improving the quality of education, most especially in Sub Saharan Africa. Developing an understanding of quality indicators in low income countries will be integral to our research activities. DFID's ultimate goal in funding research consortia across a range of development issues is to contribute towards poverty reduction and attainment of the millennium development goals (MDGs). Hence, our research programme concentrates on the primary cycle targeted in the education MDG and the learning needs of disadvantaged learners in remote or overcrowded contexts. The programme centres around five large scale projects. In order to build capacity for research into quality related issues, four of the projects are led by our African partner institutions.

Kigali Institute for Education leads *Use of ICTs to Support Basic Education*, which aims to raise the competence and confidence of teachers to use hardware and software already available in their schools to enhance teaching and learning, in particular of mathematics and science subjects. In this project and *Implementing Curriculum Change*, Kigali is paired with the Education Policy Unit, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. *Implementing Curriculum Change*, led by Wits, aims to enable teachers to implement the evidence-based curricula, recently introduced in South Africa and soon to be rolled out in Rwanda, so that learners are equipped with basic scientific literacy that can help them to combat HIV/AIDS, improve nutrition and manage their environment in a way that is sustainable. The Faculty of Education, University of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania and the Institute of Educational Planning and Administration at the University of Cape Coast in Ghana, partner each other in *Language and Literacy Development* and *Leadership and Management of Change* projects. The former is led by Dar es Salaam and will develop teaching/learning materials and teacher development programmes for bilingual classrooms. The latter, led by the Cape Coast, will work with headteachers of schools serving disadvantaged communities to develop and refine models of effective leadership for managing change and encouraging community participation.

Researchers from the Graduate School of Education, University of Bristol and the Department of Education, University of Bath support and participate in each of these projects. In addition, associate partners at the Aga Khan University, Pakistan and Universidad de La Frontera, Chile share their expertise in action research methods and ICTs respectively. All four projects involve working closely with teachers in a small number of schools to identify existing good practice and develop initiatives that can be implemented on a wider scale. New initiatives will be trialled and evaluated in a larger number of schools. In some cases initiatives will also be trialled in Pakistan to gauge appropriateness for a very different cultural setting.

EdQual's fifth project, *School Effectiveness and Education Quality* is led by Bristol and undertakes secondary analyses of a large dataset. The Southern and Eastern

African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) has administered tests in literacy, numeracy and HIV/AIDS awareness to pupils in fourteen different countries and also collected information on individual, classroom and school contexts through pupil, teacher and headteacher questionnaires. Emerging findings will be shared with the other four projects, to build an understanding of education quality that illuminates the interaction between contextual, input and process factors.