



EdQual

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

Annual Report 05\06 Abbreviated Version

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1 November 2006

Section One – Background Information

Title of RPC:

Implementing Education Quality in Low Income Countries

Reference number:

HD9

Period covered by report:

September 06 to September 07 inclusive

Name of lead institution and Director:

Graduate School of Education, University of Bristol, UK
Professor Leon Tikly

Key partners:

Department of Education, University of Bath, UK
Kigali Institute of Education, Rwanda
Institute for Educational Planning & Administration, University of Cape Coast, Ghana
Faculty of Education, University of Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania
Education Policy Unit, University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa

Countries covered by research so far;

Zanzibar, Nigeria, Zambia, Tanzania, USA, Australia, UK, Botswana, Kenya, South Africa, Papua New Guinea, Senegal, Uganda, Ghana, Rwanda, Bolivia, Peru, El Salvador, Sweden, the Gambia, Lesotho, Chad, Cameroon, Malawi, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, Indonesia, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, China, South Korea, Taiwan, Vietnam, Mongolia, India, Japan, Guinea, Cote D'Ivoire, Swaziland, Uganda, Mozambique.

Section Two – Summary

The main research outputs of the EdQual RPC will be new knowledge and understanding of education quality and indicators relevant to the needs of disadvantaged learners in difficult delivery contexts in low income countries; new examples of effective practice in implementing education quality; new practical initiatives to improve the quality of education; and, new knowledge of effective practice in mainstreaming initiatives. A related output will be to effectively communicate new knowledge to policy makers, policy influencers and practitioners responsible for formulating and implementing policy whilst a third set of outputs are to strengthen capacity amongst partner institutions to generate and communicate new knowledge and amongst policy makers and practitioners to implement new initiatives arising from research.

Activities during the first year have focused on laying a sustainable basis for delivering these outputs during the lifetime of the programme and beyond. In this regard the project teams have achieved the following:

- Put in place a sound management structure including an effective senior management team; an excellent advisory group; a partnership agreement signed by all partners; administrative support for the programme; expanded our consortium to include new associate partners from Chile, Pakistan, Africa and the UK.
- Made good progress with research plans including completion of six focused literature reviews; completion of five large scale project (LSP) proposals in the areas of school effectiveness (the SeeQ project), implementing curriculum change (the ICC project), ICTs in basic education (the ICT project), language and literacy (the LAL) project and leadership and change (L&C project); received fourteen applications for small scale project proposals. We have begun the analyse of SACMEQ I&II as part of the school effectiveness study and have begun a meta-analysis of existing initiatives and baseline data collection in the other LSPs. Progress with the ICC project has been hampered to some extent by capacity issues at the host institution.
- In relation to communications we have convened four national consultative workshops in African partner countries to determine research priorities and to raise awareness of EdQual research amongst policy makers and NGOs, established a national reference group in Ghana with others planned for South Africa, Tanzania and Rwanda; appointed a communications manager supported by a communications team; developed an excellent communications strategy. The EdQual website (<http://www.edqual.org/>) has been launched and the first edition of our biannual newsletter has been produced.
- In the area of capacity building we have identified seven students who are to commence PhD programmes linked to the LSPs in partner institutions in 2006 with a further three (of whom one is already identified) to commence in 2007; held four research training workshops linked to the LSPs; conducted a project management and administrator training workshop.

Although it is too early for the programme to have had any meaningful impact on policy and practice the consortium has made very good progress through our communication efforts in raising awareness of research plans and potential amongst key policy makers, influencers and practitioners in partner countries and putting in place the mechanisms to ensure on-going policy engagement and dialogue.

Section Four – Lessons Learnt

EdQual characterises itself as a ‘learning RPC’ in that we have focused on putting in place structures to facilitate individual and collaborative learning at all levels of the programme.

4.1 Working with Partners

Four of the five projects are African led. This is important for creating ownership by African partners and for linking research plans to locally determined priorities. However, developing capacity amongst African partners to lead on the research activities requires capacity strengthening inputs even beyond that originally planned for. This has been evident, for example, in relation to the development of the LSP proposals (see section 3). The model also requires breaking with traditional mindsets. The stereotypical model of research in Africa has been for Northern partners to lead conceptually and for Southern partners to ‘implement’. In the EdQual RPC, Northern partners have had to balance being responsive to African priorities with being proactive in using their expertise to facilitate and progress plans. The RPC has had to modify its capacity strengthening plans (see section 5) to take account of the challenges posed by the devolved model. The capacity building needs for both Southern and Northern partners will be regularly monitored and reviewed. Associate partners have a key role to play in promoting South-South collaboration and can provide relevant experiences of capacity strengthening from a Southern perspective (see above).

4.2 Good Practice/Innovation

Outside of a fuller understanding of what happens in other RPCs it is difficult to assess how innovative practices are. It is also too early in the programme to identify ‘good practice’. Below, however, is a list of potentially innovative practices. We will revisit the impact that these have on programme outputs and purpose in future reports:

- Decentralised management structure;
- The use of small scale projects to support programme goals;
- The use of mixed methods within and between projects;
- Providing training and on-going support for administrators;
- Centralised support in Bristol for international travel;
- Offering a relatively large number of studentships;
- Regular meetings between education RPC Directors;
- Split site PhD programmes linked to LSPs (see annex 6).

4.3 Project/programme Management

4.4 Communication

Given that much of our attention has been focused on establishing functioning research teams, many of our lessons learned have been in relation to internal communications. These include:

- Early and ongoing emphasis on developing ownership and shared understandings of programme and project goals is essential within and across research teams;
- Mobile phones and face to face communication are more effective in Africa than e-mail or written communication;
- E-mails can be unreliable, especially as there have been long periods of power outages in Tanzania and Ghana;

- In these circumstances UK based institutions have a critical role to play in facilitating communication, e.g. initiating contact between team members in relation to previously defined programme activities;
- Having UK expertise in African languages is an asset;
- Strategic use of e-mail is important. One mail containing key facts/ ideas is better than a proliferation;
- Assume that messages have not been effectively communicated unless they are responded to.

There are also lessons learned in relation to external communications and these are highlighted in our communications strategy. Whilst an excellent communications strategy has been drawn up there is a risk that this can detract from the time and resource required to actually undertake research. Further, a lengthy Communications Strategy helps to bring communications into focus but can make communications seem more challenging than it is – in fact our partners have been doing communications even before the Strategy was drawn up. Someone with special responsibility for communications has been appointed in each institution to undertake the necessary action planning, mapping of communications environment etc. and this requires initial training.

EdQual's professionally designed website was launched in October. As well as outlining EdQual's research, it links to related research. The website, newsletter, and brochure demand much dedicated administrative time, especially in early stages of the programme and have represented a major administrative burden at Bristol despite having one half of a jobshare, Ellie Tucker, with considerable skills in this area. We are planning collaborative communications events and publications with the other education RPCs and sharing knowledge on communications with the Access RPC in particular. Communications within UK and with international organisations, rather than within African partner countries, is where we have most to learn. Through CAG we are looking to gain advice in this area. Our link into the Oxfam media team through Dr Sheila Aikman is important in this regard.

Section Six – Annexes

6.4 Communications Strategy highlighting developments since Inception Phase Report.

Please find attached as a separate document.

6.5 Products and Publications

Key Communication Products produced	Theme\Programme	Target audiences
Peer reviewed publications for the year		
Publication in press or submitted - Submitted to IJED 'The Place of Quality Early Childhood Provision in Education and Development'; R.C Duggan (Sept06)	Leadership & Management	Researchers, international development community
Books or book chapters		
Policy Briefs - Ghana Policy Briefs 1.What you need to know about EdQual 2. Brief on inception phase activities of Edqual	Leadership & Management RPC	Teacher Unions, Heads of Schools, Ministry of Education, Ghana Education Service, National Reference Group Members
Publicity material - Ghana 1. News item on Participatory Action Research Work on National Radio. 2.Press release on visit to Deprived Schools 2. Video Clip on challenges of deprived schools in one deprived community Tanzania – Dachi, H.A. (2006). 'Implementing Quality Education in Low Income Countries (EdQual): A Research Programme Consortium', MLIMANI NEWSLETTER, ISSUE NO. 41; Jan 2006-March 2006. UK Article in NORRAG newsletter Feature in University of Bristol's 're:search' journal All countries - Brochure (www.edqual.org/about/)	Leadership & Management RPC RPC RPC RPC RPC	Parents, Ghana Education Service, Researchers, Donors etc. University colleagues, senior management & stakeholders. International development community. University colleagues, senior management & stakeholders. Practitioners & policymakers; of consortium institutions

<p>Tanzania</p>	<p>Language & Literacy</p>	<p>Department of Education). Dr Trevor Coombe; Dr. Nick Taylor (Director-Joint Education Trust); Ms Lomthie Mavimbela, (Director of Education Foundation).</p> <p>Included representatives from the Ministry of Education and Culture (MoEC), Tanzania Institute of Education (TIE), Institute of Adult Education (IAE), District Education Officers, Headteachers, Students and Academic Staff from the of Dar es Salaam and Open University of Tanzania (OUT), representatives from the Development partners' community as well as the Tanzania Education Network/Mtandao wa Elimu Tanzania (TEN/MET).</p>
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