

Institution: University of Sussex		
Unit of Assessment: 23 – Education		
Title of case study: Enabling second chance education for out-of-school children in Ghana and Ethiopia		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2007 – 2020		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Kwame Akyeampong	Professor	2004 – 2020
Keith Lewin	Professor	1977 – 2015
Ricardo Sabates	Reader	2008 – 2016
Jo Westbrook	Senior Lecturer	2003 – present
John Pryor	Professor	1994 – 2019
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2018 – 2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
1. Summary of the impact		
<p>In Ethiopia, the government rolled out second chance education programmes for out-of-school children in five regions on the basis of evidence produced by a Sussex research evaluation, which demonstrated that ‘Speed Schools’ in Ethiopia significantly reduce dropout, improve learning outcomes and enhance school completion rates. In Ghana, the government used similar research evidence to commit 1% of the basic education budget to complementary basic education targeting school dropouts. In both countries, the evidence was used to justify government adoption of second chance education programmes targeting 450,000 school dropouts to access public basic schools and address governments’ commitment to the UN Sustainable Development Goal 4: Quality Education.</p>		
2. Underpinning research		
<p>Achieving educational equality is one of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, specifically SDG 4. The widest inequalities occur in the least developed countries, where only about 4 in 10 children complete primary education. Of all Africa’s regions, Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) has the highest rates of children who do not complete primary and lower secondary education; over 20% of 6-11 year olds, 33% of 12-14 year olds and almost 60% of 15-17 year olds are out of school (UNESCO Institute of Statistics). Once children miss a few years of school, bringing them back is very difficult because many public school teachers lack the ability to teach to bridge these learning gaps.</p> <p>The Centre for International Education (CIE) at the University of Sussex conducts research into educational inequalities and the causes and effects of school dropout in low-income countries [R6]. CIE research has also focused on the production of knowledge for education policymakers in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) to improve access to quality education for all. In particular, CIE’s research (2004-2016) on educational access, transitions and equity produced knowledge [R6] underpinned the framing of research on second chance accelerated education programmes for out-of-school children in Ghana and Ethiopia.</p> <p>A CIE research programme (2005-2010), the Consortium for Educational Access, Transitions and Equity (CREATE), analysed regional variations in educational access and participation in SSA. This showed that in much of SSA, most children who are out of school have attended school at some point but the major cause of dropout was the poor quality education many experienced in the early years of schooling. The risk of dropout was highest in the early years of</p>		

primary education, where many children were 'silently excluded' from learning due to teachers teaching above their level [R6]. CREATE concluded that for public schools to deliver quality education in African contexts, it needs fundamental reconceptualisation of teaching and learning in the early years so that funds of knowledge from African children can find better and deeper expression to achieve meaningful learning and prevent school dropout [R6].

In 2009, CIE's two-year Teacher Preparation in Africa research Project (TPA), funded by the US Hewlett and Flora Foundation, examined teacher preparation in six African countries (Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Senegal, Tanzania & Uganda). It found that many trained teachers lacked the capacity to organise suitable learning in the early grades for many children to master basic literacy and numeracy skills, and contributed to the skills gap and school dropout [R5].

In 2014, CIE researchers, funded by the US philanthropy consultancy company Geneva Global, studied the long-term impact of a 10-month second chance education programme '*Speed School*' for out-of-school children in Ethiopia to measure the impacts on formal primary school completion, learning outcomes, and attitudes towards learning. It found that former out-of-school students:

1. Perform consistently better than government school students for all three basic school subjects – math, Sidama and English
2. Are generally less likely to drop out compared to government school students who have had the same primary education
3. Are more likely to have aspirations to progress beyond primary education.

Crucially, this research revealed that the Speed School instructional approach was superior to the standard instructional practices of teachers in government schools [R1]. The pedagogy transformed the learning environment, enabling children who were initially unable to recognize letters to progress to reading passages in just 10 months. It found that the Speed School pedagogy was effective because it: utilised traditional group and multimodal learning methods; promoted greater collaboration in knowledge construction, linguistic expression and learner contribution to curriculum content; awakened and sustained the ability to learn among poor and marginalized children; and enabled them to repurpose learning after transition into public schools. In addition, Speed Schools achieved long-term impact because of the use of mother-tongue instruction and produced persistence and commitment to learn [R1].

Subsequently CIE tested the effectiveness of another second chance complementary basic education (CBE) programme for Ghanaian school dropouts. This two-year DIFD-funded CBE research completed in October 2018, confirmed that it was possible to raise the achievement levels of previously out-of-school children to levels attained by children who have had four years of schooling in government schools. Many significantly outperformed their peers in government schools in literacy and numeracy skills. It also revealed [R2, R3, R4] that:

1. As in the Speed Schools, local language learning is essential for bridging the learning achievement gap for former primary school dropouts
2. CBE graduates developed skills, learning strategies and confidence, that they used to repurpose their education in public schools.

3. References to the research

- R1.** Akyeampong, K., Delprato M., Sabates, R., James, Z., Pryor J., Westbrook J., Humphreys, S., & Tsegay A. (2018) Tracking the Progress of Speed School Students in Ethiopia: 2011-2017 Type of Output: CIE Research Monograph Principal Investigator
https://www.genevaglobal.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Longitudinal-Study-of-Speed-School-Students-in-Public-Schools_Sept2018-compressed.pdf
- R2.** Akyeampong, K., Higgins, S., Sabates R., Carter E., & Rose P., (2018) Understanding Complementary Basic Education in Ghana - Final Impact Evaluation. DFID London. (Ghana Research on Out-of-School Children) – Team Leader
https://www.educ.cam.ac.uk/centres/real/downloads/Policy%20papers/CBE%20-%20Final%20Impact%20Evaluation%20-%20REAL%20RP_V2.pdf

- R3.** Carter, E., Sabates, R., Rose, P. & Akyeampong, K., (2019) Sustaining Literacy from Mother Tongue instruction in Complementary Education into Official Language of Instruction in Government Schools in Ghana, *International Journal of Education and Development*, 76. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2020.102195>
- R4.** Carter, E., Sabates, R., Rose, P. & Akyeampong, K., (2019) Trapped in low performance? Tracking the learning trajectory of disadvantaged girls and boys in the Complementary Basic Education programme in Ghana. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 100. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2020.101541>
- R5.** Akyeampong, K., Lussier, K., Pryor, J., Westbrook, J. (2013) Improving teaching and learning of basic maths and reading in Africa: Does teacher preparation count? *International Journal of Educational Development*, 33 (3): 272–282. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2012.09.006>
- R6.** Lewin, K. & Akyeampong, K. (2009) Education in sub-Saharan Africa: Researching access, transitions and equity. *Comparative Education*, 45 (2): 143-150. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03050060902920492>

4. Details of the Impact

CIE research on educational access, equity and transitions generated evidence that was used to engage key policy makers and stakeholders to influence policy and practice. Meetings held with Ministry of Education officials and key education stakeholders in both Ethiopia and Ghana discussed the significance of evidence showing how school dropouts closed basic skills gaps and successfully transitioned to public basic schools. The discussions on the evidence gave government officials confidence to introduce policies and strategies to roll out second chance education programmes for out-of-school children to access public basic education in both countries [S4, S5, S6].

In Ghana, evidence from the CBE research was used to inform Ghana's Education Strategic Plan on how to increase access to 250,000 out-of-school children [S3, S4]. Akyeampong presented evidence of the impact of CBE in Ghana to a specially convened meeting attended by the Minister of Education, his senior officials, and officials from the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and the US Agency for International Development (USAID) in September 2018. According to a senior official in Ghana's Ministry of Education, the Sussex research "was instrumental in informing the Ministry's policy", directly influencing Ghana's Education Strategic plan including the policy decision to spend 1% of the basic education budget on extending CBE to reach all out-of-school children (equating to a spend of USD26,200,000 according to World Bank figures for 2018) [S4], as also indicated in the press release by DFID (now reconstituted under the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Development Office - FCDO) [S1, S2].

The British High Commission in Accra reported that the evidence from research led by "Professor Kwame Akyeampong from the University of Sussex, in collaboration with academics from the University of Cambridge, showed the importance of the government of Ghana taking forward the CBE programme to reach children from the poorest, and rural communities" [S2, S3]. In particular, they emphasised the findings of the research that, "after completing the CBE programme, CBE children placed in public schools (often at P3 and P4 levels) showed similar learning levels as children in public schools" [S2]. The key argument of the research was that the CBE programme was capable of meeting the learning needs of children who had dropped out of school and provided a way back into public schools. The result was new policy on second chance education to provide quality education for out-of-school children in Ghana [S3].

Ghana's Education Strategic Plan emphasised government adoption of the CBE to improve educational access for out-of-school children in Ghana. In November 2019, Akyeampong was invited by the Ghana Ministry of Education to present findings of the CBE research at the annual Education Evidence Week in Accra. The presentation showcased the role of mother-tongue instruction and participatory pedagogy in improving learning in CBE schools. Evidence from the research inspired the Ministry of Education to introduce policies and reforms to ensure that all out-of-school children had a second chance to access quality basic education [S3a, S3b]. As a result of the government's decision to increase focus on CBE in its education strategic plan,

progress had been made in reducing the population of out-of-school children from 153,986 in 2018 to 35,432 in 2019 [S3c].

In Ethiopia, the government adopted a second chance education programme upon the advice and support of Geneva Global, using Sussex research on Speed Schools. According to the Luminos Fund “The diligent work of Akyeampong and his team to provide robust evidence on the positive long-term impact of the second chance program on out-of-school children ... was used to secure commitment from the Ethiopia Ministry of Education to pursue government adoption and nationwide scale-up of the program” [S6].

The Ministry of Education commissioned Mekelle University in Ethiopia to confirm the Sussex findings on Speed Schools. Evidence from both was presented at a national education policy event in June 2018 [S5]. A senior official from the Ministry of Education said the Sussex research “contributed significantly in persuading many decision makers on the merits and usefulness of the Speed School model” and is “also influencing the country’s education system to bring about a system change ... and bring about [a] shift in mindset of education officials and practitioners in Ethiopia” [S5].

The model was first adopted by the Tigray Regional Education Bureau which fully financed 32 Speed School classrooms. Following this, the Ministry decided to use the Speed School model to condense the school curriculum into the national and regional curriculum frameworks and included Speed Schools in the sixth education sector development plan (2020-2025) [S5]. Already the Oromiya region has started to set up a Speed School class in each of its 14,000 schools to help older children catch up; “just one example of the many other usages of the research to positively change the education system in the country” [S5]. The Ministry of Education’s investment in second chance education programmes has been seen as a key strategy in reaching 2.2 million out-of-school children. Starting in four regions, the programme is intended to be rolled out in other regions across the country [S5, S6].

Sussex research continues to have influence. Over the next three years (2020-2023), the Ministry of Education is taking further steps to take full ownership of Speed Schools in Ethiopia, using them as the preferred strategy for reaching out-of-school children throughout the country. The Ministry credits the work of Akyeampong and colleagues for this bold decision which is expected to reach over 4.7 million primary school aged children [S5].

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

- S1.** Social media testimonials confirming Government decision to provide financial support to the CBE programme following evidence delivered by Akyeampong 12/9/18. This will be included in the evidence from education strategy documents to demonstrate the new initiatives on improving access to out-of-school children in Ghana.
- S2.** British High Commission Accra/Gov.UK, ‘Complementary Basic Education (CBE) Programme entering a new phase in Ghana’ 17/9/18
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/complementary-basic-education-cbe-programme-entering-a-new-phase-in-ghana>
- S3.** a) Education Sector Medium-Term Development Plan 2018-2021. Ministry of Education, Ghana. https://www.globalpartnership.org/sites/default/files/2019-05-education-sector-medium-term-development-plan_2018-2021.pdf b) Education Strategic Plan 2018-2030. Ministry of Education, Ghana. <https://www.globalpartnership.org/sites/default/files/2019-05-education-strategic-plan-2018-2030.pdf> c) UNESCO Institute for Statistics (Ghana). See Participation in Education / Out-of-school children: <http://uis.unesco.org/en/country/gh?theme=education-and-literacy>
- S4.** Letter from Ghana’s Minister of Education on the impact of CBE research on education policy.
- S5.** Letter from Ethiopia Ministry of Education indicating how Sussex research has made a significant contribution to education policy and practice.
- S6.** Letter from US Luminos Fund on the role of Sussex research in motivating commitment from Ethiopian Ministry of Education to pursue government adoption and national scale-up.