

British Academy Early Childhood Development Programme

The British Academy has supported 10 research projects through its *Early Childhood Development Programme*. This Programme is a partnership with the Department for International Development (DFID) and part of the UK Government's £1.5 billion Global Challenges Research Fund. These awards begin in September 2017.

Reference: EC170101

PI: Dr Helen Baker-Henningham, Reader in Child Development and Behaviour, Bangor University

Co-Applicants: Jena Hamadani, Scientist, Maternal and Child Health Division, International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh

Title: Scaling up an Early Childhood Development Intervention by Integrating into Health Services in Bangladesh

Abstract: In two recent effectiveness trials, we demonstrated that parent-training sessions conducted by government health workers, as part of their existing duties, in primary health care clinics in rural Bangladesh leads to large benefits to the development of disadvantaged young children (Effect size = 0.84-1.3SD on cognition). In those trials, the research team trained and supervised the health workers (HWs). For the intervention to be implemented at scale, we need a feasible and effective model for the training and supervision of clinic health staff using the supervisors and trainers of the Ministry of Health (MOH). Through this project, we will work with the technical staff of the MOH to i) develop and evaluate technical guides for training and supervision of government supervisors, ii) develop and evaluate tools for monitoring the quality of implementation at scale and iii) evaluate the effectiveness of the training using two measures: observed quality of parent-training sessions and parenting practices of participating mothers. We will also measure HWs' job satisfaction and burn-out.

Reference: EC170232

PI: Professor Oriana Bandiera, Professor of Economics, London School of Economics and Political Science

Co-Applicants: Professor Imran Rasul, Professor of Economics, University College London; Professor Robin Burgess, Professor of Economics, London School of Economics and Political Science; Professor Mushtaque Chowdhury, Professor of Clinical Population and Family Health, School of Public Health, Columbia University

Title: Economic Conditions in Early Childhood and the Inter-generational Transmission of Poverty

Abstract: The economic conditions children experience during their early years can have permanent impacts on cognitive and non-cognitive traits that shape their outcomes later in life. This might be key to explaining the persistence of poverty across generations. The aim of this project is to establish whether this chain can be broken. This will be achieved via a large-scale RCT designed to evaluate an innovative anti-poverty programme targeting women in the poorest areas of Bangladesh. We build on our existing work demonstrating that this programme transformed the economic lives of the beneficiaries from 2007-2014, in order to determine whether these benefits carried over to the next generation. We aim to track all the children of the beneficiaries who were aged 0-10 at treatment date, test their outcomes against those of their counterparts in control villages and assess how the effect of treatment depends on their age at exposure to the programme. The findings will shed light on the dynamics of poverty and inform cost-benefit analyses of anti-poverty programmes.

Reference: EC170116

PI: Professor Esther Duflo, Abdul Latif Jameel Professor of Poverty Alleviation and Development, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Co-Applicants: Dr Pascaline Dupas, Associate Professor of Economics, Stanford University; Dr Elizabeth Spelke, Professor of Psychology, Harvard University

Title: The Impact of Parental Education on Cognitive Development in Early Childhood: Evidence from the Long-Term Tracking of a Randomised Evaluation in Ghana

Abstract: This interdisciplinary research project aims to establish whether secondary school subsidies for adolescents affect the cognitive development of their (future) children. The programme will leverage a randomised controlled trial initiated in Ghana several years ago. In 2008, a scholarship was allocated randomly to 682 youth in a sample of 2,064 who had qualified for, but not enrolled in, secondary school due to lack of funds. The scholarship offer led to a large increase in school enrollment. Since 2008, a team led by Professors Duflo and Dupas has tracked this cohort and studied the economic and social impacts of the programme. Now we focus on the children of the original respondents. Professor Spelke, a pioneer of the study of infant and early childhood development, has joined the team to develop innovative, robust, and culturally appropriate measures of early cognitive development for Ghanaian children at 14-18 months, 3 years and 5 years. By testing the children of the original adolescents, we ask whether investments in secondary education deliver benefits to the next generation.

Reference: EC170025

PI: Professor Paula Griffiths, Professor of Population Health, Loughborough University

Co-Applicants: Dr Elizabeth Kimani, Research Scientist, Maternal and Child Well-Being, African Population and Health Research Centre (APHRC); Dr Emma Haycraft, Senior Lecturer in Psychology, Loughborough University; Dr Teresa Mwoma, Senior Lecturer of Early Childhood Studies, Kenyatta University; Professor Judith Kimiywe, Associate Professor of Food, Nutrition and Dietetics, Kenyatta University

Title: Testing the Feasibility of Incorporating Support for Early Childhood Development into the Baby Friendly Community Initiative in Kenya

Abstract: This project aims to test the feasibility of incorporating parental support for early childhood development (ECD) into the Baby Friendly Community Initiative (BFCl; a community-based intervention delivered through community health volunteers (CHVs)) in rural Kenya. Over 66% of children in sub-Saharan Africa remain affected by poor developmental outcomes. Interventions delivered via CHVs and support to parents/families are seen by experts as a specific priority for testing in the African region because of their scaling potential. As a team of Kenyan/UK social scientists/public health nutritionists/ECD experts we will ensure impact by working closely with stakeholders in the Ministry of Health to generate evidence on: 1) the potential impact of the BFCl on ECD outcomes; 2) user, stakeholder and service provider needs for incorporating parental support for ECD into the BFCl; 3) culturally appropriate tools for delivery and monitoring of ECD within the BFCl, and as a result be in a position to co-produce a sustainable plan for incorporating ECD into future BFCl delivery/outcome monitoring.

Reference: EC170194

PI: Professor Patricia Justino, Professor, Institute of Development Studies

Co-Applicants: Miss Caroline Dusabe, Head of Education and ECD Programme Manager, Save the Children International, Rwanda

Title: Scaling-Up Early Child Development Interventions in Rwanda

Abstract: Globally, around 250 million children under the age of five do not meet key development milestones, which reduces their ability to reach their full potential, and compromises the success of the Sustainable Development Goals. The Convention on the Rights of the Child and a large body of scientific evidence have shown that parenting is one of the strongest influences on early child development (ECD). As a result, there has been a recent push towards the implementation of parent training programmes across the world. However, despite the increasing popularity of these programmes, gaps remain in our knowledge of what works to promote positive parenting practices, particularly in vulnerable contexts. This project aims to establish a long-term partnership between the IDS, Save the Children UK (SCUK) and Save the Children International Rwanda (SCI-R) to analyse, evaluate and scale-up (in partnership with the Government of Rwanda) a unique holistic programme (First Steps) that supports families of children aged 0-3 in the district of Ngororero in Rwanda.

Reference: EC170137

PI: Professor Francisca Mutapi, Professor (Global Health Infection and Immunity), University of Edinburgh

Co-Applicants: Professor Moses Chimbari, College Dean of Research and Professor in the School of Nursing and Public Health, University of KwaZulu-Natal; Dr Dixon Chibanda, Senior Lecturer in Psychiatry/Director AMARI Programme, University of Zimbabwe

Title: Providing the Evidence Base and Tools for Prioritising and Implementing Paediatric Schistosomiasis Control to Enhance Early Childhood Development

Abstract: This project aims to provide the evidence base and operational tools for appropriate prioritising and implementing treatment of preschool-aged children (PSAC) (=5 yrs) for schistosomiasis, a neglected but still the 2nd most important parasitic disease in Sub-Saharan Africa. This chronic infection typically affects people in endemic countries for 30-50% of their life. Children are exposed to infection within the first 5 years of life resulting in them carrying the heaviest infection levels during school-age years. They experience schistosome-related bladder/kidney disorders, stunted growth, impaired cognition and diminished physical fitness. Organomegaly, bladder/urethral fibrosis and bladder cancer in adulthood may result from childhood exposure. An estimated 50M African PSAC need treatment, but remain excluded from national schistosome control programmes. We will quantify the impact of PSAC schistosomiasis and its treatment on child health and development, evaluate diagnostic tools for PSAC schistosomiasis, and identify community engagement strategies for accessing PSAC for treatment.

Reference: EC170207

PI: Dr Keetie Roelen, Research Fellow and Co-Director of the Centre for Social Protection, Institute of Development Studies

Title: Pathways to Stronger Futures in Haiti: How Can Economic Strengthening Through Comprehensive Social Protection Improve Early Childhood Development?

Abstract: It is widely understood that poverty undermines early childhood development (ECD). In turn, poor ECD reinforces inter-generational transmission of poverty. Economic strengthening through comprehensive social protection may offer a 'double boon': it can improve ECD in the short-term and

reduce poverty in the long-run. This study proposes mixed-methods research that will investigate how economic strengthening through comprehensive social protection can affect ECD, particularly seeking insights into pathways, dynamics and contextual factors that underpin positive or negative linkages. It does so in a context of widespread poverty, poor outcomes for young children and limited availability of services in rural Haiti. It represents a timely contribution to the evidence, which is currently biased towards studying cash transfers and using quantitative methods. It will fill knowledge gaps on the roles of social protection and economic strengthening in improving ECD and reducing intergenerational poverty in Haiti and across the Global South, thereby directly addressing SDGs 1 and 4.

Reference: EC170233

PI: Dr Jolene Skordis-Worrall, Senior Lecturer in Health and Development Economics, University College London

Co-Applicants: Dr Peter Waiswa, Associate Professor of Health Policy Planning and Management, Makerere University School of Public Health; Dr Hassan Haghparast Bidgoli, Senior Research Associate in Health Economics, University College London; Dr Zelee Hill, Senior Lecturer of International Child Health, University College London

Title: Developing a Scalable Programme to Promote Early Childhood Nutrition and Development in Rural Uganda: a Feasibility Study

Abstract: Over 2.4 million children under 5 are stunted in Uganda, almost one third of all children under 5. A further 14% are underweight. Undernutrition accounts for 40% of all child deaths in Uganda. There is strong evidence that undernutrition in early life has life-long social and economic consequences including poor cognitive and educational performance, and reduced productivity in adulthood. Undernutrition contributes to inter-generational poverty transmission and increased later risk of non-communicable disease. Evidence has shown that nutrition interventions, combined with stimulation, can improve poor early childhood nutrition and development outcomes. Yet, evidence is limited regarding interventions targeted at the first 1000 days that are cost-effective, feasible at scale and suited to rural Uganda. This project uses a unique policy window to develop a scalable intervention to improve early childhood nutrition and stimulation in rural Uganda, and assess its feasibility and acceptability through small scale pre-testing.

Reference: EC170022

PI: Dr Jyotsna Jha, Director, Centre for Budget and Policy Studies, India

Co-Applicants: Dr Arathi Sriprakash, University Lecturer in Sociology of Education, University of Cambridge

Title: Examining the Contexts, Practices and Costs of Early Childhood Care and Education in India: Responsive Models for Child Development

Abstract: This project tackles the problem of how to scale quality early childhood care and education. It analyses the contexts, practices and costs of early childhood care and education (ECCE) for disadvantaged families/communities in two Indian states of Tamil Nadu and Bihar. The comparison of the different histories and practices of early childhood care within families as well as within existing ECCE institutions will reveal the interactions between economic, cultural, and psycho-social factors that are critical to the development of contextually responsive models of ECCE. Ethnographic inquiry, combined with an analysis of financial costs and service delivery, will provide inputs for a policy simulation exercise in which we examine how contextually-relevant programmes within the two states can be effectively scaled. In doing

so, the project offers a methodology to generate responsive models of ECCE expansion that will be both nationally and internationally relevant.

Reference: EC170023

PI: Dr Sharon Wolf, Assistant Professor in Human Development and Education, University of Pennsylvania

Co-Applicants: Dr Jere Behrman, WR Kenan, Jr. Professor of Economics and Sociology, University of Pennsylvania; Dr J. Lawrence Aber, Willner Family Professor in Psychology and Public Policy, New York University

Title: Assessing Sustained Impacts of the Quality Preschool for Ghana Teacher Training Intervention on Children's Early Primary Grade Outcomes

Abstract: The proposed study builds on a school-randomised experiment, Quality Preschool for Ghana (QP4G), to assess impacts of an affordable and potentially scalable in-service training and coaching programme for kindergarten teachers (of 4-6 year olds, KG1 and KG2) in private and public schools in the Greater Accra Region. The original study found at the first follow-up (end of Year 1) that the training improved classroom quality, developmentally appropriate practices, and children's school readiness (Wolf, Aber & Behrman, 2017). Results from the second follow-up one year later show sustained impacts on school readiness including social-emotional development, executive function, and early academic skills for younger (KG1) children. We seek to follow the 1475 KG1 children in their transition to primary school to assess if (1) longer-term impacts of high quality ECE are sustained (vs. fade-out), (2) there are differences in longer-term impacts based on primary school characteristics, and (3) there are differences in longer-term impacts by child age and gender and select parental characteristics.