

Annexe: Impact Stories

The following impact narratives highlight examples of how the Impact Initiative created opportunities to connect researchers with policymakers and practitioners to present evidence and influence policy conversations. These impact narratives were developed for annual funder reporting of the Impact Initiative's goal-level achievements.

Impact Narrative 1: Bringing evidence to a non-academic audience at the UNCSW62 – March 2018

At the 62nd UN Commission for the Status of Women (UNCSW62), the Impact Initiative hosted a panel discussion¹ as part of the NGO parallel events on 'Improving Women's Life Choices'. Chaired by Thokozile Rudvidzo, Director of Social Development in the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) Policy Division, the discussion drew on evidence from Raising Learning Outcomes (RLO) and Joint Fund for Poverty Alleviation Research (Joint Fund) grantees and a senior practitioner from World Vision International. This brought to life the messages of a Research for Policy and Practice paper (R4PP) *Women's Life Choices* (Benson and Shephard 2018) which was disseminated at the discussion.

The event was attended by just over 30 NGO activists, civil society organisations and policy actors. Most notable was the attendance of Auxilia Bupe Ponga, Permanent Secretary of Zambia's Ministry of Gender and representative to the UN. Ponga said that she found the evidence presented very relevant to her work, particularly the discussion on child marriage and the need for a more creative school curriculum to improve girls' life choices. She particularly appreciated the synthesis of evidence from across a variety of themes that connect around a core policy issue and found it very useful to see the linkages between different issues such as access to transport and education (Ponga pers. comm. 2018).²

Impact Narrative 2: Building bridges at the Putting Children First conference, Addis Ababa, October 2017

The Global Coalition to End Child Poverty and the Impact Initiative co-hosted a pan-African conference to

bring together coalition members with academics and policy actors and donors. The Putting Children First: Identifying Solutions and Taking Action to Tackle Poverty and Inequality in Africa conference³ took place at UNECA in Ethiopia and hosted over 200 delegates. The event bridged divides across sectors, disciplines, policy, practice, and research and provided an opportunity to build lasting relationships. The conference featured research from 22 Economic and Social Research Council-Department for International Development (ESRC-DFID) (since 2020 ESRC-FCDO – Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office) grantees representing 15 projects across both the RLO and the Joint Fund and including 10 Southern research partners.

The conference was highly policy-orientated but also incorporated Impact Initiative participatory sessions on evidence-informed decision making and a panel debate on research to policy processes.

Richard Morgan, Director of the Child Poverty Global Initiative, Save the Children, Putting Children First Co-Organiser, said the conference: 'Uncovered research that we wouldn't have been aware of or known about, providing a platform and spotlight for African-related and -based research. It provided an addition to knowledge' (Morgan pers. comm. December 2017).⁴

Impact Narrative 3: Policy collaborations emerge from participation in the world's largest health systems event

At the Fifth Global Symposium on Health Systems Research (HSR2018) in Liverpool, the Impact Initiative convened a satellite session⁵ highlighting evidence of scalable, tangible policy

ideas and innovations that could help make ‘health for all’ a reality by 2030. The panellists included two grantholders, funded by the Joint Fund, and a senior policymaker from the Ministry of Health in Liberia. Following the event, GAVI, the Vaccine Alliance, included the research findings in its 2019 strategic planning for Mozambique. A representative from GAVI was subsequently invited to integrate the Civil Society Advisory Group of GAVI in the country. N’Weti, a Mozambican non-profit organisation, and its local partners in Mozambique were invited to attend the Community of Practitioners on Accountability and Social Action in Health conference in Delhi. The invitation was also extended to the Brazilian partners.

This provides an example of the power of networking and connection through face-to-face Impact Initiative events and highlights how the sharing of evidence in such fora can build relationships between stakeholders that open up new paths to evidence use and behaviour change.

Impact Narrative 4: UK Disability Summit informed by the ESRC-DFID Raising Learning Outcomes Programme

Responding to increased policy, programme, and research focus on disability, the Impact Initiative’s work on disability and inclusive education came to a climax with direct involvement of ESRC-DFID grantholders at the 2018 Global Disability Summit. Facilitating the partnership of multiple stakeholders on global policy processes meant that evidence was used at the macro level to shape global policies and legislations inclusive of the needs of persons with disabilities.

Ian Attfield, Senior Education Adviser, South Asia Region, DFID, noted:

This was a space to really engage with researchers and practitioners and think through the detail of joint ideas and common messaging around disability in education. It was good to discuss the extent to which research communication and dissemination can support country operations and be done most effectively. Researchers offered support around gaps of knowledge of how children with complex needs can be supported.

(Impact Initiative 2018)

Impact Narrative 5: Influencing a new national youth policy in Ethiopia

Taking advantage of a new Ethiopian government with a stated commitment to a more inclusive and evidence-informed approach, researchers from the ESRC-DFID-funded YOUR World Research and Bridging the Gap projects co-hosted the National Youth Seminar in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 21 March 2019 (Webb 2019). Ahead of the event, the Impact Initiative prepared stories describing barriers to education for disabled youth and what it is like being young and disabled in the city to hand out to policymakers on arrival (CHADET *et al.* 2019a; CHADET *et al.* 2019b). A total of 46 youth and more than 50 adults participated in the event. Adult participants included ministry officials, NGO representatives, and local researchers. The adult participants were welcomed to the event by Ato Abiy Hilemeleket from the Ministry of Women, Children and Youth. The ministries of Education and Labour and Social Affairs were also represented.

Matiyas Asefa Chefa, Ministry of Women, Children and Youth noted:

We strongly believe that the outcomes of this research will help us a lot, especially in the policy-designing process. Today I have heard lots of interesting and fascinating points raised in these discussions, we must incorporate these issues in the policy-making process because they are vital for our future policies.
(Chefa 2019).

Impact Narrative 6: Bringing evidence on inclusive education to the UK parliamentary processes

Working directly with the UK All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Global Education to organise and host meetings provided a space for grantholders to connect with political agendas, build networks with key policy actors, and garner parliamentary awareness and support for further funding. Bringing evidence and research into the policy conversations built on the connections needed to move political agendas forward. Lucy Drescher, Head of Parliamentary Advocacy, RESULTS UK commented: ‘Having researcher and evidence present at the APPG meeting was

positive as researchers were given access to policy conversations and policy makers were able to engage first-hand with evidence from specific contexts' (Drescher pers. comm. July 2019).⁶

Impact Narrative 7: Successful in-country cohort building and research–policy engagement activities emerging from Dragons' Den pitch

Activities involving RLO projects contributed towards an evidence-based strategy of education policy reform in India. Focused on raising learning outcomes for children facing different forms of disadvantage in diverse contexts, activities included a workshop and national dissemination event of a collaboratively produced policy brief, providing the opportunity for each project to engage with each other and those at state level (De *et al.* 2019). Leadership by Southern-based research teams meant activities and outputs were contextually relevant and were able to engage on some issues presented by the draft national education policy.

Gayathri Krishna, an RLO researcher said of the regional event⁷ where the policy brief was disseminated:

They had a very good panel especially as it had people coming from different aspects of the same sector. There were a lot of different experiences and perspectives which really will benefit many of the projects which are now in the process of wrapping up and also infer the policy implications.

(Krishna pers. comm. December 2019)⁸

Impact Narrative 8: Contributing to understanding of partnership and brokerage

One of the Impact Initiative's high-level goals is strengthening the international profile of the ESRC-FCDO partnership, enhancing its reputation as a centre of excellence for social science research on international development. This has been achieved through the IDS OpenDocs collection, which includes the full text of both Joint Fund and RLO research outputs and the Impact Initiative's synthesis products.⁹ The production and promotion of an *IDS Bulletin* edition on 'Exploring Research–

Policy Partnerships in International Development' (Georgalakis and Rose 2019), an edited collection on *The Social Realities of Knowledge for Development* (Georgalakis *et al.* 2017), and a Delta of Impact working paper (Clark and Goodier 2019) have also contributed to this goal. Another contribution of the Impact Initiative has been the support to grantholders to generate Research for Policy and Practice papers (R4PPs) and impact stories.

Grantholder Ricardo Safra de Campos said of the R4PP on urban resilience (Impact Initiative 2019b):

It was a useful instrument to show evidence of the impact of our research among policy and planning circles. The document was shared with both Minister of Planning and Disaster Management of Bangladesh as well as other national and international stakeholders. The Research for Policy and Practice has enabled dialogue with other researchers working on the field of migration, displacement and urbanisation. Those outputs have also facilitated engagement with urban planners interested in using participatory methods for urban governance.

(Safra de Campos pers. comm. December 2019).¹⁰

Impact Narrative 9: Contributing to the conversation on applying the gender lens to impact

In July 2019, the Impact Initiative published a booklet (Impact Initiative 2019a) that profiles the cross-cutting research, funded by the ESRC-DFID Strategic Partnership, that provides clear lessons on gender equality and mainstreaming in international development for practitioners, funders, and researchers. The booklet has gone on to be downloaded over 1,000 times. In presenting the gendered perspective in a variety of forums – from impact stories, to all-party political events, to large scale international fora and using press and media coverage, we can ensure that gender is not sidelined but plays a key role in recognising the realities of poverty.

Commenting on the usefulness of the gender outputs, Mandu Reid, Leader of the UK Women's Equality Party said, 'To meaningfully tackle persistent poverty – particularly how it manifests for women – [research] must encompass a much broader range of considerations. The selection of ESRC-DFID-funded research presents pertinent examples of how this applies in practice' (Impact Initiative 2019c).

Impact Narrative 10: Dragons' Den collaboration provides foundation for implementation and impact

The Dragons' Den at the Power of Partnership conference held in Delhi in December 2018¹¹ provided a space for grantholders to network, make concrete proposals for joint activities, and leave with tangible plans in place for future work together. One of the pitches presented brought together researchers from three projects to co-produce the *Urban Community Resilience R4PP* (Impact Initiative 2019b). These projects were able to take their research findings to the policy dialogues co-hosted in Dhaka by researchers from ESRC-DFID-funded projects, 'Safe and Sustainable Cities', and 'Supporting the Mobility of Trapped

Populations' (Safra de Campos *et al.* 2019), and the Hargeysa International Book Fair in 2019 (Collyer 2019).

The Dhaka event provided an opportunity to distribute 100 copies of the *Urban Community Resilience R4PP* (Impact Initiative 2019b), including to the Minister for Planning, Mr M.A. Mannan, and the Minister for Disaster Management and Relief. Mr M.A. Mannan stated that the Bangladesh government 'would like to coordinate, and change things so that at the end of the day, city dwellers, new migrants, [and] old migrants... can live in peace'. The lessons that emerged from research findings and discussions will be relevant for development of policy that takes account of the urban challenges faced by new migrant populations in the country (Safra de Campos *et al.* 2019).

References

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Webb, A. (2019) 'Ethiopian Government Invites Researchers and Youth to Shape New Policy', *Impact Initiative News*, 21 March (accessed 7 January 2021)

Endnotes

- 1 The Panel Session at the 62nd UN Commission for the Status of Women ‘How Can We Improve the Life Choices for Women in Rural Africa?’ took place in New York on 20 March 2018.
- 2 Impact Initiative interview with the attending Zambia Minister, Auxilia Bupe Ponga, at the Commission for the Status of Women in New York on 20 March 2018
- 3 Putting Children First: Identifying Solutions and Taking Action to Tackle Poverty and Inequality in Africa conference took place in Addis Ababa, 23–25 October 2017.
- 4 Impact Initiative interview with Richard Morgan, Director of the Child Poverty Global Initiative, Save the Children, on 12 December 2017
- 5 The satellite session ‘[Making Universal Health Coverage a Reality by 2030: Evidence of What Works](#)’ took place at the Fifth Global Symposium on Health Systems Research (HSR2018) on 8 October 2017.
- 6 Impact Initiative interview with Lucy Drescher, Head of Parliamentary Advocacy, RESULTS, on 9 July 2019
- 7 The regional event brought researchers, policymakers, development practitioners, and civil social representatives together in Delhi on 9 December 2019 to discuss improving learning outcomes in different Indian contexts.
- 8 Impact Initiative interview with Gayathri Krishna, an RLO researcher, at the regional event in Delhi on 9 December 2019
- 9 The IDS OpenDocs repository is accessed via <https://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/opendocs/>
- 10 Response from Ricardo Safra de Campos (University of Exeter) to Impact Initiative survey, submitted 5 December 2019
- 11 Power of Partnership: Research to Alleviate Poverty took place in New Delhi, 3–5 December 2018.