



Press release

Money helps, but will not help achieve education goals on its own, says new study

3ie's comprehensive review of 216 education programmes in 52 low- and middle-income countries has several major findings on what works and what doesn't to improve key education outcomes

London, 27 September 2016:

Recent high-level calls for more investment in education are important, but more funding alone cannot achieve global ambitions for education, says a new report from the International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie). The study, which is the most comprehensive synthesis of scientific research conducted to date on the impact of education programmes in low- and middle-income countries, is being launched at the What Works Global Summit on Tuesday, 27 September. It argues that 'one size does not fit all' and that there are no magic bullets for getting children to school and helping them learn. More investments need to be made in programmes that are proven effective and – worryingly – several currently popular education interventions have failed to improve the learning outcomes of children.

'The impact of education programmes on learning and school participation in low- and middle-income countries' is a systematic review that examines the impact of 216 education programmes in 52 low- and middle-income countries. It highlights what works and what doesn't across developing countries in getting to children to school and helping them learn while they are there.

"Our study finds that education programmes either improve children's school enrolment or they improve their learning. They rarely do both," says **Emmanuel Jimenez, executive director, 3ie and a co-author of the study**. "The big takeaway here is that education strategies need to have a multipronged approach to address the multiple barriers to school enrolment, attendance and learning. Moreover, such programmes must be tailored to needs in specific contexts, because what works in one setting may not work in another", he concludes.

The 3ie study comes close on the heels of two major reports on global education released in the past one month: UNESCO's 2016 Global Education Monitoring Report and the International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity's Learning Generation Report. These reports have highlighted the serious shortfall in funding for global education and the need for more investments from both developing country governments and international aid agencies.

New Delhi

202–203, Rectangle One
D-4, Saket District Centre
New Delhi – 110017, India

3ie@3ieimpact.org
Tel: +91 11 4989 4444

London

c/o LIDC, 36 Gordon Square,
London WC1H 0PD
United Kingdom

3ieuk@3ieimpact.org
Tel: +44 207 958 8351/8350

Washington, DC

1029 Vermont Avenue, NW, Suite 1000
Washington, DC 20005
United States of America

3ieus@3ieimpact.org
Tel: +1 202 629 3939

Of the 21 different types of education programmes examined in this study, cash transfers work best for improving children's school enrolment. While cash transfers have significantly improved enrolment and are hugely popular, particularly in Latin America, they have not had any impact on improving children's learning in several countries across the world. On the other hand, structured pedagogy programmes - a combination of customised curriculum, training in new teaching approaches and educational materials – have consistently improved children's learning in several countries

3ie's comprehensive review highlights the numerous factors that influence the success and failure of education programmes. "We find that just providing free computers and textbooks does not always improve learning outcomes. This does not mean that such inputs are not an important component of programmes to improve learning outcomes. But they need to be integrated with the curriculum, provided in a language children understand and combined with training for teachers on how to incorporate new materials in their teaching," says **Birte Snilstveit, senior evaluation specialist and lead author of the 3ie research study**. "Across low- and middle-income countries around the world, we find that successful programmes are those that are well-designed and implemented, and appropriately customised for the local context," she added.

The study offers several useful pointers for developing country governments and international aid agencies. "From the perspective of a country like Peru, which has a huge challenge of making education a real pathway for prosperity for all its citizens, 3ie's systematic review and its summary report offers critical insights on the effectiveness of structured pedagogic programmes, additional instructional time, remedial education and community engagement. I am sure it will be extremely useful for all government actors, researchers and programme implementers throughout the world," said **Jaime Saavedra, Minister of Education for Peru**.

Notes to the editor:

1. 3ie's systematic review summary report will be launched at the evening public lecture session of the What Works Global Summit on 27 September 2016.
Venue: Main Hall, Woburn House, WC1H 9HQ, London
Time: 5.30pm to 7pm, 27 September 2016
High tea will be served from 5pm onwards.
2. Systematic reviews: 3ie systematic reviews use rigorous and transparent methods to identify all of the studies that qualify for analysis and synthesis to address a specific research question. Reviewers identify published and unpublished studies and use theory-based, mixed methods to analyse and synthesise the evidence from the included studies. The result is an unbiased assessment of what works, for whom, why and at what cost.
3. **About 3ie:** The International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie) is an international grant-making NGO promoting evidence-informed development policies and programmes. We are the global leader in funding, producing and synthesising high-quality evidence of what works, for whom, why and at what cost. We believe that high-quality and policy-relevant evidence will make development more effective and improve poor people's lives. 3ie's main funders are the Gates Foundation, UKaid and the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.

Media enquiries:

For more information on the report and for setting up interviews with authors or other commentators, please contact Radhika Menon, rmenon@3ieimpact.org or +44 7405001593 or Deepthy Menon, dmenon@3ieimpact.org or +447404377184