

Making rights to education realities: delivering the promise of universal access



More than half of all children in low-enrolment countries fail to complete a full cycle of basic education.

The research of the Consortium for Research on Educational Access, Transitions and Equity (CREATE) has reshaped the international discourse on access to education in low-income countries. CREATE's model for Zones of Exclusion and their 12-point framework for development are directly influencing major global education programmes and are being used to develop strategies aimed at reducing the problem of 'silent exclusion' of children from education with the goal of providing universal access to education for all.

Overview

CREATE seeks to influence policy and accelerate progress toward providing universal access to education worldwide, working within the framework of the United Nations

(UN) Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the commitment to 'Education for All'. Established in 2006 with a £2.5-million grant from the Department for International Development (DFID) to Keith Lewin (Professor of Education at Sussex), CREATE works with multiple international partners to increase knowledge and understanding of why more than half of all children in low-enrolment countries fail to complete a full cycle of basic education.

A key output of their research has been the development of the model of Zones of Exclusion and Inclusion, which charts participation in education by grade and identifies school-age children who fail to sustain access to education, from zone 0 (those who are excluded from preschool) to zone 6 (those who are at risk of drop out from secondary school). The model highlights the many millions of children

nominally attending but learning little as a result of various silent exclusions that include over-age entry and progression, poor attendance, low achievement, disability, under-nutrition and its consequences, HIV/AIDS orphanhood, migrant status and exclusions by social group. The CREATE 12-point framework for development identifies the steps needed to make the global right to education a reality.

Using household surveys, and school-based and national case studies, and by tracking 15,000 children in four countries over four years, CREATE collected a wealth of robust data on health, attendance, age in grade, enrolment and achievement, and undertook analysis of large-scale data sets across more than 40 countries in Africa and Asia. A key finding is that the UN assessment of 60 million out of school is a gross underestimate and

that more than 250 million 6–15 year olds fall into one or more of CREATE's Zones of Exclusion. This is now recognised by the Global Monitoring Report based at UNESCO. Additionally, most out-of-school children who have not completed a full cycle of basic education are drop outs rather than those who have never enrolled. Alarmingly, more than 30 per cent of all poor children in school in Africa and South Asia are more than two years over age, increasing the probability of drop out. Children, particularly girls, who do not enrol by 10 years of age are unlikely ever to enrol.

Achieving impact

A major impact of CREATE's research has been to reshape the policy discourse and priorities concerning education and to influence global organisations such as DFID, Commonwealth Ministers, AusAID, World Bank, UNICEF, UNESCO and Education International.

The Zones of Exclusion model has been adopted by major educational and aid programmes worldwide. As a result of the presentation of CREATE's research findings to DFID advisors at their 2009 Chennai retreat, DFID's Education Strategy Paper (2010) adopted the Zones of Exclusion model to frame policy on access, quality and skills. This research also helped the Government of India's Rashtriya Madhyamik Siksha Abhijan programme for secondary education in India to secure £80 million of UK aid funding in 2011. Similarly, the AusAID education policy paper *Promoting Education for All* was explicitly shaped by CREATE's Zones of Exclusion and their findings on silent exclusion, over-age children and drop outs. Their 'expanded vision of access' was adopted as one of the three pillars that shape Australian aid, and the Zones of Exclusion have been integrated into their Performance Assessment Framework. This has resulted in practical application of the 'zones' for management and monitoring being piloted in three countries.

Professor Lewin has been appointed senior technical advisor to the Commonwealth Ministerial Working Party on Education and co-authored The Commonwealth Framework for Education Post 2015, which adopts CREATE's 'expanded vision of access' and matrix of goals, indicators and targets. This paper, endorsed by the

53 member-states and presented to the UN High-Level Panel on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), is used for advocacy across the UN system to reform the MDGs.

Future impact

Professor Lewin's 2011 paper, *Making Rights Realities: Researching Access, Transitions and Equity in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia*, was the centrepiece of the 2011 UNICEF global advisors' retreat in New York and was projected on their global Intranet. This was a direct result of input into the design and theorising of the UNICEF 25-country 2010 Out-of-School studies building on CREATE models. Subsequently, UNICEF has commissioned an 11-country study on access and equity in the Arab region and an East and Southern Africa Situation Analysis from the University of Sussex. Most recently, Professor Lewin was invited to develop a series of DVDs and a plenary for the Asian region retreat of DFID Education and Health advisors based on his work on financing expanded secondary schooling for UNESCO and World Bank. Pacific Ministers have also mandated the University of the South Pacific to replicate parts of the CREATE research in the Pacific Region.

The UN MDG to universalise access to education by 2015 requires that all school-age children should be securely enrolled and on track to graduate from primary schooling. CREATE has influenced the UN debate on sustainable development Post 2015 through its direct inputs into the Commonwealth Framework, UNICEF out-of-school programmes, DFID retreats and through Professor Lewin chairing a panel discussion at the UNESCO/UNICEF global consultation meeting on Post 2015 in Dakar in 2012. CREATE's promotion of 'learning yield' indicators has contributed to the UNESCO Institute of Statistics and the Brookings Learning Metrics Task Force developing improved indicators to monitor progress and mobilise funding for educational development in low-income countries.

Funding and partnership

CREATE is co-ordinated from the Centre for International Education (University of Sussex, UK). Its core partners include: The Institute of Education Development, BRAC



'The six Zones of Exclusion described in the conceptual framework for CREATE have now entered the literature and are a standard part of the dialogue between international aid agencies and countries.'
Former Senior Education Advisor,
World Bank

University, Dhaka, Bangladesh; NUEPA, The National University of Educational Planning and Administration, Delhi, India; The Education Policy Unit at the University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa; The University of Education at Winneba, Ghana, UCC, Ghana; UCC, The University of Cape Coast, Ghana; and The Institute of Education, University of London, UK. Affiliates include the Centre for Educational Research and Training, University of Malawi, the Kenya National Examinations Council, The University of Colombo, and Beijing Normal University. CREATE has supported 23 doctoral affiliates including five Commonwealth Scholars and has raised more than £600,000 in additional funding to complement its core grant.

Working with us

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