



**Examining development evaluation in higher education interventions:
a preliminary study**

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1 This paper reports on a preliminary study of literature relating to the evaluation of higher education (HE) interventions in low and middle income countries (LMICs), which have been made by national and international development assistance programmes. It has been prepared as a background paper for the March 2012 London conference, “Measuring the Impact of Higher Education Interventions for Development”, organised by the London International Development Centre (LIDC) and the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU). This conference will examine the state of impact evaluation for HE interventions in development and how to improve its quality.

2 The study has surveyed a range of interventions in higher education for international development, characterised these in a useful way, and examined their stated objectives, the methods that have been used to assess their impact, and the conclusions from those assessments.

Background

3 There is a long history of investment by development agencies in higher education as a contribution to international development. These have included support for university training through scholarship programmes and training and capacity building projects with universities in LMICs. Elements of capacity building involving HE have been incorporated into research projects and the work of research consortia. Some, but by no means all, of these activities have been evaluated.

A typology of HE interventions for development

5 We propose that HE investments for development can be classified under three main headings: programmes and projects of education and training support, for consortia and networks, and targeted projects of HE institution development. While these categories may overlap to some degree, and certain specific investment programmes may involve more than one category, we believe that this classification facilitates examination and comparison of evaluation methods.

5.1 Education and training

Governments in high income countries have a long tradition of providing professional training for students from LMICs. In 1900, for example, the governments of individual British colonies were already providing scholarships for some 40 students to attend UK universities. Courses designed to raise capacity have been run within both industrialised and developing countries. USAID has sought to raise capacity in agriculture and agricultural education both by running training courses abroad and by taking students to American universities.

Most activities of this kind fall under one of four headings:

- specialised training courses, usually with a clearly defined purpose and target audience;
- open-ended scholarship programmes, run with broad objectives and open to applicants in a range of disciplines;
- focused scholarship programmes restricted to particular institutions or disciplines;
- distance-learning scholarships introduced as an alternative to scholarships that require scholarship holders to travel in order to study.

5.2 Consortia and networks

For many years, governments in high income countries have supported universities to link individual departments with departments with shared interests in universities in LMICs in the interest both of supporting research and teaching and of raising capacity in those partner institutions. In Britain, for instance, the HELPIS programme ran on these lines from 1981 to 2006, with funding from UK Department of International Development (DfID) and its predecessors through the British Council. HELPIS has since been superseded by a similar but more targeted programme, DELPHE, which promotes partnerships between universities and other higher education institutions (HEIs) working on collaborative activity linked to the MDGs and in DfID's priority countries.

Donor-funded research consortia on developmental issues in health, education, agriculture and other

sectors are likely to work with individuals and institutions in LMICs. Increasingly, these consortium projects are likely to have capacity development built in as a subsidiary objective to their main purpose, often involving partner HE institutions in LMICs. When, for example, DfID in 2005 allocated most of its educational research budget to three university-led consortia to work on problems of basic education, it required them to have southern partners and to build capacity development into their work.

5.3 *Institutional development*

Projects and programmes have also been run with the direct aim of raising capacity within individual institutions. This was, for example, the *raison d'être* for aid-funded development of new universities in Africa in the 1950s and 1960s, involving collaboration with universities in Britain and the United States, the exchange of staff, and provision of scholarships for cadres of staff and potential senior staff. Recent multi-donor agency activity to support Makerere University also used a variety of approaches to strengthen the university as a whole. Recently some institutional projects have been more narrowly focused (e.g. on capacity in information and communication technology) or at a regional or national rather than institutional level (e.g. establishing a regional QA system in East Africa or on student loan policy).

6 Different kinds of interventions will have different conditions for success, and this may involve different methods of impact evaluation. We use this classification, therefore, to present a more structured analysis and comparison of impact evaluations methods for different kinds HE interventions for development.

Evaluation

7 This limited review of available literature is based on readily available, generally published, accounts of HE interventions designed to raise professional capacity in LMICs. In a search for robust conclusions, and to facilitate comparison between different approaches, the review was limited to reports that met four criteria: there was some statement of aims or objectives; some kind of monitoring or evaluation had taken place; the evaluation methodology was stated; it included some information about results. The application of these criteria meant that of 67 reports scanned, it was possible to make use of 17 which are summarised below. Further, this review is selective, in that we have sought to cover the range of typologies of interventions described above, and this took priority over attempting to be comprehensive in any one category. There appears, for example, to be much more literature available about the impact of scholarship programmes than of the capacity building effects of consortia. In addition to the 17 reports used, summary information is available on a further 5, referred to in brief below, which were examined in less detail.

8 In order to provide a common framework for discussing impact evaluation in different programmes we sought to identify for each programme its specific *objectives, inputs, outputs, effects* and *impact* (UN ACC Task force 1984). Outputs are defined as the specific products or services which an activity is expected to produce from its inputs. Effects are then the outcome of the use of the project's outputs while impact is the outcome of project effects and an expression of the results produced, usually in terms of broad and long-term social aims. In scholarship programmes, for example, the numbers of graduates produced are one indicator of outputs. Data of this kind are often produced as a result of monitoring even where there is no formal evaluation. Effects might then be assessed by looking at indicators such as the promotion of an individual who had received a scholarship, or an increase in the number of publications they have produced. In looking at impact in relation to university development, for example, one would need to move from assessing the performance of individuals as teachers or researchers to measures of the strength and activities of the university as an institution. Naturally it is more difficult to find indicators of impact than of outputs, and more difficult to attribute causality as we move further down the pathway from outputs, through effects to impacts. Few studies have attempted to answer counterfactual questions such as the likely alternative career if a scholarship holder had not won the award. The Rhodes trust provides an interesting, if anecdotal, exception in identifying a distinguished list, including George Gallup, Alger Hiss and Robert McNamara, of students who applied for Rhodes scholarships but were turned down (Ziegler 2008, 152).

9 Discussion of objectives presents its own difficulties. While this study examines interventions in HE for international development, many of these interventions have multiple purposes. Boeren

et al (2008:9), for example, identifies four common objectives behind scholarship programmes: humanistic, academic, economic or political reasons (or a combination). One further difficulty is that objectives of particular programmes may change over time. For most of its first 40 years, for example, the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission did not use evidence of potential for development as a criterion for selection: academic merit was the sole guide. While it is legitimate to ask how far recent scholars funded through DfID have contributed to sustainable development or the reduction of poverty – DfID’s requirements – it is more problematic to ask about the impact of the 1990 cohort of scholars in this way.

10 In Tables 1-3 in the appendix, we present a summary of the HE interventions for development which we have selected in this study and their properties, as per the characterisation outlined above.

Review of findings

General overview

11 Most of the evaluations, which are all donor-sponsored and donor-defined, try to assess whether projects have been successful, in their overall development approach, in promoting certain widely-held donor principles: these include becoming more demand-driven, successful in promoting a sense of ownership in the south or reducing gender discrepancies. These principles are incorporated into interventions to differing degrees and in differing ways, e.g. self-initiated proposals, equitable selection procedures which positively target women and people from less conventional academic backgrounds or disadvantaged groups, sharing of costs and responsibilities. Evaluators are assessing these against explicitly stated objectives in the original or later reshaping of, the programme design or else looked at retrospectively in the evaluation.

12 The MDGs and the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers have set a common donor agenda in development and many evaluations focus on monitoring whether programmes have achieved outcomes within a framework targeted towards specific developing countries, MDG- and pro-poor related academic subject areas, regions, institutions and groups of people. Most of the evaluations focus heavily on quantifying a programme’s outputs, such as the number of research projects/training sessions/PhD or Masters in specific subject areas, the geographical reach of the project and measuring institutional links within a region.

13 Donor preoccupation with these ownership principles has also revealed unexpected outcomes. Evaluation of the IUCEA-DAAD programme, for example, found the concept of stakeholder consultation met with some resistance among its east African partners. In others, programme targets for gender balance and more representation from disadvantaged groups remain doggedly disappointing or else the equitable selection procedures of the programme are in stark contrast to realities in a more restrictive society. The SIDA-SAREC evaluation found that although the shift to self-managed research funds had positive outcomes, it nevertheless raised difficult questions about efficiency and accountability. DfID allows for its research consortia to be led by or consist entirely of developing-country partners. In practice, however, evaluations have found that expertise in proposal writing and budget and administrative support, key to successful bidding, were not evident in most African partners compared to the UK one. The principle of local level ownership and project definition, then, is there in theory but not always in practice. It is a process which needs continuous capacity building with additional bridging activities.

14 A recurrent issue in the evaluations is an imbalance between beneficiaries and funding agencies in terms of interests (e.g. funding agencies, beneficiaries, North vs. South), objectives and/or perceptions of success.

15 Some evaluations stress the need for a balance between achieving success in the beneficiaries’ terms and generating outputs that are useful to donors; also a balance between a view of development that values development as process, rather than the achievement of pre-specified targets and goals. Just as we may need to ask about the goals of projects or programmes, so we need to ask about the values of those doing the evaluation and ask whether new insights will be gained by different types of evaluators and evaluations.

16 The drive to demonstrate results is leading funding agencies to ask for more evaluation about the impact of their interventions. This has raised certain methodological difficulties:

- The desire to measure impact does not yet appear to be matched by a range of methodological tools

to do so.

- Some programmes are being evaluated in terms not built into the original objectives or where objectives about ‘capacity building in HEIs’ are so generally stated that evaluators are retrospectively bolting on an assessment of impact as just one component in a wider-ranging evaluation where, to give it its due, impact should be the sole focus of an evaluation.
- The difficulties of assessing impact and assigning attribution in multidimensional programmes or which have subsequently become subsumed under other activities and it therefore becomes difficult to identify an intervention’s separate and distinct contribution.
- Prematurely measuring impact in relatively recent interventions.

17 Trends in globalisation and the internationalisation of education are often taken into account in HE interventions and this is reflected in some evaluations. For example:

- measuring the internet profile and publications of academic beneficiaries/HEIs/departments by means of simple level bibliometric indicators (tracing citations & sites of citation to measure the degree of influence);
- assessing the effectiveness of credit transfer systems in promoting student mobility ;
- examining the state of progress in the establishment and effectiveness of regional networks and programmes or systems, e.g. the standardisation of QA system within a region;
- number of student/academic/research and support staff exchanges;
- volume of publications in international journals or participation in/management of international conferences;
- evidence about the development and usage of HEI/regional research area websites and pan-regional/African publications;
- measuring whether access to international journals, associations, special interest groups is prompting new research or practices.

18 Where once the preoccupation in scholarships schemes was to ensure a good rate of return and avoid brain drain, we are now seeing some scholarship programmes, e.g. AusAID, also embracing the idea of increasing skills for migration through projects with the explicit aim of preparing participants for the global nursing and teaching market.

19 The evaluations studied here reflect broader trends in the history of technical assistance for capacity building in higher education. For example, the historical broadening out of capacity building projects at individual level, such as scholarship schemes, towards programmes for institutional development and research consortia has inevitably impacted on the scope of evaluation and what and how much is being evaluated, how it is evaluated and who is involved in evaluation. The distinction between the types of interventions has in some cases become blurred in some multidimensional programmes (which combine aspects of some or all of them) and the evaluations, in turn, are attempting to measure these more complex interventions.

General characteristics of the evaluations

20 The evaluations examined here are mostly led by developed country evaluators (internal or external) although there is some, limited, evidence that the principle of ownership has percolated through to those involved in conducting the evaluation itself: *mixed-team field visits* (e.g. IUCEA-DAAD where one European external HEd expert is accompanied by two East African experts) and *user-end case studies* (African teacher educators rather than European evaluators assessing their experiences of the adoption and practice of TESSA Open Educational Resources (OERs) in their institutions); *respondent validation* (where key southern partners are asked to comment critically on the draft of an evaluation as a pre-requisite before its completion, e.g. SIDA-SAREC). Data collection in all the evaluations draws on the ubiquitous *stakeholder consultation*. This varies from the generally stated and, apparently token, short ‘lists of those consulted’ to more comprehensive and systematic consultation, e.g. the development and careful piloting of questionnaires for a wide range of different stakeholders, successive Delphi-method group interviewing and the involvement of a wider range of complementary stakeholders external to the immediate HEI project.

21 Of the evaluations studied here, the general picture is a focus on the outputs of a programme or project,

far more than effects and impact. It is not too difficult to identify and get evidence on outputs despite the fact that many of the donors' Terms of Reference (TORs) also want assessments of effects and impact, which are much further down the road, and with far more intervening variables that get in the way of ascribing an outcome to a particular earlier output.

22 As previously mentioned, there is a distinct sense that an assessment of impact has been bolted on to the evaluation as just one aspect of a larger evaluation and without, seemingly, the methodological tools to do so other than evaluator(s) considered impression about impact. The definition of impact also seems to vary. If we were to take scholarships as an example, then one might classify university completion rates as an output measure, the amount of promotion at work within five years as an effect measure and the role of scholars and their effect on society over 20 years as an impact measure. Some evaluation, on the other hand, may consider what we describe here as effects to be programme impacts.

23 In identifying evaluations for this study, scholarship evaluations were more readily available than other types. Included in these are two, the Ford and Commonwealth Scholarships Commission, which *are* assessing impact on the basis of, respectively a 40- and a 50-year programme. Our search also suggested that new impact studies of HE interventions, which do include specific and rigorous impact methodologies, are in the pipeline but not yet publicly available or completed.

Methodology and sources of data

24 The small sample of evaluations here include *expert reviews*, *peer reviews*, *internal progress reports* and *case studies*. Most of them are expert reviews. In contrast to traditional peer reviews where, for example, a scholar would focus on the quality of, say, the research outputs of a research capacity building intervention, expert reviews typically have broader terms of reference, looking at a programme's management and also assessing evidence of outputs, outcomes and impact, and often at programme, project *and* field levels. They tend to be both backward-looking (assessing progress, impact and relevance of past actions) and forward-looking, strategic in perspective in order to understand future challenges and inform next stages in programme or wider strategic planning.

25 Typically, these expert reviews rely on the expertise of the evaluator(s) and their use and synthesis of a combination of a wide range of data sources to inform the evaluation. The latter tend to include some or all of the following: *document analysis* (earlier evaluations and reviews, annual reports, implementing guidelines, letters of agreement, annual reports at project and programme levels); the *use of monitoring data* at both project and programme level, including *cost data*; face-to-face, telephone *interviews* (of individuals and sometimes groups of direct beneficiaries, project and programme leaders and other stakeholders); *questionnaire surveys* of beneficiaries and other stakeholders, and *country visits*. Country visits can include field visits, case studies or the use of pre-existing case studies.

26 Evaluation of scholarships have used *alumni tracer studies* (postal and online surveys, sometimes backed up with in-depth case studies of individuals, visits and interviews) in order to look at evidence on effects and impact. The studies are of varying complexity ranging from the simple (What did you gain from the scholarship? Where are you now and what are you doing?) to more complex designs (involving detailed analyses of the career paths of different cohorts of alumni, and examining the relationships between variables such as course studies, course levels, location of study, completion rates, rate of return, gender, age, types of jobs, changes in work remuneration and status, e.g. Ford's IFP). The robustness of conclusions from tracer studies is, of course, reduced where only a small proportion of alumni is located or responds. Most of the alumni studies come to the conclusion that a self-report survey alone is insufficient to measure effects and impact and there is an acknowledged additional need to drill down into specific groups, regions, sectors of employment to assess impact more thoroughly and add validity and reliability to self-reported impact findings.

27 There is also evidence of attempts to measure impact within the evaluations in other ways, e.g. small *case study impact* evaluation from an end-user perspective (e.g. TESSA, AGORA). In larger, multidimensional project evaluations, impact is explored as one area among others (e.g. effectiveness, efficiency) and at a rather impressionistic level (based on anecdotal accounts from project leaders) or the anticipated impact (based on the evaluators' retrospective assessment of the inputs and effects of the programme). In this sample of evaluations, there has been no use of *planned* statistical measures of impact evaluation (e.g. randomised control trial, propensity score matching, and regression discontinuity design).

Qualitative and Quantitative

28 Many of the evaluations use mixed qualitative and quantitative methods, although qualitative narrative accounts dominate. Where quantitative methods are used, they are usually simple number and percentage calculations in simple questionnaires, although some of the alumni tracer studies attempt greater depth by exploring a variety of variables. The USAID study of the ATLAS & AFGRAD scholarship programs is the only example of sample surveying on a large scale. There are no natural experiments or randomised trials. There appears to be a strong divide between qualitative or quantitative methods, deep divides between some quantitative and some qualitative researchers, a dearth of quantitative approaches.

Evaluative frameworks

29 There are examples of evaluators working within donor-prescribed evaluative frameworks. The SIDA, ADB and VLIR-UOS programmes, for example, draw on Organisation for Economic and Cooperation Development/Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC) evaluation criteria of efficiency, effectiveness, quality, sustainability, development relevance, impact, programme design and management. In the VLIR-UOS programme, for example, each criterion was accompanied by a set of indicators: the impact criterion had the following set indicators (although these might, depending on the definition of impact used, be seen as effects):

- Active engagement of academic/administrative staff, and students, in planning / developing initiatives;
- Evidence of changed approaches/ attitudes to learning and teaching integrating ICT-based practices (e.g. engagement by academic staff in use of e-learning);
- The library provides access for staff and students to relevant electronic and print information resources to support current university learning, teaching and research.
- Change in levels of use of library resources and range of resources used (impact of effective library management system);
- Spread of and changing levels of student skills and confidence in ICT use;
- Specific research activities, dependent on access to e-information or data, enabled by ICT provision;
- User focused website, meeting specific information needs.

Costs

30 There is surprisingly little focus on costs beyond simple cost analysis (identifying and making sense of a project/programme's costs). Two exceptions include the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission (CSC) and the ADB Japan Scholarship Program which both examine cost-effectiveness: CSC has looked at the comparative cost of producing a graduate through its conventional scholarships and through distance-learning scholarships. ADB has compared the per graduate costs of scholarships delivered by different partner higher education institutes (HEIs) in different countries, e.g. \$19,000 in Singapore, \$3, 000 in Japan, \$45,000 in Australia.

31 No cost-benefit study was found in the sample evaluations. One early cost-benefit analysis of scholarship programmes has been identified. In the 1970s an East African and American group collected and used salary data on alumni of local, eastern bloc, western European and American scholarship programmes in order to undertake rate of return analysis (Maliyamkono et al., 1982). Although there is extensive human-capital theory literature on the costed benefits of higher education generally, with this exception this has not usually disaggregated results in terms of local versus international study.

Reliability and trustworthiness issues

32 Few evaluations discussed explicitly their methodology in terms of reliability and trustworthiness. One recurrent acknowledged problem is the unreliability or inefficiency of monitoring systems at both the local project and central programme level; baseline data is not always available, complete or up-to-date and it is often conflicted at the different levels.

33 The heavy reliance on expert reviews raises certain credibility questions. The expert's credibility relies on two things: first, the perceived fairness and competence of the expert(s) and being demonstrably independent; second, the level of detail of the data sources available. The independence issue is complicated by the participation of evaluators with a close relationship with the agency and also the small international community of development evaluators.

34 There is also the question of whether expert review is an adequate approach as projects become more multidimensional (as in research consortia and institutional capacity building) and as donors are asking for wide-ranging evaluative measurements (input, effects, impact, sustainability, development relevance, efficiency, quality, ownership, management, equity, backward and forward-looking evaluations). The task of the evaluator(s) can range from assessing the quality of the research conducted, to estimating its impact in developing countries and also include suggesting improvements in the management of the programme. Few can undertake all such tasks at an institutional level with the requisite methodological rigour. It is little wonder the evaluations are littered with rather plaintive or defensive remarks made by the evaluator(s).

35 The following is a summary of the methodologies (and some of their identified perceived strengths and weaknesses) as used within the three types interventions:

Education and training

36 Scholarship programmes naturally depend on tracer studies to assess their outputs, effects and impact. Without them, as in the case of the AUSAid expert review, evaluation can only operate at the level of anecdotal evidence about alumni promotions and influence in a small sample. Long-established schemes can undertake larger, sometimes rigorous random sample surveys and examine differences, such as female participation, between, say, earlier and later cohorts, or differences in quality or costs among different partner HEIs. Alumni surveys depend on the success in tracking or getting responses from alumni and responses rates can vary considerably. They are also heavily dependent on the quality of monitoring systems and, where the monitoring systems are split between programme- and project-level, the degree to which these split-site systems are compatible or consistent. This is clearly an area of weakness. Most evaluators acknowledge the need, either in their evaluation or in recommendations for the future, for additional in-depth case studies of particular scholars or departments (where, say, the scholarship aimed at group training of professionals in a particular workplace) and input from the HEI partners and employers.

Links and Consortia

37 The complexity and multidimensional nature of links and consortia capacity building programmes clearly present considerable evaluation challenges for the expert reviewer(s). Their quality depends heavily on the expertise and vested interests of the evaluator(s), the theoretical framework that informs the evaluation and the time allocated to and investment in evaluation. Policy-makers might consider the benefits of a panel-type approach for full programme evaluations, where a heterogeneous panel is composed not just of evaluators from the same donor-oriented consulting background or agency, but the use of independent expert evaluators who bring to the task a range of different specialist skills and North-South perspectives. This might include, for example, academic experts, evaluation experts (skilled in specific methodologies for measuring impact or conducting large-scale surveys), academic monitoring and management experts, user-end beneficiaries. Another approach would be to separate out different types of separate types of evaluations, using different methodologies and evaluators. The sole use of small focused user-reviews and impact studies in the sample, for example, provide new perspectives and detail on particular aspects of an intervention that would otherwise be missing in an expert review.

38 Donors funding these programmes are making extensive use of evaluation frameworks, e.g. log frames and OECD development criteria often accompanied by a set of indicators. These clearly provide a strong frame of reference for the evaluator, but there is an accompanying risk of a tick-box approach to measurement and for evaluators to be straitjacketed by the provided indicators where more flexibility might capture unintended outcomes or open up the focus of evaluation.

39 The EdQual program, in particular, appears to underline the value of very careful planning for both research programme design and its subsequent evaluation based on a prior examination of the strengths and weaknesses that have emerged in earlier similar projects, e.g. implementation problems due to the tendency for partnerships to be dominated by northern partners to the extent that they fail to achieve mutual learning, shared objectives and joint achievements. This seems to have been avoided by carefully planned decentralised African-led programmes and evaluation that involves the beneficiaries as equal partners.

40 A key issue in these type of programme and their evaluations is whether there is successful evidence of a sense of ownership, transferral of leadership and independence (e.g. beneficiary-defined and initiated projects). The training for and use of local level evaluation (beyond stakeholder consultation) plus an openness to new

types of methodologies seems a vital but overlooked 'ownership' ingredient and which, of course, in itself contributes to research capacity building.

Institutional support

41 Much the same points made about methodologies used in links and consortia programmes apply to those for institutional support.

Main gaps

42 Summarising here some of the gaps in development evaluation, there is a general argument for more appropriate methodologies to meet the growing evaluative demands from donors and beneficiaries, and as a consequence of larger, more complex, multidimensional interventions that are proliferating.

43 Nuanced insight into the effects and impact of donor interventions is hampered by a shortage of high quality, sophisticated evaluations which employ a range of methodologies, which mix both qualitative and quantitative methods and are built into the design of programmes so that more long-term evaluative procedures are in place rather than retrospectively added. The concept of ownership in evaluation, a balance of North-South perspectives and interests, is conspicuous by its absence.

44 The growing demand for impact evaluation as the basis for evidence-based policy in HE development is limited by a lack of focus on issues of attribution – tracing out cause and effect – and quantification (e.g. instrumental variable testing, propensity scoring, regression discontinuity and difference-in-difference). There is a shortage of rigorous, quantitative assessment which through regression analysis, or some other appropriate methodology, tries to get at the long-term. It is equally important, though, to balance these approaches with a concern for context, criteria and the limitations of evidence-based quantitative evaluations. The drive for results has placed an over-emphasis on the products of an intervention rather than appreciation of the processes and necessary stages that interventions go through to reach products. The issue here is that funders tend to see the objective of education as simple and measurable, whereas education specialists know it to be more complex. One strong tradition of curriculum development argues for concentrating on process and against reducing the educational process to neatly measurable objectives (e.g. Stenhouse, 1975). Similarly, in proposing an alternative evaluation paradigm, the American researcher Emile McAnany suggests looking at measures of effort, performance, adequacy, efficiency and process: his focus on adequacy provokes broader questions about the adequacy of a programme in relation to need than a narrow focus on objectives would allow. A narrow focus on the extent to which objectives were achieved would also leave out of account unintended consequences, externalities, and side effects. (One evaluation of a distance-learning programme, designed to raise capacity in a developing-country university, did not mention the antagonism which it aroused among senior administrators at the beneficiary university (Personal communication, Marlene Hamilton, May 2007).)

45 Cost studies are a much overlooked area and, like impact studies, could only be addressed by planned training for and use of a range of approaches (cost analysis, cost effectiveness, cost benefit). Again, the reliability and quality of monitoring systems plays a vital role here.

46 One clear gap is the lack of well-managed monitoring systems, at both the programme and project level, from which evaluation draw their baseline data.

Conclusions

47 The main purpose of this study was to understand whether and how HE interventions for development were being evaluated. A typology was applied to make this simpler, and to allow comparison of approaches for evaluating different kinds of interventions. A secondary aim was to examine the evidence for impact, where it has been measured.

48 While this is very much an initial study, it is clear already that only a fraction of relevant programmes have clearly stated development objectives and procedures for determining whether these objectives have been achieved: only 17 of 67 programmes investigated met these criteria for our study. With respect to our secondary aim, this small sample made it difficult to draw any broad conclusion about the effectiveness of HE interventions for development, or what makes for a good intervention under the different types of programmes we have identified. This caveat having been issues, we can make the following interim observations on

effectiveness of interventions:

49 *Education and training*

- a. There are good successful completion rates for many programmes.
- b. Evidence on brain drain is mixed (and needs to be interpreted in light of recent and nuanced discussion of this issue).
- c. There is confirmation that rigorous and equitable selection methods, and guidance for selection, have worked (as implied in (a)).
- d. Scholarship programmes have benefited in various ways (e.g. good completion, happier learning experiences, less brain drain) where both sending and receiving countries have roles to play in the selection process.
- e. There is evidence from various evaluations of (1) alumni applying what they have learned (2) participation in the scholarly community (3) wider effects through their participating in the community (4) training others (e.g. in agriculture and supervising PhDs).

50 *Links and Consortia*

- a. Successful mobilising of new knowledge resources from other sources (e.g. UK HEIs, African one-stop research sites);
- b. Significant transfer of research knowledge and skills to developing countries;
- c. Evidence of promoting innovative initiatives in MDG areas that evolved into broader programmes and community extension activities;
- d. Goodwill and long-term links between northern HE institutions and partner southern HE institutions, and also for South-South HE institution partnerships. growing evidence of shift towards home grown, new local level courses, doctoral programmes, leadership and skills in competitive funding proposals and towards the establishment of centres of excellence;
- e. There is evidence from various evaluations of (1) beneficiaries applying what they have learned (2) participation in the scholarly community (3) wider effects through their participating in the community.

51 *Institutional support*

- a. Evidence of successful capacity building in policy, infrastructure and academic support systems (e.g. finance, QA, ICT, library) in targeted HE institutions and arising from long-term approaches;
- b. Evidence of institutional benefits in the form of recognition of the value of research in universities, organisation benefits in the form of improved ability to build on research, and financial benefits in terms of continued investment in research and financial incentives to researchers;
- c. Strong evidence of North-South and South-South collaboration raising capacity in research and academic support systems;
- d. Direct positive contribution to the scientific knowledge base;
- e. Basic university frameworks in place for regional harmonisation (QA) & networking;
- f. Expansion in indigenous doctoral programmes .

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Table 1: Evaluations of programmes and projects of education and training

Scholarship Schemes	Objectives	Evaluation method	Evidence of		
			Outputs	Effects	Impact
<i>Australian Development Scholarships, AUSAid</i>	Individual & cluster HEI capacity building (CB) in key development fields & institutions	Expert review (N*, external): document analysis	Uneven data about ss numbers & rates of return & gender balance	Anecdotal evidence about alumni promotions & in influential positions. A little data on establishment of strong cadres among group scholarships.	
<i>International Fellowship Programme, Ford Foundation</i>	Individual CB. in – open, student-selected fields/institutions	Expert 3-team review (S, external): range of tracer surveys for different stages, document analysis, interviews, monitoring statistics.	28% choosing to study in own region. Good completion, completion efficiency & return rates. Low drop out.	Gender balance in selection in procedures 65% alumni in socially committed activities Gender differences widen in employment on return.	Alumni judge studies having a strong impact on social justice in their countries. Brain drain minimal
<i>ADP Japan Scholarship Program</i>	Individual CB & regional HEI CB in key development fields	Expert 3-team review (N, external):Tracer study, survey to partner institutions, monitoring statistics, cost effectiveness comparisons	83% completion rates Rising participation of women (to 41%); large differences in costs of scholarships in HEIs, e.g. low in Singapore, high in Australia	Equitable decentralised selection procedures. 50% in research & gov on return. Younger graduates face lower employment prospects. 96% employed.	Significant brain drain (30%)
<i>ATLAS & AFGRAD scholarship programs, USAid</i>	Individual CB in key development fields	Expert 5-panel, 40 year-span review (N-S, internal & external): participant sample survey, quasi quantitative analysis of participants-generated text, structured focus groups, interviews, 4-week field visits, internet hits, costs of program	80-90% return rate; program costs; gender equity; comparison of differences of output by institution type, acquisition of knowledge skills and attitudes during training.		No evidence of brain drain; participants in advanced career positions; long-term training lay strong foundation of know, skills & attitude; institutional changes on return attributed to scholarship; dev of critical thinking more important than tech & sci know; improved management skills; higher impact among ed, ag, health than financial areas; advanced careers in key development areas
<i>Canadian Francophone Scholarship Program, CIDA</i>	Individual CB in key development fields	Expert 8-team review (N, external): Online alumni, current students, partner institutions surveys, document analysis, interviews, benchmarking	Nos of scholarship; 74% African beneficiaries in 37 countries; women participation 51%; 69% success rate; Return rate 50-70%	Appreciation of Canadian education & know acquisition; benefits to Canadian HEIs; scholars in academic, technical, vocational & research	No evidence of critical mass impact; random individual success stories.

		comparisons, focused interviews, strategic interviews, donor & programme level management interviews, field visits		institutions & senior ranks of public sector.	
<i>UK Commonwealth Scholarship, DFID</i>	Individual CB in key development fields	Internal review over 50 years (N): Alumni survey and individual case studies	16,000 alumni; from 64 countries (34% south Asia, 30% Africa); awards range from doctoral study to professional fellowships of 3 months; science (64%), arts (36%). Subjects related to science, engineering technology (29%) or health-related (21%). Female participation: 1960s (9%); 1980s (16%); since 2001 (40%).		<u>Individuals:</u> 88% returned home & based in own country; 92% advancement in career; 66% economic circumstances in top 20% of country; 92% maintaining links with individuals or institutions in UK. <u>Institutions:</u> - 93% ability to have influence and make changes at work; 97% using skills at work;; <u>Society:</u> 90% activity in at least one of 12 key priority area for development & leadership; 45% influence on government; 48% having economic impact; 81% influence in particular projects; Impacts across priority areas and not confined to one, e.g. majority employed in Higher Education (HEd) -- multiplier effect/knowledge transfer,
<i>UK Commonwealth Scholarship Distance Learning Provision, DFID</i>	Individual & cluster group CB of working professionals by distance learning in key development fields delivered in beneficiaries countries	Internal annual report at programme management level: Survey of completing students, cost effectiveness analysis, monitoring statistics, document analysis	No of students (1291 - 2003-9 & 140 in 2010); No of Masters (30); no of disciplines (15); country of origin (32 countries); drop-out (18%); Range of delivery modes: partnership, direct delivery & cluster. More scholarships per year offered than conventional scholarships. 30-40% less unit cost per graduate of more traditional methods of generating skills in development. Graduation rates are markedly lower (50-70%) than conventional scholarships.	Successful equitable recruitment of non-conventional scholars. 3 forms of institutional development: 1. CB & staff dev within academic discipline of course; 2. academic cooperation - joint production of teaching material; 3. strengthening of st support & teaching capacity.	Impact varies depending on partnership but benefits include: developing DL capacities themselves with a view to localising course or developing new ones; international links & networking; some examples localisation but in some cases it will be years before this happens. Some evidence of career promotions or work moves where new skills put in practice.
Training					
<i>International</i>	CB for developing	Survey of sample of trainees	Data on course numbers	Evidence of knowledge	86% of institutions where

<i>Maize & Wheat Improvement Centre, (CIMMYT), CGLAR</i>	country research in agriculture	from 5 courses, training staff, and in-country research leaders in touch with trainees		and skills gained, use of training, increase in hands-on work, contact with international scientists, use of research resources	trainees were working reported development of new areas of research; 82% reported changes in ways of doing research; 61% of trainees reported changes in local agricultural practices
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Table 2: Evaluations of project and programmes of training support for consortia and networks

<i>Examples</i>	<i>Objectives</i>	<i>Evaluation method</i>	<i>Evidence of</i>		
			<i>Outputs</i>	<i>Effects</i>	<i>Impact</i>
Links & Materials Development					
<i>Development Partnerships in HED Programme, (DELPHE), DJID</i>	Individual & Inst CB via links between N-S HEIs on MDG activities (health ed, agriculture, s & t, economics, environment, governance, social sciences)	Expert 3-team review (N, external): document analysis, F2F & phone interviews, country visits. End of Project reports. Case studies.	200 projects funded (since 2006); 178 N-S collaborations, 22 S-S. rounds; research papers, training events at local, national levels; exchanges (N-S, S-S, S-N)	Significant joint research in MDGs & Sci & tech programmes; increased staff & ss capacity in HEIs; improved N-S, S-S networking between partner HEIs; improved institutional and admin of partner HEIs; DelPHE delivered though effective management by BC & ACU.	New & revised courses; long term links with UK HEIs; embedding of new technology (e.g. health informatics); Ministry taking forward new local level research and systematic planning for research & improved health, agricultural, environmental systems.
<i>Higher Ed Links Scheme, DJID</i>	Individual & Inst CB via links between N-S HEIs	Expert 3-team review (N, external): document analysis, visits, interviews with programme & project managers & HEI partners	400 projects (1981-2003); upskilling of 1000 core & 4000 second tier staff, 400 new courses, 350 research or teaching pubs, 100+ workshops	Mobilising resources from other sources (e.g. UK HEIs), promoting innovative initiatives that evolved into broader programmes; goodwill between UK & Partner HEIs, successful transfer of knowledge & skills to dev countries.	No body of evidence to assess impact & sustainability of ongoing projects; all small & local - difficult to attribute impact where projects have become subsumed in other activities.
<i>Teacher Education in sub-Saharan Africa, (TESSA),</i>	CB & access to teachers' resources via collaborative creation, use & adaptation of Open Educational	User reviews(S) 12 small impact studies in 8 countries		Uneven take-up in use, dependent on time, sense of ownership, ICT skills, connectivity, expense of printing.	Teachers' exposure to range of ideas & practices, more reflective approach, pupil-centred learning; increased collaboration between institutions, departments;

<i>Open University</i>	Resources (OER's) between partner S-S, N-S HEIs				(improvement in teaching pupil motivation & involvement) to schools & classrooms
Research Consortia					
<i>EdQual, DfID</i>	Research CB via N-S, S-S, S-N HEI collaboration	Peer review (N&S): Literature & document analysis: self-reflective reports from all team members & external evaluations, annual team reviews.	Establishment of 4 decentralised African research consortia and 2 UK focused of research & research support in educational areas. 10 scholarships; curriculum change/TA projects. No. of locally designed & developed research projects in particular areas, e.g. ICTs, school leadership. No of articles, presentations, training sessions, scholarships, joint research projects Completion & return rates of 10 doctoral students;	Strengthening of local level research capacity via individual, team & informal research networks (in research presentation & dissemination, proposal writing, data analysis, training events) leading to greater research outputs.	Local research leadership; new institutional monitoring systems & indicators for educational quality. New opportunities outside the project for collaboration between (s-s, s-n) established partners & greater networking (s-s, s-n). New sources of funding for research.
<i>Higher Education Research & Advocacy Network (HERANA), Partnership for HED in Africa</i>	HED research networking in SSA (as part of a larger HEIs & individual research capacity building programme)	Progress report (S): Monitoring performance (e.g. costs, development of policy documents); case studies, desk review, bibliometric indicators	Establishment of a regional SSA HED researchers' website and networking activities no. visitors, repeat visitors, country of origin, referring sites. Seminars: no, distribution & attendance figures Production of African Edition of University World News (WUN): No of editions, original news articles, features etc., reported on, readership levels, readerships by African country	Launch of African edition of WUN and high readership and African contribution (although concentrated in certain countries). Website not used very much as yet.	Too early
<i>Enhancement of Research Capacity (ENRECA, Danida</i>	CB of N research one-stop sites in MDG areas + networking to S to use research results in new research projects	2 Expert reviews (N): document analysis; interviews with network representatives	6 Danish-based research networks. Range of dissemination activities. Research projects initiated. Outreach training activities. Scholarships to Danish universities. Publications	User end take up dependent on variable commitment, e.g. at Danish embassy level promotion & individual inclinations. Research sometimes low priority in aid context. Access to and professional info exchange between researchers, dev aid agencies, HEIs N & S. and evidence of applying knowledge to village level.	Locally-initiated research projects. National capacity building in policy formulation.

Table 3: Evaluations of institutional development programmes

<i>Examples</i>	<i>Objectives</i>	<i>Evaluation method</i>	<i>Evidence of</i>		
			<i>Outputs</i>	<i>Effects</i>	<i>Impact</i>
<i>Development for Research Cooperation (SAREC), SIDA</i>	National research capacity building in S HEIs promoting research activities, improving research management, research infrastructures and policy development	Expert panel review (N, S) Country visits, document analysis, respondent validation, team meetings	Research training (no. of Masters and PhDs), publications in international, national and local journals, conference presentations, ss enrolled in collaborative research projects, no of well-documented applications.	Development of research policy frameworks & strategies at institutional and Ministry levels in pro-poor areas. Self-managed research funds: skills in competitive application process, new funds. Audit systems improved. Greater research links with Ministries and Ministers including drafting new legislation.	Project progress against 3 development stages: 1. academic training (including publishing and competitive research fund chasing), upgrading of labs & equipment. 2. Established & productive research projects needing small grant funding, and expanding no of national and international research partners and regular publishing. 3. Projects and team stronger and increasingly independent and expert and sourcing wider range of other funds.
<i>Access to Global Online Research in Agriculture, (AGORA), FAO, WHO, Ford</i>	Access to global online research in agriculture	User review: Small local impact study	Access to range of journals (1278) n wide range of HEIs in wide range of countries (107 in 2011). Search facility, articles in different languages, training in IT.	Community-based farming research (250 farmers) based on testing drought tolerant crops using knowledge from AGORA by Egerton University team. Led to 20-30% increase in sustainable crop production.	Direct positive impacts on knowledge base. Progress towards use Kenya's 50% Arid & semi Arid land for agricultural production, * in the long term reduction of Kenya's dependency on aid, reduction of food shortages, malnutrition, school drop-out rate, reduction in the 40-50% importation of wheat & beans.
<i>Malaria Capacity Development Consortium (MCDC), Gates Foundation</i>	Institutional CB to develop doctoral programmes in S	Expert panel review (N, S, Internal) Interviews with audience specific questionnaires, document review, visits	PhD scholarships in African universities (completion rates; no of publications, grants, presentations). Concurrent strengthening of system for doctoral programmes.	Development, monitoring and planning tool for HEIs & donors to lead, identify areas of capacity gaps and responsibilities.	Long-term research capacity building of indigenous doctoral programmes & world class researchers.
<i>Institutional</i>	ICT capacity	Expert 3 team review (N,	20 ICT CB projects in 11 southern partner	Development of platform	Most funding going to

<p><i>University Cooperation, VLIR-UOS</i></p>	<p>development in HEIs</p>	<p>external): Visits, interviews, case studies, document review, indicator framework, simple cost data, synthesis with respondent validation. 5 case studies.</p>	<p>HEIs (11) in African & south American countries</p>	<p>for university: communication services (email, connectivity); operational services (provision & maintenance of PCs & labs); administration & management services (finance, learning, library, registration) & data collection; ICT policies & strategies, development of e-content, website</p>	<p>infrastructure equipment, software, ICT applications & technical capacity building to the detriment of end-users and the development of information resources. Heavy reliance on a small pool of expertise & experience & therefore worries about sustainability.</p>
<p><i>East African-German Cooperation in Enhancing QA in HEd, IUCE-DAAD</i></p>	<p>Enhancing QA in regional HEIs</p>	<p>Expert panel review (N, S): Country visit – shared evaluation, document analysis (team self-assessment reports, interviews</p>	<p>Study visits to Europe by stakeholders; development of QA handbook ; training seminars for external reviewers & QA officers & academic staff; regional visits to HEIs; self-assessment exercises & external review of no of academic programmes; development of improvement plans</p>	<p>Drafting of QA handbook; countries moving towards comprehensive national system for QA with designated personnel, office space, support staff & new budget provision for QA in HEIs. Cadre of peer reviewers for region. Basic CB framework for larger regional harmonisation, move towards subject benchmarking, & networking within region.</p>	<p>Strengthening of Standing Committee for QA for E. African region -- forum/links for policy maker, HEIs & nat, regulatory bodies. Commitment to stated learning outcomes & better evaluation & curriculum. Better quality teaching & learning in the long run.</p>

