DAY 1: EVIDENCE BASED EDUCATION POLICY REFORM WORKSHOP

AGENDA

Date: 23 October 2012
Time: 08H30 to 16H30
Venue: Department of Basic Education, Conference Centre, Room B

Chairperson: DBE

NO	ITEM	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBLE	ORGANISATION
	Tea and registration	**08H30 to 09H00**		
1.	Opening address: relevance of evidence based policy making in education	09h00 to 09h30	Mr PB Soobrayan Director-General	DBE
	SESSION 1: IMPACT EVALUATIONS FOR POLICY MAKING			
2.	Presentation: what can impact evaluations tell us about education policy?	09h30 to 10h30		J-PAL
3.	Discussion	10h30 to 11h00	All	
4.	Time to Read: Western Cape Remedial Holiday Reading Programme Evaluation	11h00 to 11h30	Dr Ursula Hoadley	University of Cape Town
	SESSION 2: IMPACT EVALUATIONS IN PRACTICE			
5.	A-Z of impact evaluations	11h30 to 13h00		J-PAL
	Lunch	**13H00 to 14H00**		
6.	Group work: impact evaluation methods	14h00 to 15h30	All	
7.	Questions and answers	15h30 to 16h00		J-PAL
8.	Way forward and closure	16h00 to 16h30	Mr PB Soobrayan Director- General	DBE

TARGET AUDIENCE: Branch managers, senior managers, provincial officials, programme managers, J-PAL, researchers and practitioners responsible for monitoring and programme implementation. Researchers who responded to the Education Research Indaba Call for Research Papers on Literacy and Numeracy.

ABSTRACTS AND BIOGRAPHIES OF PRESENTERS

DAY 1

1.   Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-Pal)

The Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL) is a network of 70 affiliated professors around the world who are united by their use of Randomized Evaluations (REs) to answer questions critical to poverty alleviation. J-PAL's mission is to reduce poverty by ensuring that policy is based on scientific evidence. J-PAL works to achieve this by:

- Conducting Rigorous Impact Evaluations- J-PAL affiliated professors conduct randomized evaluations to test and improve the effectiveness of programs and policies aimed at reducing poverty. There are more than 349 evaluations that have been either completed or are ongoing.
- Building Capacity- J-PAL provides expertise to people interested in rigorous program evaluation, and training to others on how to conduct randomized evaluations.
- Informing Policy- J-PAL's policy group performs cost-effectiveness analysis to identify the most effective ways to achieve policy goals, disseminates this knowledge to policymakers, and works with governments, NGOs, foundations, and international development organizations to promote the scale-up of highly effective policies and programs around the world.

It is not always obvious which policy will have the most desirable effects on educational outcomes. Does performance based pay for teachers improve learning, or cause "teaching to the test"? What is the best way to help students who are falling behind? Should scarce funds be spent on school uniforms, on treating ailments that keep students away from school, on textbooks, or on something else?

To design good policy, we need to know how well a policy is working and whether it provides good value for money. Are there alternative ways of achieving the same outcomes at a lower cost? Do some aspects of the programme have no impact and only add to the cost of the programme?

Random assignment offers a simple way to generate these insights. In randomised evaluations, individuals or schools are selected to receive a programme based on a lottery. Those who do not receive the programme form a comparison group. The two groups are similar in every respect, except that one group receives the programme, while the other does not. The growth of randomised evaluations of development programmes is a relatively recent innovation, and the scope for introducing an element of randomisation into development programmes continues to gain recognition. When properly designed, randomised evaluations can provide insight not only into whether a programme works, but also into why it works.

The following topics will form part of the workshops focus:

- Expanding research methods for evidence based policy-making
- Objective assessment of impact interventions in the education sector- benefits & challenges
- Randomised control trials and program evaluation including policy lessons from around the world
- Various methods to conduct randomised control trials
- Application of a randomised assessment to a current DBE programmes

2.   Time to Read: Western Cape Remedial Holiday Reading Programme Evaluation

Presenter: Dr Ursula Hoadley, Senior Lecturer, School of Education, University of Cape Town

Dr Ursula Hoadley is a Senior Lecturer working in the School of Education at the University of Cape Town. She completed her undergraduate degree at the University of Natal in 1992, and her post-graduate studies at the University of Cape Town. Her research interests lie in the sociology of education, and her work reflects a particular interest in the relation between education and social stratification, especially social class and the differential social and academic outcomes engendered through educational processes. Her work has focused on three main areas: teachers' work, pedagogy and curriculum, and she has published extensively both locally and internationally in these areas. . Her work on the role of school principals as instructional leaders, the reproduction of social inequalities through pedagogies, and the role of appropriate pacing in effective curriculum delivery has been influential in understanding schooling in South Africa. Ursula is a National Research Foundation (NRF) rated researcher. She is a member of several professional organisations; sits on a number of boards; served on the Ministerial Review Committee of 2009 which led to the revision of the outcomes-based national curriculum; and participates regularly in processes of national and international research appraisal and review. Current projects that she is involved in include the SPADE Project, which analyses why schools that perform above what one would expect given their socio-economic profile manage to do so, and the impact evaluation of the literacy holiday remedial programme in Cape Town

Too many children do not acquire basic literacy and numeracy skills in early school grades. These children end up being promoted from grade to grade without mastering basic skills, leaving them lost and unprepared for the lessons they are taught. Heterogeneity in school preparedness and performance within classes also makes it difficult for teachers to target literacy instruction to all learners. Recent evidence from randomised impact evaluations conducted by the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab in India, Ghana and Kenya show that remedial literacy and numeracy interventions that focus on basic skills and provide additional time for learners to practice and consolidate learning at their individual ability level can be highly effective at achieving sustained learning gains for large numbers of learners at a relatively low cost.The presentation will provide an overview of the Time to read programme, an initiative of J-PAL, and SALDRU and the School of Education at the University of Cape Town. The Time to Read project is a randomised control trial evaluation of a cost-effective, remedial holiday literacy programme that aims to support learners through the difficult transition from mother tongue instruction to English in Grade 4. The project trains unemployed youth to deliver a highly scripted English reading programme. The presentation outlines the intervention and evaluation design of the project, highlighting the theory of change underlying the design.