

Research for Results in Education

A Global Conference on Education Research in Developing Countries

Call for Papers

Overview

The Education Policy Research Network of the Global Development Network (GDN) is sponsoring a global conference on educational research in developing or transition countries. Any researcher who is permanent resident of a developing or transition country may participate (for a list of countries, see below). The conference will convene some of the best education researchers from developing and developed countries to present and critique recent studies, review what accumulated research says about key policy issues, and discuss how obstacles to more and better research might be overcome. Its fundamental goal is to strengthen capacity in developing and transition countries to carry out policy-relevant empirical research on education. The conference will take place between March 31 and April 2, 2005 in Prague, Czech Republic. Travel and expenses for one author of each paper selected will be covered.

Concept and Objectives

Education research is a complicated endeavor under the best of circumstances, and is particularly difficult to produce in developing countries. Highly qualified researchers are scarce. They tend to be isolated from one another and from researchers in developed countries, causing them often to ignore work relevant to their own. Much of the research carried out is not clearly linked to policy. Policymakers are not accustomed to asking what lessons can be learned from research results before making decisions. Funding for education research is meager and sporadic, making it hard to develop a modern research community. For all these reasons it is hard to argue that research has played a significant role in improving education in most developing and transition countries.

This global conference seeks to address some of these shortcomings. Its central objective is to strengthen capacity in developing countries for carrying out policy-relevant empirical research on education.

The conference will pursue this objective by:

- showcasing some of the best education research being produced in developing and transition countries;
- providing critical comment on current studies by some of the world's leading researchers;
- presenting the lessons of accumulated research summaries for key policy issues;
- promoting alliances among researchers from developing, transition and developed countries;
- making clear the importance of research in developing good education policy.

The conference will draw heavily on researchers from the developing world. It will also incorporate distinguished researchers from developed countries, along with representatives from policy-making institutions, international organizations, development assistance institutions, universities and research centers.

The topics discussed will reflect the best research being produced worldwide on topics of particular interest for developing countries. The conference will provide ample opportunities to present and discuss research and interact with researchers from all regions. Conference proceedings will be conducted in English.

Research themes and disciplinary approaches

The conference will be open to a diversity of topics and disciplinary approaches. We expect to have a strong presence of economists, along with anthropologists, sociologists, political scientists, educational administrators and psychologists. One major requirement will be that the research presented be based on methodologically solid empirical work. A second requirement will be that the studies be framed in a way that makes it relatively easy to infer policy implications. Thus basic research (i.e. work focusing exclusively on methodologies), essays and philosophical perspectives will not be accepted.

The conference will focus exclusively on preschool, primary and secondary education, given that in most developing and transition countries these are the areas where most students are located and where the potential impact on poverty reduction is greatest.

Papers presented should fall within one of the major categories mentioned below:

- Improving the quality of education. What do we know about what works at the school and classroom level? (Evidence from randomized control trials related to particular inputs particularly welcome). How is education quality measured? (assessment systems and monitoring).
- Education and development. How does education contribute to individuals and society? (Benefits such as better health, higher earnings, "social cohesion", etc.)
- Education and inequality. What creates differences in education participation and achievement? (Emphasis on such contributors as gender, household income, child labor, siblings, social status, migration, etc.)
- Cost of education. What does education cost and who pays? (Emphasis on counting the full cost and identifying sources of finance; particularly relevant for post-basic education).
- Education reform. The political economy of education reform and its implementation. Incentives for stakeholders, especially clients and teachers, to advocate or undertake reform. How information, especially educational assessments, affects the demand for reform. How changes in governance, finance, and/or organizational arrangements affect the delivery of public education. The effects of community participation and local school governance on school performance.

Design and Structure

The Conference will consist of five plenary sessions, where one or a few researchers will present the state of the art in a current area of research. These will be by invitation only.

There will also be five sessions each consisting of approximately five parallel presentations of papers by researchers from developing and transition countries. All authors submitting papers must be willing to participate as discussants of papers by others. The parallel sessions will be set up so that there will be ample time to present the studies and discuss them. No other presentation formats will be available.

Finally, there will be five parallel workshops, each focusing on a topic related to strengthening educational research (specific topics and workshop leaders are yet to be determined; we will appreciate any suggestions from prospective participants).

Procedures

Who may submit papers

- Any researcher who is a permanent resident of a developing or transition country that is 1) not on the World Bank's list of "High-income economies" (<http://www.worldbank.org/data/countryclass/classgroups.htm>) or 2) that is a current member of a GDN Education Research Policy Network.
- A researcher may submit only one paper as first author and a second as a secondary author.

Paper specifications

- Papers must be written in English.
- Each paper must include an abstract of 250 words maximum
- The papers must be typed in double-space, Arial Font 12, and not exceed 50 pages. They must be in Word or rtf format. Tables and Figures must be included at the end of the text; their place in the text should be indicated (e.g. "Place Table 1 about here").

Submission of papers

- Authors should send an e-mail by September 15th, 2004, to Santiago Cueto: educationresearch@thedialogue.org indicating: a) tentative name of the paper to be submitted, b) name(s) of the authors, c) country of origin of the main author.
- Full papers must be sent by November 1st 2004, midnight GMT for consideration. Authors may submit a complete paper at this time even if they have not sent the e-mail indicated before.
- Complete papers must be sent as one attachment to Santiago Cueto: educationresearch@thedialogue.org. The attachment should be less than 500 KB. The text of the message should indicate:
 1. Title of paper;
 2. Author(s), country and institutional affiliation of each;
 3. Person who will be contacted for results: name and e-mail;
 4. Main topic(s) of paper (indicate only one):
 - Improving the quality of education.
 - Education and development.
 - Education and inequality.
 - Cost of Education.
 - Education reform.
 5. Educational level(s) included in the study: Preschool, Primary, Secondary.
 6. Whether the paper been published. (If so, please provide complete reference.)
- We will send an e-mail confirming reception of the paper.

Evaluation of papers

- The papers will be selected based on their academic merit and potential for policy implications. The evaluators will also consider disciplinary and geographic diversity. It is expected that at least 40 educational researchers from around the world will be selected to present and discuss research with their peers.
- The papers selected for presentation will be announced January 15, 2005.
- Only the first author of a selected paper will be contacted through e-mail. Conference organizers will pay for the travel and stay for the duration of the conference by the first author of each paper.

If the authors participating in the conference authorize, their papers will be uploaded on the conference web for public consultation. In any case, the authors will retain their publication rights to the article. The conference organizers will attempt to organize publication of unpublished materials in an academic journal.

Questions and concerns should be written in English and directed to Santiago Cueto (educationresearch@thedialogue.org), executive secretary of the Global Education Research Conference.