

<p>Institution: University of Bristol Graduate School of Education</p>
<p>Unit of Assessment: 25 Education</p>
<p>Title of case study: Strengthening international policy engagement with the educational priorities of small states</p>
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>International engagement with the education policy priorities of small states has been significantly strengthened and reshaped since 2009 by research and subsequent activities undertaken by the Education in Small States Research Group at the University of Bristol. Small states have historically been marginalized from international policy debates and agendas. Their unique educational priorities have often not been reflected in international deliberations, goals and priorities for education. This research has significantly strengthened macro-level international policy engagement with the educational priorities of small states. This is evidenced by changes in policy priorities, strategic plans, funding streams, on-going interventions, new research initiatives, and government ministry support for small states provided by leading international agencies including the Commonwealth, UNESCO, The World Bank and national policy makers. The reach of impact is therefore evidenced across global, regional and national levels.</p> <p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>The Education in Small States Research Group (www.smallstates.net) was established in 1994 at the Graduate School of Education and has an established international track record that has global reach and a demonstrable impact upon scholarship, policy and practice.</p> <p>A new strand of research was funded by the Commonwealth from 2009-2011. University of Bristol (UoB) researchers in the project included Professor Michael Crossley (UoB from 1990) who led the project as PI, Terra Sprague (UoB Research Fellow from 2009), and Mindy Colin (UoB PhD Researcher from 2008). International collaborators (from 2008-2011) outside the university included Professor Mark Bray (then Director of UNESCO/IIEP in Paris), Steve Packer (consultant), Dr David Atchoarena (Director of the Division for Education Strategies and Capacity Building at UNESCO Headquarters) and Dr Michaela Martin (UNESCO/IIEP). The research team at the University of Bristol led the design of the overall study, the management of the project, the primary data collection, analysis and writing of core sections of the key publications.</p> <p>The research began with a purposefully convened meeting held with Ministers of Education and Senior Advisors from small states at the 17th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (CEM) held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in June 2009. 32 of the 54 Commonwealth countries are classified as small states. Following this initial consultation, substantial literature reviews were carried out along with in depth, qualitative interviews with stakeholders from a variety of small states, field visits to Papua New Guinea, Turks and Caicos Islands, Fiji Islands, Solomon Islands and Surinam, and focus group discussions in association with UNESCO/IIEP's Advanced Training Programme participants.</p> <p>The findings challenge traditionally held development agency positions by calling for increased efforts to support greater diversity in international development priorities and closer articulation with national and local needs [5]. Recommendations [4] emphasise the need to move beyond a focus on basic education to strengthen the tertiary education sector, to prioritise Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), and to increase support for local, context sensitive policy development and research capacity within small states [2]. The research indicates there is much that the wider international community can learn from the experience of small states [3] as the Post 2015 Development Framework emerges. Conclusions also highlight the importance of the Commonwealth, UNESCO, and other international agencies maintaining ongoing support and international partnerships with small states – especially in the challenging contemporary global economic and environmental contexts.</p> <p>The research builds upon over two decades of pioneering work on education in small states carried out by Professor Crossley and members of the GSoE Research Centre for International and Comparative Studies (ICS) Education in Small States Research Group. Prior to the publication of their 2011 book [1] the main benchmark for Commonwealth research in this arena was an earlier</p>

Impact case study (REF3b)

volume, and related peer reviewed journal articles, published by Crossley and Holmes.

3. References to the research

- [1] Crossley, M., Bray, M., & Packer, S. with Atchoarena, D., Colin, M., Martin, M., & Sprague, T., 2011. *Education in Small States: Policies and Priorities*, London: Commonwealth Secretariat. ISBN: 978-1-84859-088-5. Listed in REF2.
- [2] Louisy, P., & Crossley, M., 2011. 'Tertiary Education in Saint Lucia: Challenges and priorities within the evolving global environment.' In Martin, M., & Bray, M. *Tertiary Education in Small States: Planning in the context of globalization*, pp 149-166. Paris: UNESCO/IIEP. ISBN: 978-
<http://www.iiep.unesco.org/information-services/publications/abstracts/2011/tertiary-education-in-small-states.html>
- This book received the Annual CIES Higher Education Best Book award in 2013.
- [3] Crossley, M., 2010. Context Matters in Educational Research and International Development: Learning from the Small States Experience. *Prospects*, 40(4), pp.421-429. DOI 10.1007/s11125-010-9172-4
- [4] Crossley, M., Bray, M. & Packer, S., 2009. Education in the small states of the Commonwealth: Towards and beyond global goals and targets. *The Round Table: The Commonwealth Journal of International Affairs*, 98(6), pp.731-751. Listed in REF2
- [5] Crossley, M., 2008. The Advancement of Educational Research in Small States. *Comparative Education*, 44(2), pp.247-254. DOI 10.1080/03050060802041316
- Recognised for an award and listed on the publisher's website as one of the two top cited articles in the 2010 review period

Related research grant supporting publications: Crossley, M. (Principal Investigator) and colleagues at UNESCO/IIEP. Educational Research and Planning Priorities for Commonwealth Small States. 2009-2011. Funder: Commonwealth Secretariat, £31,500.

4. Details of the impact

The impact of this research and associated activities has changed international policy priorities adopted and promoted by the 2009 CCEM and throughout the Commonwealth. The CCEM formulated policy on key development issues and built consensus at the highest political level within the Commonwealth. This, in turn, shaped the related Commonwealth Secretariat Education Strategic Plan from 2010, which then generated new international support, funding streams, and practical assistance for ongoing work on the distinctive educational priorities of small states worldwide. This further influenced UNESCO/IIEP, The World Bank, four regional groupings of small states, and Commonwealth input for the new Global Post-2015 Development Framework.

- **Impact at the global level:**

- **Commonwealth Secretariat**

The Head of the Education Section at the Commonwealth Secretariat, has attested that this research was undertaken 'in response to requests from Commonwealth governments,' and 'in order to inform policy making,' [g]. Initial findings [4] were reported, by invitation, and considered directly by Ministers of Education and Senior Officials from Commonwealth small states at the 17th CCEM held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in June 2009. The findings [4] were formally adopted by the Commonwealth Secretariat and this directly influenced the nature and content of the Kuala Lumpur Communiqué [a]. This established Commonwealth education priorities for the next triennium, allocated and prioritised core funding for small member states, and shaped the content of the Secretariat Education Strategic Plan 2010-2012 [b]. Both the KL Communiqué and the Strategic Plan revitalised ongoing support for education in small states and returned it to the top of the Commonwealth Secretariat's agenda, work plan and subsequent practice: the first of 8 goals in the Communiqué is to 'Advance education in small states through a variety of capacity-building and research initiatives,' [a]; the second of four 'priority areas' demarcated in the Strategic Plan is identified as 'Small States', emphasising teacher development, school leadership and higher education [b]; Crossley et al's research [1, 4, 5] further 'helped to frame the terms of reference for further, more focussed studies on education issues in small states, in particular, the study 'Islands of Inspiration: Education for Sustainable Development in Small Island Developing States' [g].

Impact on ESD policy and practice is especially notable following our participation in the most recent CCEM held in the small state of Mauritius. The Head of the Education Section at the

Commonwealth Secretariat has further stated that as a result of the research [1] 'The importance of education in small states was recognised at the 18th CCEM in August 2012, where ministers discussed at a dedicated roundtable on education in small states.' [g]. The research findings [1] and conclusions were then shared and endorsed in discussions with and between Education Ministers and Senior Advisors from 54 Commonwealth states during closed Ministerial deliberation sessions. In the light of this, the 18th CCEM committed the Commonwealth to prioritising ESD in future policy and practice for small states throughout the next triennium.

There has also been a direct high-level impact of the research [1, 3] upon the Commonwealth Ministerial Working Group's recommendations for global Post 2015 Education (Millennium Development Goal (MDGs) and Education For All (EFA)) deliberations. Professor Crossley was invited to participate in the Ministerial Working Group held at Marlborough House, London, in December 2012 and subsequently to contribute to on-going discussions via the Commonwealth's online forum. The result was a strengthened positioning of small states educational priorities within the Commonwealth's Recommendations for the Global Post 2015 Development Framework for Education. Ministers Recommendations state that the new Global Development Framework should 'ensure that systemic differences, especially those of scale experienced by small states and developing countries are taken into account.' [e] This is a strategic macro level impact since Commonwealth priorities are now being built into the new Global Post-2015 Development Framework that will replace existing MDGs and EFA goals.

- **Council for Education in the Commonwealth (CEC)**

The research [1, 5] has also impacted the scope of work of a second Commonwealth body, the CEC, bringing educational priorities of small states to the forefront of their broader educational work. This is first evidenced by the research team being invited to convene a CEC sponsored Day Conference in October 2010 at the University of Bristol to engage an international audience of 70 delegates including CEC members, High Commissioners from Tonga and Namibia, 20 Commonwealth scholars working in the UK, and University of Bristol participants [f]. Past and current CEC Executive Chairs have stated that this event and the research 'had implications later in 2012 for the programme of the Stakeholder Forum, associated with the 18th CCEM,' [h] and has helped the CEC 'to appreciate the significance of the contribution that the small states would make in Mauritius (2012 CCEM) and in turn how the proceedings and final communique would impact on their development, particularly their educational development over the next three – five years.' [h]

- **UNESCO and The World Bank**

Project collaboration with UNESCO/IIEP (International Institute for Educational Planning) generated wider impact and reach throughout UNESCO member states. Until 2009, IIEP had undertaken little recent activity on education in small states. As a result of our joint research and the emphasis placed upon higher education needs in small states, UNESCO IIEP convened the 2009 IIEP Education Policy Forum on the theme of Tertiary Education in Small States. This brought 50 senior educational planners together from small states worldwide, to share tertiary education experience and collectively 'develop policies and strategies at the system and institutional levels' [2 p 24]. Findings emerging from the research [1, 2, 4] also fed directly into the Policy Forum as a Keynote Address presented in Paris by the Governor General of St Lucia, on Tertiary Education in Saint Lucia [2]. This demonstrates how our work on tertiary education informed strategies to strengthen the tertiary sector and contributed to local research capacity building in St Lucia. The research also then informed the Governor General's globally influential Opening Address for the 2009 invitation only UNESCO World Conference on Higher Education for Heads of State, Senior Diplomats and Advisers. This evidences the growth of UNESCO's engagement with the research findings and the educational priorities of small states, and extended the impact of the findings to the world stage at the highest political level. This is further evidenced by inclusion of a 'Call to Action' within the World Conference communique, calling Members States to 'Empower Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States to benefit from the opportunities offered by globalisation and foster collaboration between them,' [i].

The reach of impact was extended beyond the field of education in 2011 through an invitation to present key findings [1] to a joint World Bank-Commonwealth Secretariat Meeting of Experts on 'Growth and Development in Small States' convened in Malta. This meeting was designed to

'strongly influence the ways in which the Commonwealth, World Bank and other international organisations assist small states in their growth and development endeavours' [d]. The research team was one of only two specialising in education invited for this influential meeting of 40 economists, political scientists and government representatives from small states from around the globe.

- **Impact at Regional and National Levels and Beyond Small States**

Following the 2009 CCEM, four Regional Commonwealth Consultation Meetings (Caribbean, South Pacific, Mediterranean, Southern Africa) were held in small states worldwide to provide practical and policy development support for all 32 Commonwealth small states. Sections from the research [4] presented to the 2009 CCEM shaped the consultation briefing documentation and helped to set the agenda for each of the four regional meetings which, in turn, shaped the development of new national education plans in ways that paid greater attention to distinctive small state needs and priorities [c].

At the national policy level, the Governor General of Saint Lucia attests [j] to the influence of our work [1,2,3,4,5] upon her own April 2013 Throne Speech, which determined the national government agenda and funding priorities for the next 12 months. In this speech to Parliament, she 'committed to promoting a better understanding of the plight of small states, so that, globally, there can be acknowledgement and agreement that such states require special treatment and delineation, given their openness and vulnerability.' [j]

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

- [a] Commonwealth Secretariat, 2009. *Kuala Lumpur Communiqué*, London: Commonwealth Secretariat. http://www.thecommonwealth.org/document/208198/17ccem_communique.htm confirmed key tasks and mandates for Commonwealth to adopt, prioritising education in small states for the 2010-2012 triennium.
- [b] Commonwealth Secretariat, 2010. *Education Strategic Plan 2010-2012: Improve and Promote Quality*, London: Commonwealth Secretariat. Lists educational priorities for the Secretariat to pursue with small state policy and research activities being highlighted.
- [c] Commonwealth Secretariat, 2010. Report of the Regional Consultation on Education Priorities in Small States. 6-7 May, 2010, Gaborone Sun Hotel, Gaborone, Botswana. Demonstrates and documents activities carried out by regional groupings of Commonwealth small states prioritising recommendations stemming from the research.
- [d] World Bank and Commonwealth Secretariat Experts Meeting on Growth and Development in Small States: statement of meeting purpose, demonstrating reach and impact into the wider development arena, beyond the field of education.
- [e] Commonwealth Secretariat 2012. Commonwealth Ministerial Working Group Recommendations for the Post 2015 Development Framework for Education. London. Documents how small state education priorities have influenced the emergent post-2015 development framework.
- [f] Council for Education in the Commonwealth, 2010. Winter Newsletter, pg 6 'Educational Policies and Priorities in Commonwealth Small States: a report of the meeting.' *CEC Reports & Lectures*. Evidences how our research was incorporated into and influenced CEC activities and agency priorities.
- [g] Head of Education Section, Social Transformation Programmes Division, Commonwealth Secretariat. Provides information (December 2012) about influence of the research upon changes in Commonwealth Secretariat policy priorities – including initiation of new work on post basic/tertiary education, ESD in small states and local research capacity building.
- [h] C EC Executive Chair. Letter on behalf of the Council for Education in the Commonwealth April 2013 stating how our research influenced CEC to engage in and prioritise small states activities.
- [i] UNESCO, 2009. World Conference on Higher Education Communiqué. UNESCO, Paris, p8. Prioritised work on tertiary education in small states for UNESCO at the highest political level.
- [j] Governor General, Saint Lucia. Formal statement April 2013 attesting to St Lucia's commitment to focus governmental action and funding on priorities identified in our research.