The Robert Owen Centre for Educational Change was inspired by the philosophy and actions of the social reformer, Robert Owen. The Centre was launched on 5th November 2013 with the explicit purpose of researching issues of educational equity and supporting the development of more equitable education systems to improve outcomes for all learners and to promote social justice.

During our first year, the Centre has engaged with diverse contexts, ranging from classrooms in Clydebank to Government offices in South East Asia. The purpose of this newsletter is to offer an insight into some of these research and development projects, and to highlight our commitment to increasing the link between policy and practice through a series of presentations and lunchtime and evening seminars open to academic, policymaking and practitioner communities.

Of course this is only a snapshot of our work, and we plan to publish a bi-annual update of activity. In the next edition we look forward to reporting on other new projects we are engaged in, including the ESRC/Scottish Government funded, “What Works Scotland Initiative” and the STV appeal, “Stronger Communities” project.

If you would like to know more about the work of the Centre, attend our seminars or get involved in our work please do get in touch.

Professor Chris Chapman
Director, Robert Owen Centre for Educational Change
Research highlights

School improvement partnerships

In 2013, Education Scotland commissioned the Robert Owen Centre for Educational Change (ROC), led by Professor Chris Chapman, to evaluate the impact of and to provide research support for the School Improvement Partnership Programme (SIPP) during 2013 and 2014. Specific objectives were:

• to provide tailored support to up to 10 individual SIPP partnership projects
• to assess how well the overall SIPP and each individual partnership project within it, have been initiated
• to assess the extent to which the SIPP has contributed to its intended intermediate outcome and to make recommendations for the future development and potential scale-up of the SIPP.

To help develop practitioner enquiry approaches, the research team worked collaboratively with stakeholders across eight partnership projects spanning a number of geographical boundaries. The Interim evaluation (February 2014) analysed an on-line survey of teachers, local authority personnel and other stakeholders involved in the partnerships, providing base-line data to allow comparisons with data to be gathered at the end of the project.

Interim findings

The interim findings reveal two key findings; firstly, the Programme has stimulated the imagination and creativity of a number of local authorities and their schools and often their other agencies to devise diverse and complex partnerships and programmes to tackle inequality in education. Secondly, there is already evidence that many of their goals are long-term and can only be realised by putting in place robust and effective systems and associated enquiry, which is the focus of their current work.

Above all, the Programme can be seen as an ambitious experiment and a learning experience that will require participants receiving appropriate and timely support and encouragement if they are to rise to the goals they have set. The value of inter-school collaboration was highlighted at an ESRC Festival of Science seminar and inaugural Annual Lecture led by Professor Mel Ainscow CBE on the 6th of November. The first annual report was launched on the 13th of November by Mr. Mike Russell Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning.

http://goo.gl/SRxLt8
Contact: Chris.Chapman@Glasgow.ac.uk

The Political Economy of Education Systems in Conflict-Affected Contexts

Dr. Oscar Valiente was part of the research team (along with the Centre for International Education, University of Sussex, the University of Greenwich and the University of Amsterdam), that carried out a rigorous literature review funded by DFID on the political economy factors that drive educational development in conflict-affected contexts. The purpose of the review was to provide theoretically informed and policy relevant political economy insights on the global, national and local governance of education systems in contexts where education development is hindered by the direct and/or the indirect effects of conflict.

Key findings

A comprehensive search for relevant literature was carried out combining purposive sampling with systematic review methods. Evidence was extracted thematically relating to: agenda setting, policy formulation and policy implementation in order to highlight the practical implications of insights to support strategic decision-making.

• At the agenda setting point the review found that the education sector has been marginalized within international agendas for conflict-affected contexts, which prioritise humanitarian aid and security. This prevented opportunities to address structural social, political and economic inequalities which often underpin conflict, including issues of inequitable educational provision and access.

• At the policy formulation point the review found a disjunction between generic globally formulated educational agendas and the specific challenges of conflict-affected contexts including issues of social justice, economic and political exclusion and cultural repression.
• The review found that the effectiveness of educational interventions was often undermined at policy implementation stage by insufficient attention to cultural, social, religious and political contexts within which they played out. A key issue was the need to engage with national and sub-national actors, including teachers, women, indigenous groups and religious leaders.

Contact: Oscar.Valiente@Glasgow.ac.uk

Research gaps and implications

Some research gaps were identified in the review of the literature on international education and conflict:

• There is a lack of systematic country level studies on the political economy relationship between education and conflict in conflict-affected contexts.

• Within the literature on education and conflict there is little communication and synthesis between orthodox and critical political economy approaches.

• More empirical evidence is needed assessing education actors’ perceptions of the utility and translation into policy action of political economy analysis in conflict-affected contexts.

The potential of education to contribute more fully to supporting sustainable peace building processes in conflict-affected contexts is undermined by a range of complex political economy factors at global, national and local scales. Better inter-agency and inter-sectoral coordination and understanding, and more political economy and conflict sensitive education programming can address these challenges.

This year-long research project, commissioned by the aid branch of the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade through the Developmental Leadership Programme (http://www.dlprog.org/) is led by Professor Michele Schweisfurth; Dr Oscar Valiente is a co-investigator and the team also includes partners from the Universities of Birmingham, Oxford and Malaya.

What kinds of education have leaders from lower-income countries experienced, and how has this shaped individuals and coalitions who have the power to facilitate development? This question is at the heart of the project. There are two important contexts for this research programme. One is a growing understanding in development studies of the importance of leadership for sustainable development. Economic growth, for example, depends on an educated population, but it also depends on leaders who are developmental rather than predatory. Another important part of the context for this research is the recent emphasis on primary education provision by aid agencies and national governments, encouraged by global Education for All and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The question in the air is whether this emphasis has gone too far and whether the disinvestment in higher education and research which it creates may ultimately be counterproductive in terms of development. If state funding is directed to primary education, and quality is minimal and uneven, how will the right kind of leaders be educated, gain legitimacy, and join forces?

The methodology consists of historical analysis, interviews with leaders of key social and political movements, and network analysis. Historical analysis will identify key movements which brought about positive change, and also identify people who were central to the movement as individuals or coalitions. Fieldwork will mainly involve interviewing as many of these individuals as possible, to explore their educational histories. We will aim to understand the roles of these institutions and while their influence may have been historical, where relevant we will visit them. Social network analysis will be used to illuminate the links between people within and across movements and institutions. While education including higher education may well have had an important role to play, whether that role has been consistently positive is an open question.

The research will inform the ongoing debate regarding priorities for education in the post-MDG era, and the interdisciplinary nature of the research across education, development studies and politics will facilitate this.

Contact: Michele.Schweisfurth@Glasgow.ac.uk or Oscar.Valiente@Glasgow.ac.uk

Case Study of Developmental Leadership in The Philippines: Educational Experiences, Institutions and Networks

As part of DLP’s research in these areas, a case study of the Philippines has been commissioned, building on work done in Ghana by researchers from CBT. The research will explore many aspects of education, including the roles of pedagogy, the curriculum, institutional selectivity, school ethos, values and the hidden curriculum, mobility, extracurricular activities, and student (dis)empowerment. The project will focus on the importance of particular institutions, coalitions and educational experiences to individuals, and how, through education, education may contribute to political and social change. One of the key issues for exploration is how far the benefits of education and of development are distributed fairly in the Philippines, in keeping with the spirit of the Robert Owen Centre’s priorities.

The research will inform the ongoing debate regarding priorities for education in the post-MDG era, and the interdisciplinary nature of the research across education, development studies and politics will facilitate this.

Contact: Michele.Schweisfurth@Glasgow.ac.uk or Oscar.Valiente@Glasgow.ac.uk
Renfrewshire Council Early Years initiative

The Robert Owen Centre for Educational Change (ROC) was commissioned in 2013 to work with two neighbour-hood centres in Renfrewshire, which have a focus on family-based work, aimed at improving the life chances of both parents and children. Each of the neighbour-hood centres has a core team of workers with a flexible, family based approach to dealing with a range of difficulties commonly experienced by local families. Each team (consisting of a coordinator, well being worker, several generic family workers, financial adviser, parents and carers) can be referred to the team through other agencies or by word of mouth and self referral. Workers then develop a solution based approach to deal with the families problems. Often this involves working with the family at particular crisis points and modeling appropriate behaviours and strategies.

The Roc team, led by senior Researcher, Stuart Hall is tasked with introducing and developing self-evaluation as part of the on-going project. Evaluative methodology is largely qualitative involving semi-structured interviews with staff, parents/carers and professional from other relevant local agencies. Through a formative mechanism the research team regularly feedback findings from the ongoing evaluation into the project development.

Interim findings

The project is due to report in March 2015, but interim findings suggest that the project has already worked with two hundred families and has assisted many of them to access benefit entitlements (Approximately an additional £140,000) which have had a major impact on individual’s circumstances and well-being. Moreover, it is clear that the core teams are addressing unmet need in relation to parental mental health, children’s behavioral issues, substance misuse, family isolation, housing problems and domestic abuse.

Contact: Stuart.Hall@Glasgow.ac.uk

Reducing School exclusions – Inclusion Plus Initiative

The Inclusion Plus Evaluation Project, funded by the Robertson Trust, is led by Dr. Mark Murphy, and Professor Chris Chapman. There are three agencies involved (Apex, Skillforce and Includem) in this Public Social Partnership initiative designed to help reduce school exclusions in a set of schools in Dundee. The agencies have different remits. Apex offers a service in the main to S1 and S2 pupils and provides either an alternative to exclusion, flexible learning packages or a combination of both. Their curriculum is mainly bespoke and designed around the child. Skillforce provide a more ‘off the shelf’ service with a similar curriculum across schools, mainly for S3 and S4 pupils. In many cases their curriculum is one of the optional subjects for pupils. Includem provide more of a wraparound service tailored to work with pupils and their families outside school hours in the main.

The aim of the evaluation is to:
• evidence the impact of the Inclusion Plus project on the levels of school exclusion in Dundee, while assessing the contributions of each organisation to this process
• evaluate the success of the Public Social Partnership model in terms of improving partnership working at the service and funding levels
• evaluate the success of the Inclusion Plus project, mainly working as separate agencies, are having a positive impact on behaviour change among at risk pupils in all four schools

Inclusion issues: The introduction of Inclusion Plus to schools in October 2013 presented a set of challenges, with the sense of imposition from outside having an effect in some of the school settings. In particular, the fact there were somewhat similar services already in existence in the schools (aside from Skillforce) meant that questions of ‘fit’ naturally arose.

The evaluation of the Inclusion Plus Project, like the project itself, has entered its second year, with a final report due in August 2015. A second interim report, to be delivered in February 2015, will explore in more detail the progress made regarding the public social partnership (PSP) model. This report will include data from key stakeholders, including funding agencies, Dundee City Council, schools and parents, with the aim of identifying the benefits and challenges of collaborations between the state and the third sector.

Contact: Mark.Murphy.2@Glasgow.ac.uk

Value of FE Colleges to the economy

Dr Kristinn Hermannsson, whose research expertise is in Economics, has recently produced a report on the value of education colleges to the economy.

Research Background

Further Education Colleges serve a large and diverse population of students. They typically grant incremental qualifications based on relatively short courses to a large number of students. Due to this diverse and diffuse nature of the studies their economic contribution is often overlooked, in particular compared to the fewer and more iconic bachelor and master degrees provided by universities. As part of the David Hume Institute’s discourse on further education in Scotland, Dr Kristinn Hermannsson and colleagues at the University of Strathclyde, Professor Kim Swales and Dr Patrizio Lecca, set out to quantify the economic impact of the 2011 graduation cohort from FECs based on the value of their increased skills being applied in the labour market.

Findings

Drawing on data from the FECs and wider labour market data it is possible to determine the increase in human capital stock available in the labour market attributable to the 2011 FEC cohort. Using the AMOS model of the Scottish Economy (which is maintained by the Fraser of Allander Institute and used for example by the Scottish Government) it was estimated that once in employment the cohort will boost Scottish GDP by 0.12% annually until their retirement. That is approximately £150m annually. Comparing the funding and output of FECs and HEIs respectively we further argue that the FECs provide as good value for money for taxpayers based on the contribution of their graduates to the labour market.

This is without making any allowance for potential differences in ability of these institutions student intake.

Contact: Kristinn.Hermannsson@Glasgow.ac.uk

www.strath.ac.uk/media/departments/economics/researchdiscussionpapers/2014/14-04.pdf
## Knowledge Exchange links

### 2014 Calendar for Seminar series

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<td>How much does a single graduation cohort from Further Education Colleges contribute to the Scottish Economy?</td>
<td>Dr Kristinn Hermannsson, (ROC) Fr. Patrizio Lecca, &amp; Dr. Kim Swales, Fraser of Allander Institute</td>
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<td>27/02/14</td>
<td>A Critical Analysis of Global Rankings in Higher Education</td>
<td>Professor Barbara Kehm, (ROC)</td>
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<td>24/04/14</td>
<td>The Scottish College for Educational Leadership. “Learning for leadership, leadership for learning”</td>
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<td>Learner-centred Pedagogy in International Perspective</td>
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<td>System Level Professional Learning: Initiation and Implementation (EVENING)</td>
<td>Professor Mark Hadfield, University of Cardiff</td>
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<td>26/06/14</td>
<td>Partnership-based approaches to tackling school exclusions (3-4pm)</td>
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<td>28/08/14</td>
<td>Women’s schooling and child development: A mixed-methods, longitudinal study in Ethiopia</td>
<td>Dr Edward G. J. Stevenson, Dept of Anthropology, University College London</td>
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<td>04/09/14</td>
<td>School Choice in the US</td>
<td>Professor Emeritus Robert Fox, &amp; Professor Emerita Nina Buchanan, University of Hawaii</td>
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<td>02/10/14</td>
<td>Theorizing accountability and risk in public sector governance</td>
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<td>29/10/14</td>
<td>A Free for All? Contemporary education policy in England and research evidence in Free Schools (5.30-7.30 EVENING)</td>
<td>Professor Rob Higham, Institute of Education, London</td>
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<td>06/11/14</td>
<td>Collaboration for Equitable Educational Improvement (5.30-7.30 EVENING)</td>
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<td>27/11/14</td>
<td>Advancing Race and Ethnicity in Education</td>
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<td>18/12/14</td>
<td>Gender and Student Social Cultures in HE</td>
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Knowledge Exchange links

Invited presentations

Professor Chris Chapman
- International Conference of School Choice International keynote symposium, Florida (January, 2014).
- Keynote at HMIE Conference, Dunblane (June 2014).

Professor Andy Furlong
- Invitation to speak on youth policy at the Israeli Knesset (May, 2014).
- Invitation to speak at Columbia University and the United nations (March).
- Invitation to first forum on Global Youth Policy, United Nations and Council of Europe, Azerbaijan (Oct).
- Invitation to symposium on youth outside the northern metropole, Newcastle Australia.

Professor Michele Schweisfurth
- Funded panel speaker on Education and Social Justice panel at ESOF in Copenhagen June 2014.

Professor Barbara Kehm
- “Wie trägt Internationalisierung zur Qualität der Lehre bei?” Presentation at the DAAD/IDF Seminar, “Quality in international study programmes”, organised by DAAD, 14 to 15 February 2014 in Bonn (Germany).
- Der Kampf ums Treppchen. Wie Hochschulen bei der Lieferung von Daten für internationale Rankings schummeln. Keynote at the welcoming event of the new cohort of students in the Master of Public Administration Programme “Science Management”, University of Public Administration, Speyer (Germany), 17 March 2014.
- Drivers for International Student Mobility. Invited presentation at the Conference on ‘International Student Mobility: Global and Commonwealth Perspectives’, organized by the Council for Education in the Commonwealth, University of Glasgow, 2 April 2014.
- Concepts of Professional Education in International Comparison. Invited presentation at the Institute for Higher Education Research, Beihang University, Beijing, China, 17 June 2014.
- Changes in Academic Careers and Work in Germany. Presentation at the 27th Annual CHER Conference, 8 to 10 September 2014 in Rome (Italy).
- University Rankings and Their Role in Restructuring the German Higher Education Landscape. Invited presentation at the 5th International Conference of the Russian Association of Higher Education Researchers, Moscow, October 16 to 18, 2014.

Professor Clive Dimmock
- Keynote. Transforming schools as 21st century innovative learning environments. OECD, Barcelona, (December, 2013).
- SCEL launch of Fellows Scheme 21/22 March – presentation on International perspectives on how future leadership can help transform Scottish education.

Dr Mark Murphy
- ‘The dangers of not having research at the heart of educational change’. Keynote delivered at the Further Education Research Emporium, City of Glasgow College, (June, 2014).
- ‘Using social media in your research’. Keynote delivered at Engage Research Event, University of Strathclyde, May 2014.

Dr Barbara Read

Dr Oscar Odena
Recent awards and appointments

Contracts and awards

Professor Chris Chapman has recently secured funding from a number of organizations, including:

• “What Works Scotland”. Professor Chris Chapman, (along with a team of academics from the College of Social Science and the University of Edinburgh) have been jointly awarded funding from a ESRC/ Scottish Government for a three year project to help policy makers and practitioners in Scottish public services transform the way they work, by working with public sector bodies to establish/ evaluate the evidence of what works in Scottish Public service delivery. (May 2014).

• Two contracts were awarded from Education Scotland, “Knowledge into Action”. In August 2014 and “Schools Improvement Partnership Programme” (phase2) in October 2014.

• Save the Children awarded a contract to support “Stronger Communities”, September 2014.

• N. Ayrshire Council awarded funding to investigate, “Making Education Work for All – a research collation for equity and innovation”, October 2014.

• ESRC Festival of Social Science awarded the costs of holding an interactive seminar presenting research work to Schools and wider public bodies as part of the ESRC Social Science Festival in November 2014.

• The Moffat Charitable Trust recently awarded ROC a 3 year Postgraduate Scholarship, with the aim of working with teachers and pupils in Glasgow’s poorest areas to better understand the factors which create the well established links between poverty and low attainment, and to identify practical policies and practices which will promote more equitable education. (April 2014).

• Dr Barbara Read, won support from the University of Glasgow’s Adam Smith Research Foundation for research on the Topic of “Precarity”, leading an inter-disciplinary team on research that is designed to foster enquiry involving a range of Macro and Micro perspectives under this overarching thematic umbrella.

• Dr Oscar Odena was successful in an application to the University of Glasgow’s Chancellor’s Fund, (May 2014) to support the study, “Student teachers using music education to integrate new arrivals”.

• Professor Michele Schweisfurth has recently been awarded funding from the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, to develop a “Case Study of Developmental Leadership in the Philippines: Educational Experiences, Institutions and Networks.”

• Professor Andy Furlong has just been awarded on behalf of the College of Social Sciences, a Grant from ESRC for Impact Acceleration Accounts, designed to promote knowledge exchange activities.

• Dr Oscar Valinete was awarded a contract in September 2014 from British Council to examine, “Dual Apprenticeship programmes to Tackle youth Unemployment: A Comparative analysis of their adoption and implementation in Mexico and Spain.” He was also awarded funding in September 2014 from UNICEF to study, “Building Resilience and social cohesion: comparative country study exploring the nexus between education sector governance inequity, conflict and peacebuilding.”

Appointments

• In May 2014 Dr. Natalie Walters was appointed as a Research Assistant to the Robert Owen Centre.

• In April 2014 Dr. Barbara Read was appointed as Director of the Adam Smith Research Foundation.

• In April 2014 Professor Chris Chapman was appointed as Research Director for the School of Education.

• In October 2014, Adele Rowe was appointed as a Research Assistant to the Robert Owen Centre.

• In October Dr Mark Murphy was appointed as Co-Director of the Centre.

• In November Nantina Tsekeri was appointed as Social Media Intern for the Robert Owen Centre.

• Dr Natalie Watters with Chris Chapman were awarded funding in October 2014 from the Save the Children Fund to provide in depth qualitative evaluation of their early intervention programme (FAST) to support children’s learning.
Members of the Robert Owen Centre

**Director(s)**
Professor Chris Chapman
Dr Mark Murphy
Professor Michele Schweisfurth

**Other core members**
Dr Katherine Barg
Ms Hannah Chestnutt
Ms Julie Cooper
Professor Clive Dimmock
Professor Graham Donaldson
Professor Andy Furlong
Professor Anthony Finn
Mr Stuart Hall
Dr Kristinn Hermannsson
Professor Barbara Kehm
Dr Deirdre Kelly
Mr Kevin Lowden
Dr Oscar Odena
Dr Barbara Read
Ms Adele Rowe
Dr Gijsbert Stoet
Dr Oscar Valiente
Dr Natalie Watters