

ELP Systems Research

About ELP Systems Research

ELP Systems Research is a \$6 million research program, funded by the UK Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) to deliver policy-relevant, quality research on early learning systems. Fieldwork concluded in 2021 in a set of four focus countries - Ethiopia, Liberia, Pakistan and Jamaica - with additional global research and dissemination work ongoing.

The Program has generated:

- High quality in-depth research into early learning systems focused on ‘what works’ to improve quality, equity and cost effectiveness of early childhood education in different contexts as a **global public good**.
- **Country specific evidence** and tailored dissemination activities to inform government early learning investment decisions in 4 countries (Ethiopia, Liberia, Pakistan [Punjab region] and Jamaica).
- **A set of system diagnostics developed on early learning** which will contribute to the emerging field of education systems research and provide tools for policy and programming.

The primary research question that the program aimed to address is: *‘What works in education systems in low-income countries to provide equitable, quality Early Childhood Education (ECE) to improve school readiness?’* Within this primary question, there are the following sub-questions:

- a. What are the **institutional and systemic barriers** to equitable ECE? What is the political economy that enables/inhibits countries to implement ECE policies and scale up interventions?
- b. What works in different **types of ECE provision** (for example home, school, community-based) to provide quality ECE for girls and boys? What works to **enable equitable scale** up of quality ECE interventions to improve school readiness for correct age entry into primary school? What **indicators and tools** are most effective for measuring this?
- c. How can **civil society, NGOs and the private sector** effectively support quality ECE and how do they engage with government systems?
- d. What are the **financial implications** of ECE services and what are the most cost-effective options?
- e. What works to support **family and parental interaction** in children’s early learning and in ECE services? What is the demand for ECE services, and what incentives,

opportunities and barriers shape investments in early learning? What are the financial implications for families?

Within each country a diagnostic phase of research was conducted from 2017–2019 and then a second phase (2019–2021) focused on specific topics in agreement with the Government. These themes include overage enrollment in ECE in Liberia, parent engagement in Pakistan, trauma and violence in early childhood in Jamaica and ECE quality improvements and measurement of child outcomes and quality in Ethiopia. A series of country-specific and cross-country papers have been produced and are published in peer-reviewed journals and working paper series.

ELP Systems Research has had a significant impact on early learning program and policy decisions and helped increase government capacity in the focus countries. For example, in Pakistan, the ELP Systems work helped develop a scalable, quality focused ECE classroom model and established indicators for monitoring quality. In Ethiopia, ELP Systems Research built capacity at the national assessment agency to use the Measuring Early Learning Quality and Outcomes (MELQO) tools, supported changes to the pre-primary curriculum to improve quality, and contributed to the development of supervision tools for principals, including an inspection framework and checklist and teacher training materials. In Jamaica, a rapid phone survey contributed to the adaptation of a non-violent parenting program to a virtual format during COVID-19 lockdowns. The research included a rigorous evaluation of a virtual parenting intervention, which is informing future programming by the Early Childhood Commission (ECC).

Peer reviewed Publications

2024

- [Impact of COVID-19 on Young Children and Families in Jamaica](#)
- [Setting Strong Foundations for Early Learning: Lessons From the Global South on Early Childhood Education](#)
- [Donor Coordination and Evidence Uptake in Early Childhood Education Policy](#)
- [The Virtual Irie Homes Toolbox: Adaptation and Remote Delivery of an Early Childhood, Violence Prevention, Parenting Program in Jamaica](#)
- [Parental/Caregiver Engagement in Early Learning Systems: Findings From Early Learning Partnership \(ELP\) COVID-19 Research in Pakistan and Ethiopia](#)
- [Pre-Primary Education and School Readiness Amid the COVID-19 Pandemic: Evidence From Ethiopia](#)

2023

- [Violent Discipline and Child Behavior: The Short and Mid-term Effects of a Virtual Parenting Support to Caregivers in Jamaica](#)

2022

- [The COVID-19 Pandemic and Early Childhood Education in Ethiopia, Liberia, and Pakistan: Perspectives of Pre-primary School Teachers](#)
- [Effects of pre-primary education on school readiness during the COVID-19 pandemic: Evidence from Ethiopia](#)
- [Misalignment of policy priorities and financing for early childhood education: Evidence from Ethiopia, Liberia, and Mainland Tanzania](#)
- [Persistent inequalities in early years' access and learning: evidence from large-scale expansion of pre-primary education in Ethiopia](#)
- [Political prioritization of early childhood education during the COVID-19 Pandemic: A comparative policy analysis of low- and middle-income countries](#)

2021

- [Political prioritization of early childhood education in low- and middle-income countries](#)
- [The implications of COVID-19 for early childhood education in Ethiopia: Perspectives from parents and caregivers](#)

Country Reports

2022

- [Early Learning in Ethiopia: Effects of pre-primary education on school readiness. Early Learning Partnership Ethiopia Phase 2 report](#)

2021

- [Evaluation of a pilot programme to promote child-centered early childhood education and reduce over-age enrolment in Liberia. Early Learning Partnership Phase 2: Liberia Country Report](#)
- [A Systems Analysis of Early Childhood Development in Jamaica. Early Learning Partnership Systems Research Report: Jamaica Phase 1](#)
- [Rapid assessment of children and families in the time of COVID-19 to guide interventions: Junior JAKIDS. Early Learning Partnership Systems Research Report: Jamaica Phase 2](#)
- [COVID-19 interim research, Punjab Pakistan Early Learning Partnership Phase 2 Report](#)

- [Early Learning Partnership Phase 2: COVID-19 Interim Research Punjab Pakistan](#)

2020

- [The implications of COVID-19 on early learning continuity in Ethiopia: Perspectives of parents and caregivers](#)

2019

- [Quality, equity and governance for early years: Lessons from the Punjab, Pakistan. Early Learning Partnership Phase 1: System Diagnostic Report Pakistan](#)

2018

- [Early Learning in Ethiopia: Equitable access and learning. System diagnostic report for World Bank Early Learning Program](#)
- [Early Learning Partnership Systems Research: Liberia Diagnostic Report](#)
- [Early Learning System Diagnostic: Mainland Tanzania](#)
- [Early Learning System Diagnostic: Zanzibar](#)

Policy Briefs

2018

- [Overage enrolment in Early Childhood Education in Liberia. Issue Brief #1](#)
- [Early childhood education in Liberia: A growing crisis. Issue Brief #2](#)
- [The cost of scaling up quality early childhood education in Liberia. Issue Brief #3](#)

Interviews and blogs

2021

- [Learning inequalities widen following COVID-19 school closures in Ethiopia](#)
- [Practical and ethical challenges of doing distance research in the Global South during a global pandemic](#)
- [Ethiopia Builds its First National Assessment of Pre-primary Education](#)

2020

- [Implications of COVID-19 for pre-primary education in Ethiopia: Perspectives of parents and caregivers](#)
- [The threat of COVID-19 on Ethiopia's recent gains in pre-primary education](#)

- [Education response to COVID-19: How can basic education be implemented in Ethiopia?](#)

Conference Presentations

2020

- [Persistent inequalities in early learning opportunities: Evidence from a large-scale expansion of pre-primary education in Ethiopia. Research on Improving Systems of Education \(RISE\) 2020 Conference-Online Presentation Series](#)
 - *Speakers:* Janice Kim (REAL Centre, University of Cambridge; RISE Ethiopia) and Belay Hagos Hailu (Addis Ababa University; RISE Ethiopia)

Videos (*coming soon*)

Video Session 1 – Praise

Video Session 2 – Irie Time

Video Session 3 – Positive attention throughout the day

Video Session 4 – Giving clear instructions

Video Session 5 – Teaching your child new skills - independence and choice

Video Session 6 – Understanding your child's behavior

Video Session 7 – Understanding and managing emotions

Video Session 8 – Redirect and withdraw attention

Video Session 9 – Chillax, consequences

Video Session 10 – Review

Datasets (*coming soon*)

- **Ethiopia**
- **Jamaica**
- **Liberia**
- **Pakistan**

Learning Resources (*coming soon*)

2021

- The Irie Home Toolbox: Facilitator manual for virtual delivery