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Support classes offered in rural education – the SCORE trial

Submission date 25/04/2015	**Recruitment status** No longer recruiting	[_] Prospectively registered [X] Protocol
Registration date 01/05/2015	**Overall study status** Completed	[_] Statistical analysis plan [_] Results
Last Edited 17/12/2015	**Condition category** Other	[_] Individual participant data [_] Record updated in last year

Plain English summary of protocol

Background and study aims
Low education levels are endemic in much of the developing world, particularly in rural areas where traditional government-provided public services often have difficulty reaching beneficiaries. Providing trained para-teachers to teach regular after-school remedial education classes has been shown to improve literacy and numeracy in children of primary school age residing in such areas in India. We want to investigate whether such as intervention can also work in a West African setting with similarly low learning levels and difficult geographic access.

Who can participate?
Villages in the Lower River and North Bank Regions of The Gambia (West Africa) that have between 15 and 300 households, at least 15 children deemed eligible to participate in the study, and the village chief (Alkalo) gives his consent. Children are eligible if they did not attend first grade or higher in a lower basic school in last academic year and expect to be enrolled this year. They should also be born between September 1st, 2007 and August 31st, 2009.

What does the study involve?
Villages taking part in the study are randomly allocated to one of two groups. Those in group 1 (intervention) receive an education intervention providing after-school remedial education 5-6 days a week for three years to children entering the first grade in the fall of 2015. Those in group 2 do not receive the intervention. The effects of the intervention on the children's learning levels are then investigated.

What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?
The potential benefits of the study are improved learning levels. We foresee no potential risks from participating.

Where is the study run from?
The study is run from our offices in Banjul (Gambia) and London (UK)

When is the study starting and how long is it expected to run for?
July 2014 to June 2018

Who is funding the study?
Effective Intervention - London School of Economics (UK)

Who is the main contact?
Mr Alex Eble

Contact information

Type(s)
Scientific

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Study information

Scientific Title
Support Classes Offered in Rural Education – The SCORE Trial: a randomized controlled trial of remedial after-school support classes in rural Gambia

Acronym
SCORE

Study objectives
Low education levels are endemic in much of the developing world, particularly in rural areas where traditional government-provided public services often have difficulty reaching beneficiaries. Providing trained para-teachers to teach regular after-school remedial education classes has been shown to improve literacy and numeracy in children of primary school age residing in such areas in India. This trial investigates whether such an intervention can also be effective in a West African setting with similarly low learning levels and difficult geographic access.

Ethics approval required
Old ethics approval format

Ethics approval(s)

London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM) Interventions Research Ethics Committee, 27/11/2014, ref: 8767.

Primary study design
Interventional

Study design
This is a cluster-randomized control trial evaluating an education intervention randomized at the level of a geographically defined cluster of villages

Study type(s)
Other

Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied
Low learning levels / literacy / numeracy

Interventions
The intervention in this study will adapt the STRIPES para-teacher intervention (Lakshminarayana et al., PLoS ONE, 2013) to the Gambian context, providing remedial after-school education classes focusing on numeracy and literacy, five to six days a week, in each intervention village, to attempt to replicate the results from STRIPES in a new context.

Intervention Type
Behavioural

Primary outcome(s)
Composite of scores earned on English language and mathematics assessments from a test which will be conducted after three years of implementing the programme, i.e. in spring 2018.

Key secondary outcome(s)
1. Performance on language and maths assessments, separately;
2. Performance on the National Assessment Test, administered annually to all students in the third grade in The Gambia
3. Subgroup-specific treatment effects to be investigated using interaction tests. Subgroups, defined at the individual level, to be considered are:
3.1.. Ethnic group (Mandinka, Fula, Wollof, and other)
3.2. Gender
3.3. . Geography (above or below the median distance from the main highway in each region);
3.4. Parents' education level (in tertile groups)
4. School type (three types: public/government, private-religious, and private-non-religious);
5. Spillover effects of the intervention on the reading ability, as measured by a simple ASER-style literacy test of the child's siblings immediately before and after the child in birth order and the child's primary caretaker
6. Whether or not the school's mothers' club is active
7. Effects of the intervention on educational spending by families, attendance of teachers and children in regular school, and parent and child's time spent on education-related activities (doing homework, helping child with homework, study) outside of school hours.
8. Children's enrolment in school

Completion date

30/06/2018

Eligibility

Key inclusion criteria
A village will potentially be eligible if the following conditions are met:
1. The number of households in the village is between 15 and 300 according to the 2013 Gambian census
2. There are at least 15 children eligible for inclusion in the trial at the time of our enumeration
3. It falls inside an eligible cluster, determined by an enumeration and mapping exercise described below, designed to minimize the risk of bias from contamination
4. The Alkalo (village chief) consents to allow the village to participate in the trial

A child will be eligible if he or she is resident in a village within an eligible cluster, and fits the following criteria:
1. S/he did not attend first grade or higher in a lower basic school or madrasa in the 2014-2015 academic year
2. The child's caretaker intends to enrol him/her in the first grade in the 2015-2016 academic year
3. S/he is born between September 1st 2007 and August 31st 2009
4. The caretaker consents to allow the child to participate in the trial

Participant type(s)
Healthy volunteer

Healthy volunteers allowed
No

Age group
Child

Sex
All

Key exclusion criteria
Participants will be excluded only if they fail to give consent or meet the inclusion criteria

Date of first enrolment
26/01/2015

Date of final enrolment
30/06/2015

Locations

Countries of recruitment
Gambia

Study participating centre

Villages in Lower River and North Bank Regions
Gambia
-

Sponsor information

Organisation
Effective Intervention

ROR
https://ror.org/00a1wp308

Funder(s)

Funder type
Charity

Funder Name
Effective Intervention - London School of Economics (UK)

Results and Publications

Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan

IPD sharing plan summary
Stored in repository

Study outputs

Output type	Details	Date created	Date added	Peer reviewed?	Patient-facing?
Protocol article	protocol	16/12/2015		Yes	No