REAL Centre evidence in International Development Committee’s report on Education

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Oral and written evidence from the REAL Centre has been drawn on by the UK International Development Committee (cross-party committee of MPs).

In a letter to the Secretary of State for International Development, Priti Patel MP, published yesterday in lieu of a final report due to the upcoming election, the Committee highlights the importance of increasing investment in education to ensure no one is left behind.

Professor Pauline Rose, on behalf of the REAL Centre, joined other expert witnesses during the Committee’s enquiry on education. Drawing on evidence from the REAL Centre’s work, she highlighted the critical issue of investing in early years education in order for disadvantaged children and young people to realise their potential in adulthood.

Professor Rose was quoted in the letter as saying, "the evidence is quite clear that an early childhood development programme makes a huge difference to their readiness to learn once they are in school and has greater benefits once they go through the system, particularly for the most marginalised ".

Drawing on the REAL Centre’s Teaching Effectively All Children research programme, Professor Rose was also cited as arguing that efforts should be on ensuring the most disadvantaged " have the best teachers, the most qualified teachers and teachers who have been given training in how to teach basic literacy and numeracy ". She also emphasised the need for teachers to be trained in inclusive teaching practices, to ensure they can deal with diverse groups of children in the classroom and ensure children are not left behind once they reach the classroom, including those with disabilities.

The IDC letter further highlighted the REAL Centre’s attention to focusing on the transition from primary to secondary school, where there are large numbers of dropouts and on the most marginalised children, particularly girls and those with disabilities. The REAL Centre is currently working with Camfed to assess Value for Money with an equity lens in its girls’ education programme in Tanzania, a programme which the Committee recognised as achieving unprecedented learning outcomes among the most marginalized girls.