



**International Initiative for Impact Evaluation**

# **Using synthesised evidence to improve education**

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**Ghana Education Evidence Summit  
Accra, 6<sup>th</sup> August**

# Challenges of single studies: generalisability and reliability (quality)

TIME


HEALTH FOOD & BEVERAGE

## Drinking 4 Coffees a Day Is Bad for You, Study Says

Tessa Berenson @tberenson | May 28, 2015

Less than 400 mg of caffeine per day is safe

A lot of caffeine is bad for your health, according to a new study, and many people are consuming too much of it.



A new report by the European Food

TIME


HEALTH DIET/NUTRITION

## Why Your Coffee Addiction Isn't So Bad for You

Real Simple @RealSimple | Jan. 28, 2015

Go ahead and pour yourself another cup

Knocking back a daily cup of joe (or several) delivers more than a jolt of energy. That morning brew comes with a host of health benefits, according to research. Here's how coffee can benefit your body and your brain.



MailOnline

## Drinking three cups of coffee a day could halve the risk of liver cancer

- Coffee is proven to prevent diabetes, a known risk factor for liver cancer
- It also has beneficial effects on cirrhosis and liver enzymes

By DAILY MAIL REPORTER

PUBLISHED: 00:57 GMT, 24 October 2013 | UPDATED: 07:19 GMT, 24 October 2013

Three cups of coffee a day could reduce the risk of liver cancer by up to 50 per cent, latest research has shown.

One study found the drink reduces the risk of the most common type of liver cancer, hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC), by 40 per cent but separate research indicated that risk could be reduced by half.

Study author Dr Carlo La Vecchia, said 'Our research confirms past claims that coffee is good for your health, and particularly the liver.'

MailOnline

## Why filter coffee is bad for you

by JAMES CHAPMAN, Daily Mail

Dropping coffee from your diet could reduce the risk of heart disease by as much as 15 per cent, according to a study.

Britons spend £850million a year on coffee. But experts suggest it can raise levels of cholesterol and homo-cysteine in the blood - both associated with heart disease and strokes.

There has been concern about the possible dangers of unfiltered coffee for some time but the more widely consumed filtered coffee has generally been given a clean bill of health.

The latest study suggests there may be a link between even filtered coffee and cardiovascular disease.

The team, led by Dr Benedicte Christensen of the Ullevål University Hospital in Oslo, concluded that compounds in coffee called terpenoids - which are only partially removed by filtering - were responsible for raising the heart disease risk.

Writing in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition today, they say abstaining from average amounts of coffee may lower the concentrations of both tHcy (total homocysteine) and total cholesterol.

Dr Christensen studied a group of 183 Norwegian men and women, aged 24 to 69. Cholesterol and tHcy levels went down in those subjects who abstained from coffee.

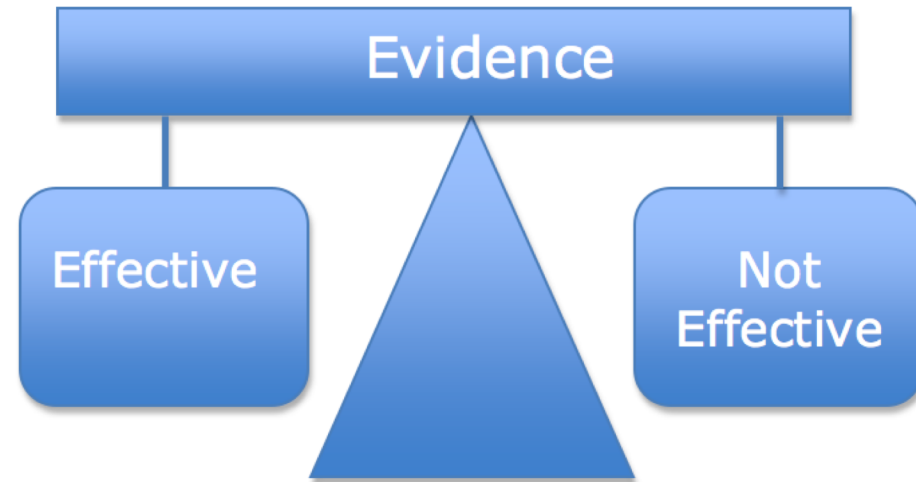
Those who usually have an average of four cups of coffee per day could reduce their cholesterol-related risk of heart disease by 15 per cent and homocysteine-related risk by ten per cent, the scientists say.

# Challenge of information overload

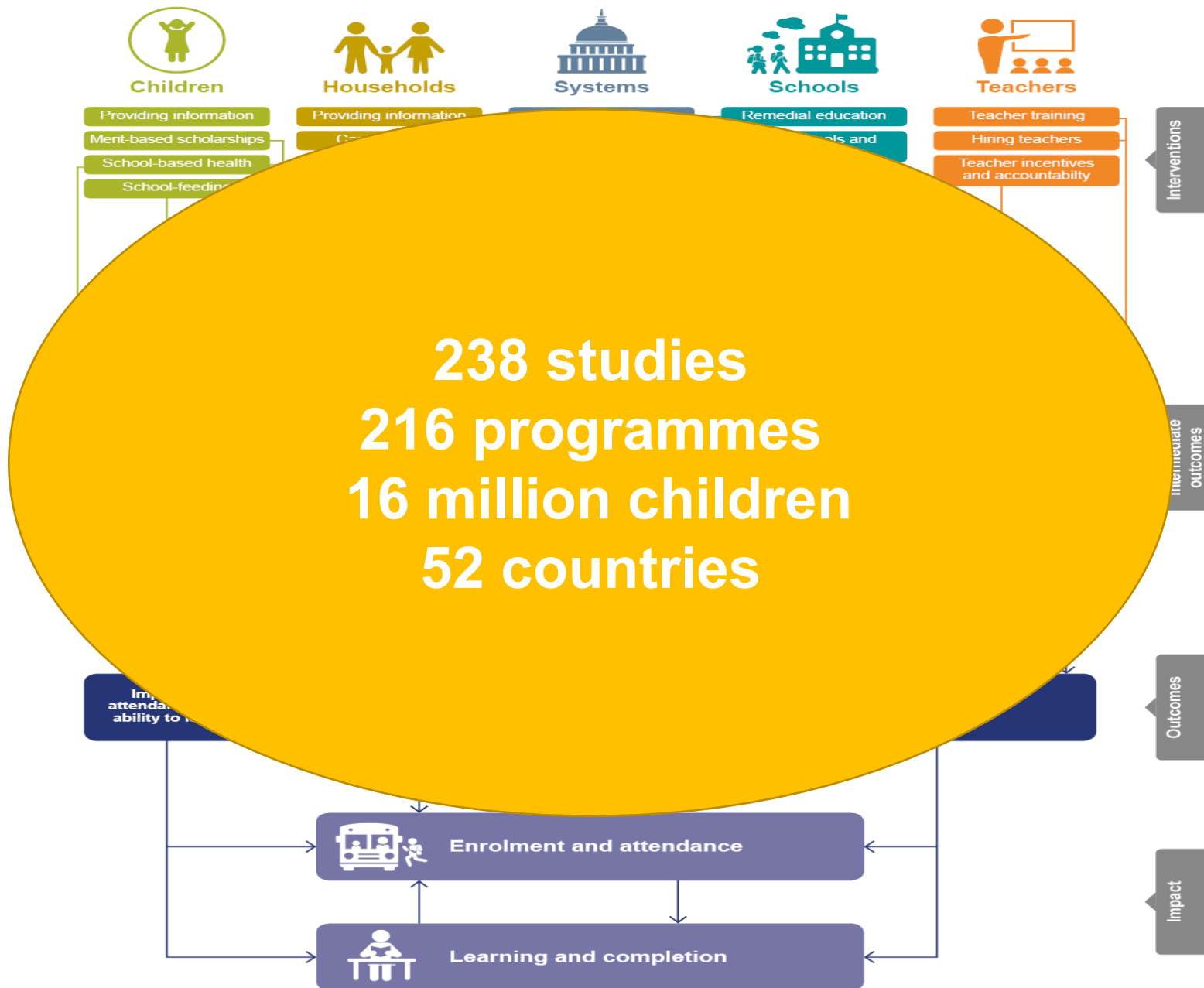


# Why systematic reviews?

- A way of establishing the *overall balance of empirical evidence* on a particular question
- Separating *higher quality* from lower quality evidence
- Identifying what is *generalisable* and what is *context specific*
- May reject accepted wisdom, confirm what we think we know or identify new findings based on all available evidence



# Scope and intervention framework



# What works in most contexts, what is promising and what is unknown



## Children

Providing information

Merit-based scholarships

School-based health

School-feeding



## Households

Providing information

Cash transfers

Reducing fees



## Systems

Public-private partnerships

School-based management

Community-based monitoring



## Schools

Remedial education

New schools and infrastructure

Providing materials

Structured pedagogy

Grouping by ability

Extra time

Computer-assisted learning



## Teachers

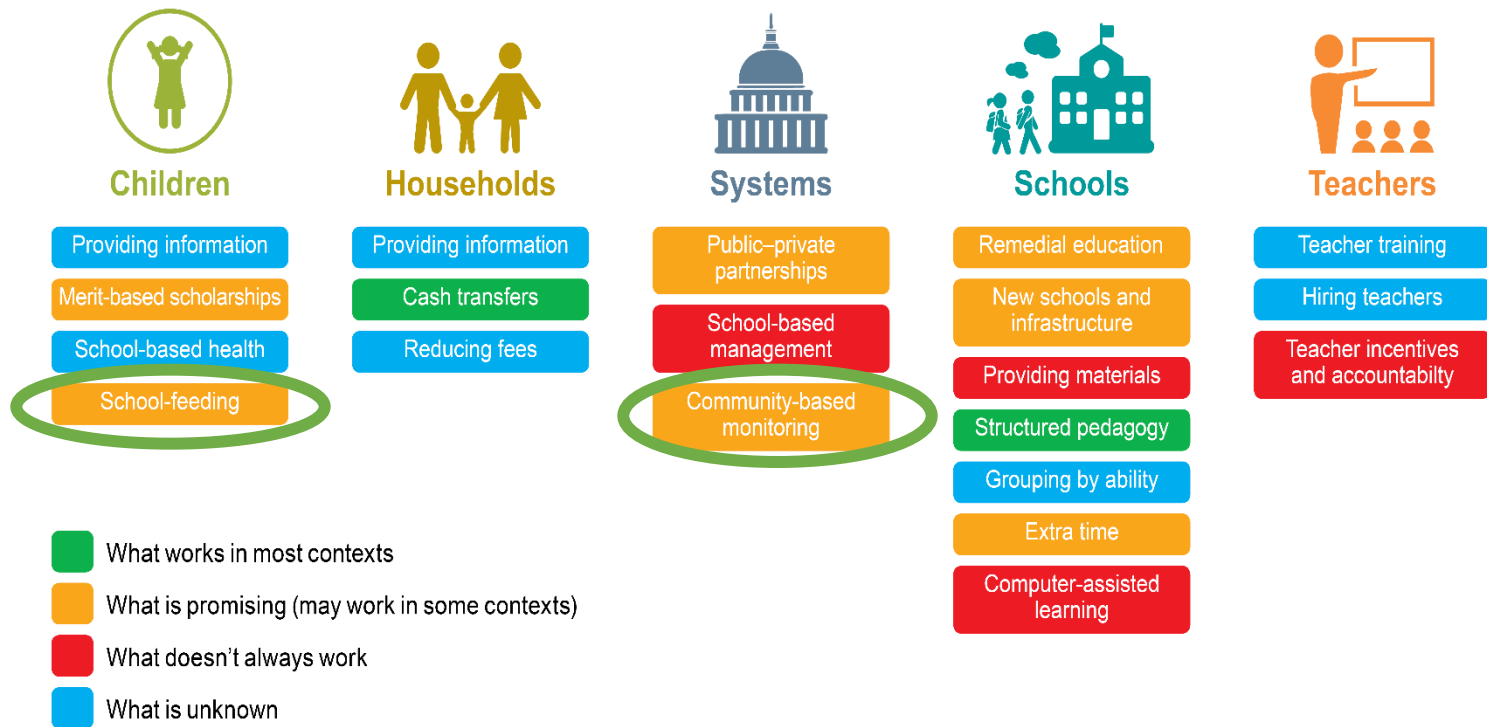
Teacher training

Hiring teachers

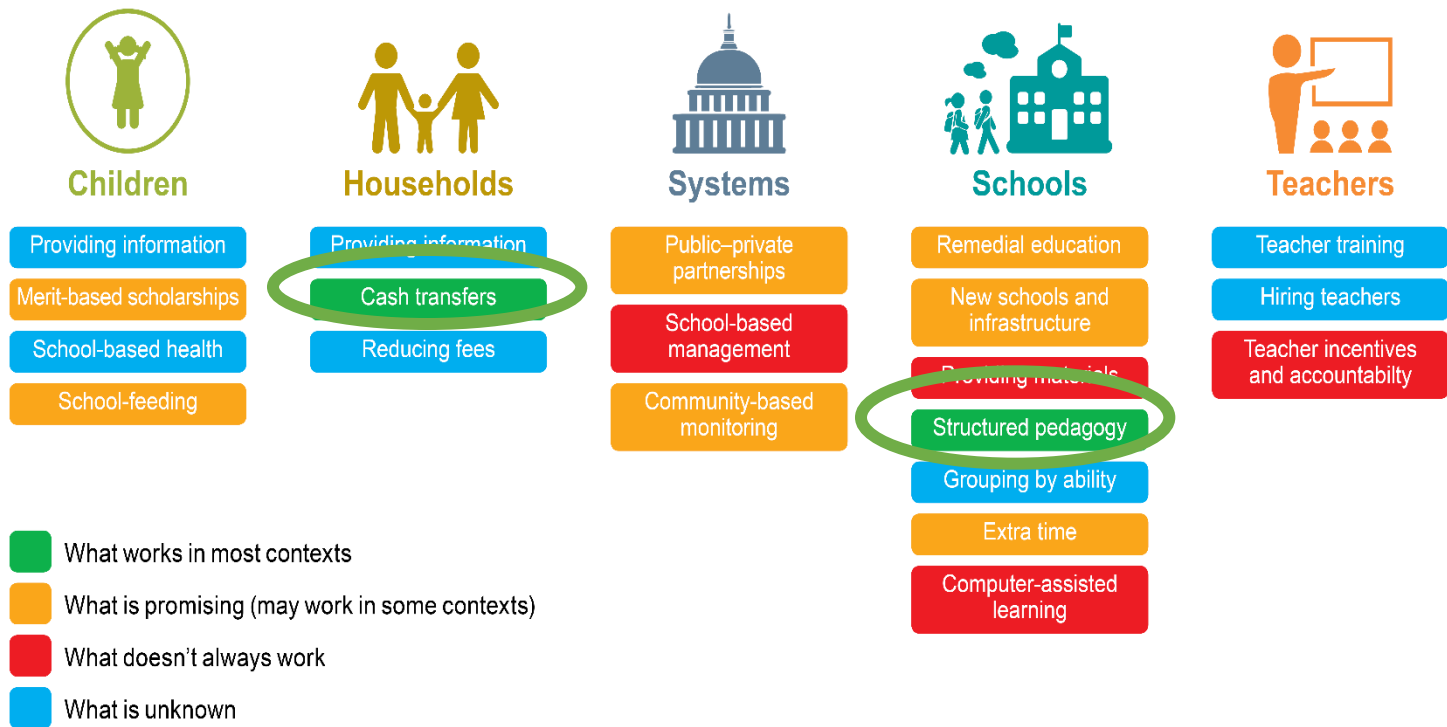
Teacher incentives and accountability

- What works in most contexts
- What is promising (may work in some contexts)
- What doesn't always work
- What is unknown

# Programmes typically improve either participation or learning, but not both

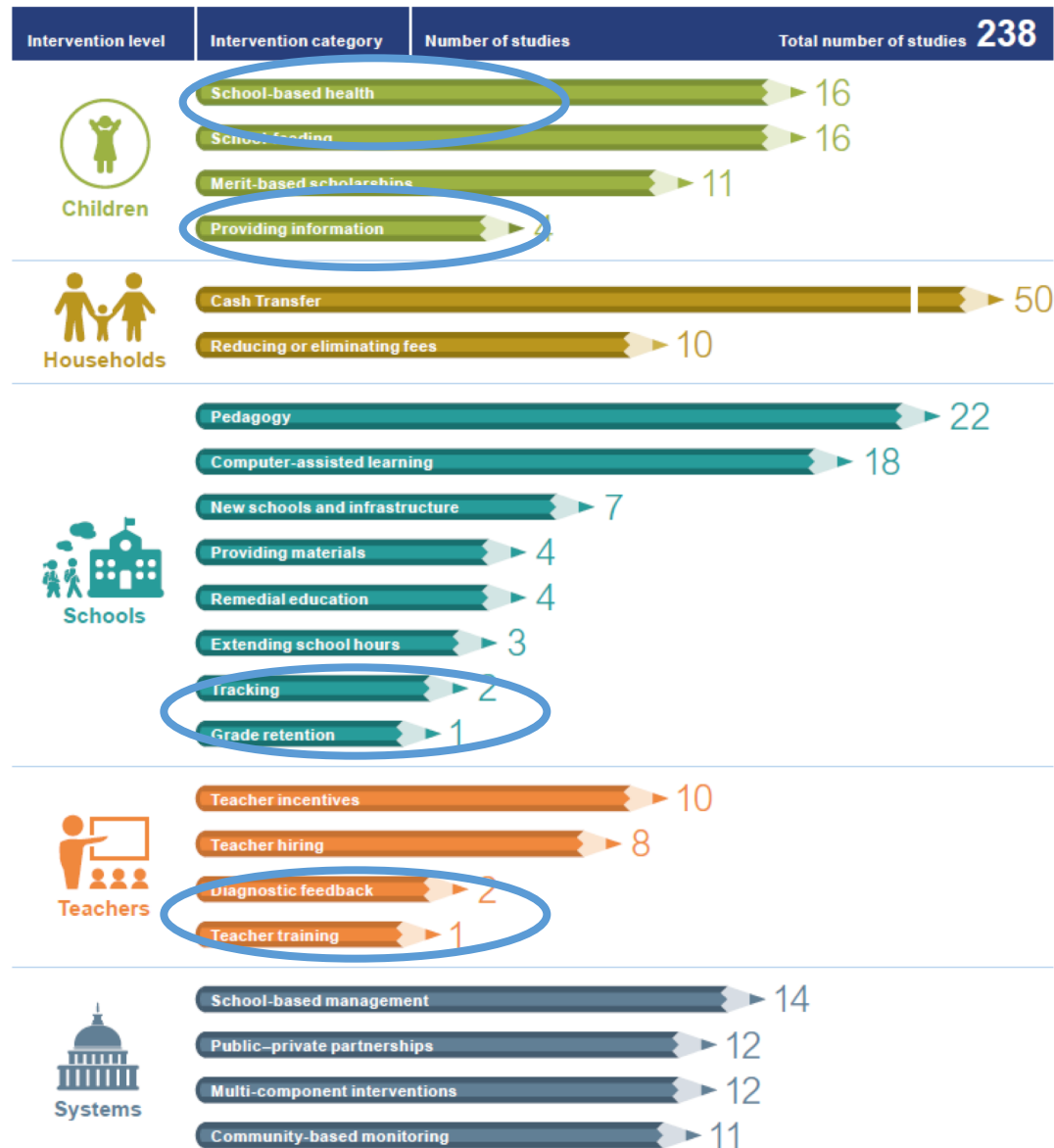


# Works in most context: Cash transfers and structured pedagogy





# Substantial resources are directed to programmes where effects remain unknown

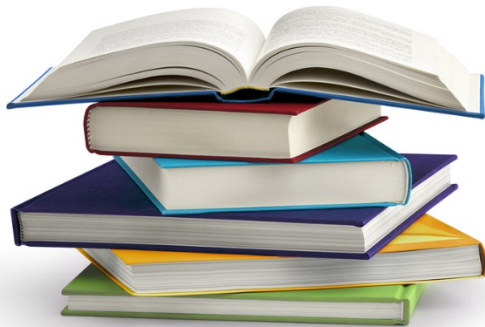


# How can evidence from systematic reviews be used?

‘Evidence based medicine is the conscientious, explicit, and judicious use of current best evidence in making decisions about the care of individual patients.

The practice of evidence based medicine means integrating **individual clinical expertise** with the **best available external clinical evidence from systematic research.**’ (Sackett et al., 1996, p. 71).

# Improve programme design and implementation



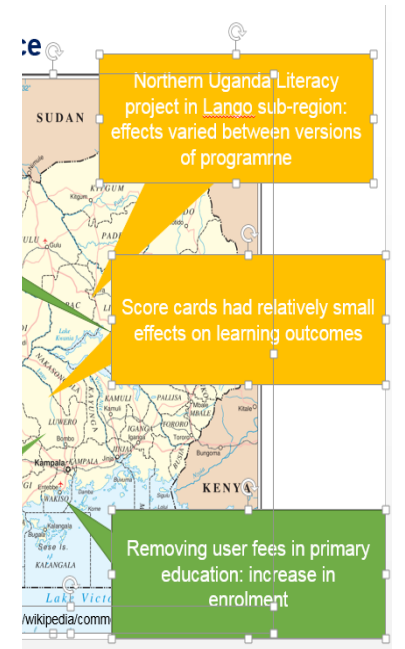
# Inform decisions about education strategies in specific contexts

WHO recommendation on community mobilization through facilitated participatory learning and action cycles with women's groups for maternal and newborn health

2014



**PRIME MINISTER**



# Conclusions and policy lessons

- Systematic reviews provide reliable and accessible evidence for informing policy and programming
  - ⇒ But need to be interpreted for specific contexts
- Need a framework for institutionalising evidence use – can we learn from health?
  - ⇒ problem analysis and capacity of other parts of the school system
  - ⇒ acceptability, feasibility, costs
  - ⇒ evidence translation through a deliberative process with experts and key stakeholders
- Continuous investment in evidence required
  - ⇒ Primary research: interventions, geographical, equity, implementation
  - ⇒ Synthesis: Regular updates of SRs + syntheses on new topics

# Citation

- Technical report, summary report and brief available here:

<http://www.3ieimpact.org/en/publications/systematic-review-publications/3ie-systematic-review-education-effectiveness-srs7/>

# Thank you



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