



Alumni Advisory Panel

Review of the Contribution Analysis report

Background

The Commonwealth Scholarship Commission is currently meeting the Nesta level 2 Standard of Evidence in the evaluation of the impact of its programmes, which requires a well-defined Theory of Change which clearly articulates the relationships between stakeholders, activities, and outcomes, and how they contribute to the different pathways of change through which the CSC meets its objectives. In addition to the Theory of Change, the CSC also has in place processes that capture relevant quantitative and qualitative data on a cyclical basis.

The Commission is now aiming to achieve the Nesta Level 3 Standard of Evidence by conducting a Contribution Analysis that aims to demonstrate that Commonwealth Scholarships is producing the impact that has been outlined in its Theory of Change model. Contribution Analysis is a research method that examines a range of evidence to determine whether the impact that has been reported by the beneficiaries of an intervention could be a result of the intervention, if not with a definitive proof at least as a line of reasoning.

The CSC has already taken several steps towards this type of analysis and is therefore well-positioned to deliver this work. For example, it has been collecting both qualitative and quantitative data annually through surveys and case study work.

Generally, these datasets are analysed periodically for usual annual reporting requirements, however for the Contribution Analysis report, the Evaluation team has dug deeper and produced a report that brings in evidence from all relevant data sources, i.e., qualitative information collected through case study interviews and the open-ended questions in the surveys as well as the quantitative data gathered through categorical variables in surveys and its equivalent counterfactual data collected from the non-recipients of scholarships.

The analysis is based mostly on descriptive statistics however in a few instances additional statistical analysis has also been conducted to determine whether there are significant differences between responses provided by scholarship recipients and non-recipients. Given the variables are measured at the nominal or categorical level, e.g. scholarship status (yes or no) and developmental impact (yes or no), and the data comes as frequencies, the chi-square test for independence was employed.

This test was employed in order to establish whether or not there was a statistically significant association between the scholarship recipients and non-recipients in their answers to these binary response questions. This testing therefore supports this report's goal of evidencing a causal pathway from the award of the scholarship to development outcomes.

The Contribution Analysis report is structured on the Theory of Change model, therefore is broken down into looking at the 18 elements of the Theory of Change, each a key component of the four pathways identified by the Theory of Change. These pathways are namely, **the basic programme pathway**, which describes how the overall scholarship programme is structured

and its expected development impact; **the skills and knowledge pathway**, which describes how the skills and knowledge gained from studies contribute to institutional capacity building and development impact; **the network development pathway**, which describes how the scholarship experience contributes to the development of interpersonal networks and soft power; and **the research pathway**, which describes how research activities conducted during and post scholarship contribute to both additional research and the application of research findings towards developmental impact.

Task

Members of the Alumni Advisory Panel are asked to review the Contribution Analysis report and provide feedback through a survey which seeks recommendations on how to improve the report and address issues that reviewers may flag.

The survey is divided into four sections covering general readability and impressions of the report, its methodology, the data sources and presentation of the data, and finally overall feedback. Panel members are expected to provide their feedback bearing in mind the overall quality of writing; the use of methodology; strengths and weaknesses of data/evidence used; and presentation of data. Panel members are welcome to add additional feedback and are encouraged to provide examples from the report for better understanding and clarity.

Panel members must read the following documents to participate in this activity:

- The Contribution Analysis Report
- Background on the Contribution Analysis Report (see page 1 of this document)

These documents must not be shared with anyone beyond the Alumni Advisory Panel.

Sharing your comments and feedback

All panel members are invited to take part in this activity. Panel members can submit their feedback through a survey consisting of open-ended questions. You may also be contacted by email as a part of a follow-up to further explore your responses and suggestions.

Online feedback survey

In your activity email, you will have received a username and password to an online survey. You do not have to complete the questions at one time but can save your responses and log-in later to complete further questions. You should submit your responses by **17:00 (BST) on 16 September 2024**.

Your responses will be read and analysed by the CSC.

If for any reason you are not able to complete by this deadline but would like to share your feedback, you must notify the CSC Alumni Team at alumni@cscuk.org.uk

If you would like to share additional feedback not gathered by the survey, you can email this to alumni@cscuk.org.uk

Questions?

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the CSC Alumni Team at alumni@cscuk.org.uk and/or team email