The economic crisis of the mid-1990s in Asia has already produced substantial retrenchments and an abrupt decline in new hiring which will lead to at least a doubling of unemployment rates in some areas. There is likely to be a significant rise in underemployment, on both the hours of work and the income measure, under the impact of an increased influx of displaced workers and unsuccessful new job seekers.

This study will assess the impact of the economic crisis on participation/retention and learning achievement rates, particularly in Asian schools. Some attention will also be given to the flow-on effects to other regions beyond Asia and the wider link with poverty and efforts to mitigate the effects of the crisis on the poor. The study will assess the progress made by governments, NGOs, private sector, bilateral donors and international donors in addressing the current economic crisis, in light of previous crises in the early 1990s and 1980s. Finally, the study will attempt to draw out policy implications for future crises.