

2019 Annual Report

Policies and objectives

The objectives of CORE Economics Education (CORE) are: to promote the advancement of education in economics and related fields of study for public benefit and to raise public awareness, through the provision of teaching and learning materials and associated activities.

Activities for achieving objectives

During the 2019 financial period (1 October 2018 - 30 September 2019) CORE actively fundraised to support the development of new teaching and learning materials, further develop the publishing platform over which CORE ebooks and materials are delivered, train people in their use, and to expand the project's reach. Part of CORE's activities continue to be delivered through The CORE Project based in the Economics Department at University College London.

Main activities undertaken

In its mission to reform the teaching of economics, CORE continues its work of developing and providing free access to high-quality online resources. These are not only available to university students and teachers, to help them in the learning process, to support instruction, or to help them prepare their courses, but to anyone in the world with access to the internet.

The major activity during this reporting period was a rewrite of the beta editions of *Economy, Society, and Public Policy* (ESPP) and *Doing Economics* ebooks, in response to ideas and opinions from a wide range of sources, including reviewers and academics and teachers, but also students' experiences.

Further improvements to the CORE website and the ebook publishing platform are delivering better user experience and enabling the sharing of a much broader range of teaching and learning materials, as well as connecting the CORE community of teachers and learners.

Achievements and performance

Publications

In September 2019 the 1.0 editions of *Economy, Society, and Public Policy* (ESPP) and the companion *Doing Economics* have been published as freely accessible ebooks on the CORE website. *ESPP* has also been published as a print version by Oxford University Press. These two ebooks have been designed to introduce the power and excitement of economics to a wider audience, whether they are non-specialists taking a course in economics, in the workplace, or learning for themselves.

ESPP is for students from any programme of study. Students develop analytical tools and data handling skills as they engage with the most pressing policy problems facing our societies: inequality, financial instability, climate change, wealth creation, and innovation. *Doing Economics* is a collection of 12 empirical projects, available in Excel, Google Sheets and R versions and serves as a unique resource for learning a valuable array of data-handling, software and statistical skills that will be transferable to other courses and to the workplace. It is keyed primarily to both *ESPP* and *The Economy* but it can be used alongside other courses or for self-study. Besides the step-by-step instructions using a series of images, which were available in the beta edition of *Doing Economics*, the 1.0 version contains 12 video walk-throughs that give instructions for basic Excel tasks which are needed in more than one project.

Students and teachers who had experience with the beta editions of *ESPP* and *Doing Economics* [responded positively](#) to the introduction of a new type of textbook: “Policy problems, real data examples, and the companion *Doing Economics* make the frontier of modern economics accessible to students from all backgrounds without sacrificing rigorously.”

[L'economia](#), the Italian translation of *The Economy* (units 1-16), has been published as a freely accessible ebook on the CORE website. The work is the result of efforts by CORE contributors from the University of Sienna.

During this time, CORE has partnered with contributors from around the world to develop further translations of *The Economy*. The Portuguese and Spanish translations are under way; Georgian, Vietnamese and Finnish have started; while the South Asian adaptation of *The Economy* is being developed by partners at the Azim Premji University in Bengaluru, India.

Teaching and learning materials

CORE has partnered with [Our World in Data](#) (OWiD) to recreate *The Economy* and *ESPP* data charts on their website, giving the users of CORE's ebooks the ability to interact with charts (for instance, by comparing data for different countries or adjusting the timelines) in order to gain deeper insights into the ideas and concepts portrayed. OWiD is a website that brings together the data and research on the long-run trends reshaping our world and shows how the world has changed through interactive data visualizations.

In partnership with the *Financial Times* CORE developed the [CORE-FT teaching and learning resource](#) - an interactive webpage which provides a curated selection of 121 *Financial Times* articles mapped to CORE's ebooks, *The Economy* and *Economy, Society, and Public Policy*, and to advanced high school themes (currently mapped to Edexcel A-level topics), together with discussion questions.

Other projects and activities

CORE held the first [Doing Economics data competition](#) in which it challenged undergraduate students around the world, in any discipline, to use *Doing Economics* empirical projects to produce a report that identifies a specific policy problem related to one of the following topics: climate change, well-being or inequality; explain why it is important, and suggest how it can be solved. Four prizes were awarded, to winners and runner-up in the Excel and R categories, to students from Italy, France, US and the UK.

The goal for this competition was not just to inspire some excellent investigation and policy work, but also to learn more about how *Doing Economics* can be used as a stepping-off point for original, creative work. The winners show how CORE's data-led projects can build on teaching in economics, as a practical application of economic models; for social sciences, as a way to investigate how the conceptual frameworks and policy options can be taken to data; in statistics, as a way to use techniques to evaluate pressing social problems, and as a way to evaluate the practical impact of ethical choices, in a PPE-style context.

CORE also held the third annual [Schools Economics Challenge](#) in which secondary school teams were challenged to create an accessible and informative short video, making use of *The Economy* Unit 20 “The Economics of the Environment”, on the theme: “Why is addressing climate change so difficult?” The competition was open to students around the world and it attracted 28 schools from 10 countries (Australia, China, Colombia, Hungary, South Korea, Romania, Russia, UK, UAE, and USA).

The aim of the competition was to extend CORE's reach to school students in order to contribute to bringing more diversity to economics and public discussion of critical policy options. The judges noted that the participating students “displayed an ability to engage critically with the competition topic and to back up their arguments” while one student said: “The challenge has encouraged me to think outside the box and has given me the skills needed to break those complex issues apart and to see the issue from another perspective. The challenge augmented my analytical skills, but has also made me a more open-minded person.” Evidence from teachers tells us that by challenging students to produce such high-quality work, and providing them with an incentive to showcase their knowledge and talents, the competition seems to have raised aspirations of, at least some, students.

The second annual “[Teaching and Learning with CORE](#)” workshop was held on 25-26 June 2019 at the University of Warwick. The workshop focused on effective and innovative teaching of economics using the CORE texts and offered practical tips on designing and teaching a course based on these texts. The aim of the workshop was to support departments of economics who were interested in the new active-learning based approach to economics teaching made

possible by CORE. By engaging economics departments and early career lecturers in innovative and transformational educational practice we are aiming not only to spread the use of CORE but to enhance teaching across departments and help them in a context where the quality of teaching is increasingly under scrutiny in the form of the Teaching Excellence Framework. The workshop was attended by 57 participants from 36 universities from the UK and abroad (including Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Japan, Pakistan, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland, Uruguay, and USA).

To facilitate the dissemination of knowledge presented at the workshop beyond the necessarily limited number of participants, all of the sessions were filmed and edited to create a '[virtual workshop](#)' resource on the CORE website. The virtual workshop page now hosts materials from three workshops. Apart from more than 22 hours of video (with shortcuts for easy access to the relevant sections) the sessions are accompanied with 70 references to additional materials and 43 downloadable resources, creating an interactive repository of materials which teachers from anywhere in the world can access for free.

To increase the stock of open access resources CORE developed [CORE Labs](#), an online platform established to facilitate the communication and sharing of materials among teachers using CORE. The platform is already helping CORE crowdsource new teaching and learning materials and contribute to community building.

Assessing impact

By the end of September 2019, there were 271 universities from 53 countries around the world using CORE in instruction, 2/3 of them using *The Economy* as the main textbook on at least one course.

At the same time, over 92,000 users and over 8,500 teachers from 206 countries have registered on the CORE website to access additional materials. During this 2018/19 reporting period there were 5.19 million page views on the CORE website, with 32% of website visits from new visitors. Compared to the previous 2018/17 period, the CORE website was visited by 60% more users and had 46% more website sessions.

CORE materials have been accessed from every country and territory in the world. The top ten countries where visitors come from are mostly those where CORE has been used the longest: the first three countries for visitors are the UK, USA and France, followed by Australia, South Africa, India, Netherlands, Japan, Italy and Germany.

CORE had at least 13 major mentions in press, including in [Boston Review](#) on how CORE is “advocating for a new way of understanding how the economy works”, an opinion piece in [Washington Post](#) where CORE's *The Economy* is mentioned as an example of an alternative model of economic textbooks, and an opinion piece on [Bloomberg](#) where CORE is recommended as an alternative to conventional 'Principles of Economics' teaching.