

## **Vulnerable, Excluded, Invisible & Ignored: The Margins of Education for All**

### **Editorial**

Often vulnerable, frequently excluded, sometimes invisible or ignored, marginal children and youth<sup>1</sup> represent a unique challenge to the world's education systems. Often they are difficult if not impossible to "reach" through conventional means. The usual strategies of provision of more school places and improvements in quality are necessary but rarely sufficient to engage the most marginalized kids outside of school. Meanwhile, marginal children *in school* are often poorly served by conventional instructional strategies, which often further disadvantage them. In a metaphorical, and sometimes actual sense, educators interested in educating marginal children must "get out of the school" and go to the student adapting delivery of educational programs to the constraints facing child laborers, for example; or providing supports not needed by mainstream children and not conventionally the responsibility of schools (see for example, DeStefano et al. n.d. and KAPE 2006). Reaching marginal kids may require education ministries to partner with other government sectors and institutions. At a basic conceptual level, educators need to recognize the importance of learning about the complex needs of marginal children and youth and how these needs can be appropriately met, knowledge that schools generally lack.

To inform such discussions, this special issue<sup>2</sup> of the *Journal of International Cooperation in Education* explores issues and programs in the education of marginal children and youth with a special focus on developing countries. This introduction opens with a range of definitions, discussion of the nature of educational marginalization, and estimates of the numbers of children and youth affected. It continues with a brief introduction of the articles and themes in the special issue. The articles themselves follow, loosely organized as problems to solutions. The special issue concludes with an appendix of print and internet resources for policy makers and program planners interested in following up, to better understand the challenges and needs of particular marginal populations.

### **Marginalized Children and Youth**

The words "marginal" and "marginalization" are used to describe two groups, children and youth who are not receiving or have not received a basic education<sup>3</sup> and children and youth who, though enrolled in school, are/were treated peripherally there, their educational

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<sup>1</sup> Understandings of childhood and youth vary greatly across cultures and historical periods. Here I adopt the convention of the Millennium Development Goals and identifying children as those ages 0-14, and youth ages 15-24, recognizing the limitations of these somewhat arbitrary distinctions.

<sup>2</sup> Grateful appreciation to Nancy Campbell, George Washington University graduate assistant, for research assistance. Errors and inaccuracies are the responsibility of the guest editor.

needs substantially unmet. The latter group might include, for example, children taught in a language in which they cannot learn, or students whose abilities are minimized and opportunities undermined on account of gender, ethnicity, disability, or other factor. Marginalized children are those who because of individual or group characteristics do not receive a basic education. Children are marginalized when the organization and delivery of education fail to meet the educational constraints facing children, or when the content does not meet their needs. Underachievement is an indicator of marginalization. It is possible for a numerical majority of children in a particular system or context to be marginal. “Mainstream,” in contrast, refers to those children according to whose needs, constraints, and supports schooling is conventionally organized and delivered in a particular time and place.

Schools may reproduce, or reinforce, the inequalities of the larger society. Alternately, schools may compensate for external inequalities, even challenge them, to help overcome the marginalization of excluded, vulnerable and “invisible” children. The word “marginalized” is used preferentially to emphasize our stance that schools play a more or less active role in responding to the marginality of children; indeed, schools sometimes even create marginalization. The focus is on educational programs and issues for children and youth ages 5-25, so as to include the substantial number of youth who have missed out on opportunities for basic education but who might take advantage of second-chance programs while still in the preparatory phase of their lives. We do not discuss programs in early childhood care and education (ECCE), not because they are any less significant in the educational lifespan. Indeed, research is increasingly documenting the importance of early childhood care and education to subsequent human development. Rather the focus is basic education, recognizing that it is an initial, though insufficient, step in providing education for all.

This understanding of marginal children and youth includes those who are:

*excluded* from obtaining educational services in a way that threatens their personal development and/or their “ability to participate in society in the future” (UNICEF 2005, p.7);

*vulnerable*, either to missing out on educational opportunities, or alternately to exploitation, disease or other threats to well-being and healthy development that interfere with their educational advancement;

*invisible*, either more literally, “in effect disappearing from view within their families, communities, and societies and to governments, donors, civil society, the media, and even other children”. (UNICEF 2005, p.35), or

those children and youth who are present but *less visible*, such as girls in a gender-biased classroom, or displaced children in terms of official statistics, etc.

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<sup>3</sup> We use the ISCED definition of basic education as primary education plus lower secondary, often corresponding to compulsory education. *The Global Monitoring Report 2007* indicates a lower secondary gross enrollment ratio of 78 (see Table 8, UNESCO 2006, p.292). This suggests that a sizeable majority of the world’s children are at least “surviving” to the lower secondary level.

These categories are not always distinct, nor need they be for these purposes. Often, children are multiply disadvantaged. Children and youth may be marginalized because of who they are (e.g., members of a low status minority group), where they are (e.g., rural children); what they possess or don't possess (i.e., the poor); or their particular needs (i.e., children and youth with disabilities). Marginalization may be based on "static" characteristics that cannot be changed, i.e., membership in an indigenous population; or "dynamic" characteristics that vary according to circumstances, i.e., child labor.

Marginalization varies in severity. In their discussion of exclusion and girls' education, Lewis and Lockheed (2006) describe four levels of severity.<sup>4</sup> Most severe is exclusion leading to ethnically based slavery or even genocide. Examples would include African-American slaves in the US and Brazil, or native peoples of the Americas. Severe exclusion is associated with the shunning of particular groups, such as the Dalits in India before the enactment of anti-discrimination legislation or the Roma in Europe. Moderate exclusion is a less formal discrimination against marginal groups, but is often associated with a poor match between the schooling offered and the needs and situations of students, e.g., education in a language the child does not speak. Mild exclusion is associated with "individual social preferences" of teachers, for example, who might ignore or dismiss members of minority or lower status groups, as for example the treatment of girls or ethnic minorities in many schools. Even so, the distinctions are not always clear. While a teacher may demonstrate an individual preference against the social styles of a low status minority group, for example, this individual preference is often part of a larger, more systematic set of social prejudices.

Marginal children and youth include those that are members of:

Clearly vulnerable groups    street children, children in detention, children with HIV/AIDS, children orphaned by HIV/AIDS, orphans, urban poor, landless people and squatters, child soldiers, sex workers, nomadic people, children and youth with disabilities, refugees, displaced people, children in early marriages, hazardous labor or combat; trafficked or indentured children; children affected by armed conflict; victims of abuse and violence; dropouts.

Potentially vulnerable groups    girls, rural children and youth, linguistic and ethnic minorities, indigenous groups, immigrants, child laborers, girls, the poor.

## **The Sources of Marginalization and the Role of Education**

Educational marginalization we would argue derives from five sources.

Poverty (Smith 2005)

Armed Conflict

Disease, especially HIV/AIDS

Discrimination, on basis of gender, ethnicity, language, and so forth

Rigidity of school organization and practices, poor school quality, and failure to

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<sup>4</sup> Lewis and Lockheed use exclusion in practically the same way as marginalization is used here. There is a rich literature on social exclusion, where further distinctions are made.

respond to the learning needs of all children, e.g., children with special needs and disabilities

Many marginal children and youth are affected by multiple sources of marginalization. For example, the poor are much more likely than others to have disabilities, upwards of 50% of which are preventable (Children's Rights Information Network, n.d.), and which have a direct impact on children's ability to attend and do well at school. Throughout the special issue, the themes emerge of poverty, conflict, gender, and the rigidity of formal school delivery systems and poor quality. In the short run, school systems *cannot solve* the external problems of poverty, conflict, disease, and discrimination, of course, but they *can respond more appropriately* to children who are affected, they can try to avoid reinforcing and recreating the exclusions and prejudices of the larger society, they can help children adapt by doing their instructional job well, and they can modify their delivery to better fit the constraints children face in attending school or learning while there.

Most education systems, from individual classroom to national systems, face the challenge of educating large numbers of heterogeneous children and youth with too few resources. This heterogeneity derives from students' individual characteristics, e.g., children's differing native abilities and intelligences, their academic backgrounds, the value and support provided by families; by social characteristics, children's varying economic and social academic backgrounds, and the particular cultural and linguistic context and history of home, community, school, and nation; and by especially difficult circumstances, such as children affected by conflict, or AIDS orphans.

Individual heterogeneity poses a difficult instructional challenge, even in the best of circumstances and especially when, as in most developing education systems, resources are tight. Schools and education systems work to simplify their task, by standardizing work and focusing their teaching, often either to the "middle" or to the most able students. Given the difficult circumstances of schooling in much of the developing world—large classes, insufficient numbers of instructional materials, teacher training insufficient for actual conditions—such simplification may be (or felt) necessary for schools to make any progress in their work.

In addition, schools are organized, implicitly or explicitly, in ways that make it easier for children and youth of dominant social groups to succeed in school, and more difficult for members of non-dominant groups. These exclusionary modes of organization are often invisible, especially to members of dominant groups, yet they effectively marginalize members of socially disfavored groups. Finally, schools are not well organized to serve children in especially difficult circumstances. As a result, disproportionate numbers of marginal kids fail at school—they do not enroll, repeat and drop out, fail to learn. (Bruneforth 2006) Sometimes they are not reached by schooling, or are offered schooling in ways they do not want to or do not feel they can take advantage of. Often, marginal kids may attend school but do not "reach their potential," failing in the worst cases to acquire permanent

literacy, or in many other cases, to learn what might help them maximize their individual and social growth.

Reaching marginal children and youth requires an act of will on the part of education systems. The possibility of universal education is a recent idea in most of the world, and for the most part has yet to be achieved. (Chabbott 2003) Who else but those on the margins would lose out when there isn't enough for all?

We start with two premises, 1) that all children can and want to learn (though they may not want to learn in the ways or on the terms by which formal education is offered), and 2) that all children have a right to a basic education, a right the state has the moral and legal responsibility to ensure. From a rights-based perspective, the burden of "reaching" kids is on the school. This, we argue, is in stark contrast to the way most systems are organized, where the burden is on the child and his/her family.

Education systems, at once, instruct, certify successful completion of that instruction, and often govern admission to higher levels of education. School systems are thus in the business of selection as well as instruction. Kids come to school, take a test, some pass, some do not. The conventional teachers' notion that some kids "get it," while others do not comes naturally to schools. In some cases, it is likely true that some kids absolutely do "get it" while others cannot. In many more cases than is often practiced, however, kids can get it, if it is offered differently. There are increasing numbers of examples of how education organized and delivered in ways responsive to the needs and constraints of particular groups of learners can reach and educate previously marginal children, whether individually, socially, or circumstantially (see, for example, DeStefano et al. 2006). Sometimes it's the timing or location of schooling, other times the language of instruction, other times the provision of supports the school has not conventionally provided.

Marginality in schooling is substantially variable. Groups with very similar characteristics may be "mainstream" in one educational context and marginal in another. Gender might be a prime example, where girls in one context are in the mainstream, whereas in another context, they are marginal. Schooling in its normal functioning plays an active role in marginalization?creating winners and losers, defining more and less competitive characteristics, creating and reinforcing new socio-economically competitive forums, gateways, and credentials. Schools often serve to reproduce the inequalities of the larger society.

Schools and school systems are used to teaching but less so to learning. From the perspective adopted here that all children can and want to learn, and that government has the legal and moral responsibility to provide basic education to all children, the decision of whether to acknowledge and respond to marginality is a policy choice, albeit not always a conscious one. Thus a first over-arching policy question relates to who bears the primary burden of closing the gap between school and child. Is it the responsibility of the school (and its supportive system) to reach the child, wherever the child is, physically, linguistically, culturally, and intellectually; or does the burden belong with the child (and her family and community)? The second question asks whether schools, as we believe they do, have a

responsibility to educate all groups of children equitably when the larger society does not treat them so.<sup>5</sup> Answering these questions in favor of children on the margin requires an act of will on the part of schools, and a process of learning, for schools and school systems really do not know how to do these things. Schools and school systems are accustomed and organized more to teaching the material at hand than to understanding and meeting the diverse needs of all children, especially those outside the norm.

Of course, the issues are not as simple as portrayed. Children have a responsibility to attend a nearby school and families must allow, even insist that their children attend school and do their best, just as governments have the responsibility to build schools within children's reasonable reach. Even so we would argue that a notion of "reasonable reach" needs to be redefined with greater attention to the constraints, perceived needs, and values of children, their families and communities, if all children are to be educated and the promises of universal basic education realized. Many fewer children need be marginalized than currently are. As noted, substantial evidence from cases throughout the world suggests that placing education "within reasonable reach" of previously marginal children sparks great interest in education among children and communities thought deficient in educational demand. (DeStefano et al. 2006)

### **How Many Children Are Marginalized?**

Estimating the extent of marginalization is quite difficult. Easiest to understand conceptually, though difficult to count definitively, is the number of children not in school. Global estimates of the number of children worldwide not enrolled in primary or secondary school in 2004 range from 76.8 million children (based on administrative data) to 115 million (estimated from household surveys). (UNESCO 2006, pp.29-30) Using the administrative data for comparative reasons, the number of children out of school has dropped rapidly (over the past five years for which data are available), by almost 4% per year, from 98.2 million children in 1999. West and South Asia showed the greatest decrease, halving the number of out-of-school children over the five-year period. Even in the context of high population growth in sub-Saharan Africa, the number of out-of-school children decreased from 43 to 38 million. Still, 53.7 million children in Sub-Saharan Africa (50% of the world total) and West and South Asia (19%) are out of school. Four countries, Nigeria, Pakistan, India, and Ethiopia account for 23 million out-of-school children. Gross enrollment ratios at the lower secondary level in 2004 are estimated at 78% worldwide, 64% in West and South Asia, and 36% in Sub-Saharan Africa (UNESCO 2006, p.292, Table 8), suggesting that a considerable number and proportion of the world's youth will leave school without a basic education defined to include primary and lower secondary education.

In percentage terms, the global net enrollment ratio<sup>6</sup> rose from 83 in 1999 to 86 in 2004. (UNESCO 2006, p.24) Yet, as is well documented, these overall figures mask

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<sup>5</sup> A larger question might be whether schools have the responsibility to challenge the inequitable treatment of different groups of people in society.

considerable disparities across regions. Net enrollment ratios in sub-Saharan Africa, for example, rose from 55 to 65% over the same period, and while this is a substantial increase, over one-third of Africa's children are not enrolled in primary school. Completion rates are much lower. And within-country disparities are greater, almost invariably correlated with social factors originating outside the school. In Nigeria, for example, 43.6% of children in the poorest fifth of households are reported as having never attended primary school as compared with 1.6% of children in the wealthiest fifth of households. (UNESCO 2006, p.34) Youth illiteracy rates, ages 15-24, are estimated at 27% in Sub-Saharan Africa and 28% in West and South Asia. Female youth illiteracy rates, of course, are higher, 32% in Sub-Saharan Africa and 37% in West and South Asia. (UNESCO 2006, p.237, Statistical Table 2) As noted, individuals tend to be multiply marginalized: Of the 60 million girls who remain out of primary school, almost 70% are from other excluded groups. (Lewis & Lockheed 2006)

These figures overestimate the "effective education" children are receiving. Many children who are officially enrolled in school do not attend regularly, many who enroll do not even complete primary school<sup>7</sup> much less complete basic education. Even some of those who do complete school do not learn a sufficient amount of the curriculum,<sup>8</sup> because of poor quality of the school, insufficient engagement on the part of the student, or because the knowledge and skills called for in the child's environment are of a higher order than are taught in primary school. The existence of such children can be seen, indirectly, through measures of children's poor attendance, high repetition and dropout, low achievement test scores, as well as through more and less direct ways in which schooling is rejected. When these numbers vary substantially by group membership, marginality can be concluded. Moreover, data are often incomplete or missing from countries in conflict, where participation rates and marginalization are worst. Some children are invisible to the system and not counted at all, children of migrant workers for example, displaced families, or street children. Often, statistics are not collected on some types of marginalization, e.g., gender-based violence in schools.

In terms of school participation, it may be helpful to summarize the groups being discussed, bearing in mind the two necessary dimensions of participation in school and

<sup>6</sup> Gross enrollment ratios (GER) tend to overestimate the percentage of children of appropriate age enrolled in school because GER is calculated by dividing the number of children enrolled in school by the number of children in the school-age cohort. (Net enrollment rates (NER) are calculated by dividing the number of school-age children in school by the population of school age. This underestimates the number of children in school.) Over-estimation by GER is particularly problematic at the primary level, where over-age enrollment is a major problem.

<sup>7</sup> The median rate of survival to the last grade of primary school for countries reporting data in sub-Saharan Africa in 2003 was 72.6. (UNESCO 2006, p.285, Statistical Table 7) This represents the more developed group of African countries, who have sustained sufficiently strong data collection systems over sufficient time to estimate such rates. Countries with the greatest problems likely do not have the statistical wherewithal to report. Even so, survival to the last grade of primary school does not necessarily entail successful completion, of primary school or basic education.

<sup>8</sup> The World Bank reports that only 60% of the 20% of 15-19 year olds in Mali who had completed primary school could read a sentence. (2006, p.70)

learning acquisition, and remembering the issues of vulnerability, invisibility, multiple exclusion, and under-achievement. In terms of marginalized groups, there are:

Children of school age:

1. not yet enrolled (likely to enroll, but over age)
2. dropouts (enrolled but dropped out)
3. unlikely ever to enroll
4. enrolled in school but marginalized, and so not acquiring needed knowledge and skills

Beyond school age:

5. dropped out of school
6. missed out on school

In addition, Table 1 notes some of the particularly vulnerable groups of children and youth.

## **The Special Issue**

Given the diversity of possible topics, it is useful to provide a somewhat more detailed introduction to each of the articles, to the particular manifestation of marginality in each, and to the broader implications for treating marginality. Space prevents us from doing justice to all groups of marginal, excluded, vulnerable and invisible children. Thus, we have no articles on disabilities, child labor, displaced people, or child soldiers. The issue of language is similarly not discussed. Still, we try in this section to illustrate some of the principles which are likely to apply more broadly. We end with a listing of resources for individuals and organizations interested in following up on particular issues or special groups of marginal children and youth.

**Marc Sommers** opens the special issue, focusing on urban youth, one of the large, mostly unrecognized problems in Africa. Urban youth, “the overwhelming majority of [whom] are marginalized, poorly educated and poor” represent “a group, simultaneously enlarging in size and detachment from the rest of society”. Too old and socially disconnected for formal education, largely invisible in policy terms, many African urban youth lack the skills needed to maximize their economic, social, and political contributions to society, yet there are few services, educational or otherwise, provided for them. Instead, while not adequately acknowledged by government, civil society, and international actors, their many assets may be well recognized “by those who seek to manipulate them. [Drug and gang operators and others seeking to exploit urban youth labor all appreciate at least some of what youth potential can readily provide. All too often, they work on urban youth with few competitors.] Social, economic, and perhaps even political alienation, together with the dangers of HIV/AIDS, prostitution and trafficking, form an explosive cocktail for youth living on the margins of African cities”. Sommers outlines a series of programming principles in programming for



**Table 1. Especially Vulnerable Groups of Children & Youth**

Vulnerable Group	Who Is Affected?	Implications for Education
Child labor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Refers to children who are exploited, either too young to work or work under risky conditions. Important to distinguish appropriate work from the “worst forms of child labor:” slavery, trafficking, debt bondage and forced labor, use of children in armed conflict, prostitution, pornography, illicit activities</li> <li>- Estimates vary: 218 million, of whom 126 million in hazardous work (ILO 2006); 246 million of which 171 million in hazardous conditions (UNICEF, Child labour...)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Economic necessity often forces children into work. Provision may need to be made for children to work, in non-hazardous occupations, and attend school.</li> <li>- Multiple options for education needed.</li> <li>- Comprehensive economic, legal, education, and child-labor targeted interventions are needed. (International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour. 2006)</li> </ul>
Child soldiers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In addition to those fighting, includes children serving in non-combatant roles, i.e., cooks, porters, in sexual roles</li> <li>- 300,000 worldwide in 30 countries (UNICEF, Child soldiers)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Social reintegration can be difficult</li> <li>- Mode of ed delivery, mode of outreach, provision of supplemental supports are critical</li> <li>- Resolution of conflict</li> <li>- Psychosocial supports needed (UNICEF 2006)</li> </ul>
Child trafficking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Recruitment, transport, transfer, etc of persons for purpose exploitation (labor, sex, armed conflict)</li> <li>- 1.2 million people each year estimated to be trafficked, many are children (UNICEF 2006)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Often invisible</li> <li>- Similar issues with child soldiers</li> <li>- Legal efforts needed to combat trafficking</li> <li>- Difficult to integrate into regular schools (Office of the Under Secretary for Global Affairs 2006; UNICEF 2006)</li> </ul>
Children & HIV/AIDS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Children are affected directly by being sick, indirectly by losing parents or having to assume adult responsibilities too soon</li> <li>- 2.1 million children under age 15 estimated to be living with AIDS</li> <li>- 15 million children have been orphaned by AIDS (UNAIDS <i>et al.</i> 2004)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- AIDS affects children, their families, communities, and school systems</li> <li>- AIDS orphans (along with conflict-affected and displaced children) are especially vulnerable</li> <li>- Supplemental supports are essential, but generally most difficult to provide in communities hardest hit by AIDS</li> <li>- HIV/AIDS is most difficult in areas in conflict</li> <li>- Education provides “a window of hope” (Bundy 2002)</li> </ul>

**Table 1. Especially Vulnerable Groups of Children & Youth (continued)**

Internally displaced children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Internal “refugees” but without international or national voice or legitimacy</li> <li>- 23.6 million people in 50+ countries (IDMC 2005)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- often considered “enemies of the state” hence invisible, lack claim to benefits, e.g., education</li> <li>- generally coupled with other exclusions</li> <li>- extremely vulnerable (UNICEF 2005)</li> </ul>
Refugees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- displaced people who cross an international border</li> <li>- 7.5 million worldwide, with almost half under 18 (UNHCR 2006)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- education for repatriation or in country of asylum; often resisted by country of asylum, confined to camps</li> <li>- lack of complete primary, secondary schools (UNICEF 2005)</li> </ul>
Children in poor or isolated rural areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- of 1.2 billion people estimated to live in extreme poverty, on less than 1 ‘standard’ dollar a day, 75% live in rural areas</li> <li>- despite urbanization, majority of world’s poor are rural</li> <li>- 60% of world’s poor expected to be rural by 2020</li> <li>- rural incomes generally lower, economic prospects often poorer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- rural areas less likely to have schools, adequate facilities, well-prepared teachers</li> <li>- metropolitan bias of schooling may be less relevant for rural</li> <li>- relevance of schooling questioned by some rural parents</li> <li>- educational outcomes in poor rural areas often lower than in urban areas (Atchoarena &amp; Gasperini 2003)</li> </ul>
Children in poor urban areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 1 billion children live in urban areas. In developing countries, and others, high proportions are poor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- modes of provision, visibility, cultural distance, livelihood are critical to education efforts</li> <li>- at risk of gangs, violence, street</li> <li>- children living in informal settlements may be invisible (UNICEF 2002)</li> </ul>
Children & youth with disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- estimated 150-200 million children with disabilities in the world (out of 2 billion)</li> <li>- 10% of children born with disability, become disabled by 19</li> <li>- As many as 50% of disabilities are preventable</li> <li>- WHO estimates up to 1.5 million children are blind, 70% of which are preventable (cited in Children’s Rights Information Network, n.d.)</li> <li>- estimated 30-40% of households worldwide have a member with a disability</li> <li>- families are primary support systems for individuals with disabilities, generally face poorer health due to stress, insecurity; higher health costs; labor force exclusion; isolation from community support; as compared neighboring households</li> <li>- Multiple vulnerabilities:</li> <li>- In Canada, 40-70% of girls, 15-20% of boys with intellectual disability estimated to be sexually abuse by 18</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 98% of disabled children receive no formal education</li> <li>- still, boys with disabilities more likely to attend schools than girls</li> <li>- schools ill-equipped to serve children with disabilities and other special needs: lack of statistics, awareness, legislation, facilities, training</li> <li>- children and youth with disabilities at particular risk: indigenous; people in rural, remote, small island communities; refugees, displaced; orphans; children affected by conflict, emergency, disaster, refugees and stateless (Canadian Association for Community Living &amp; Inclusion International 2003; IDDC Task Group on the Convention on the UN Convention 2005)</li> </ul>

urban African youth, and potentially other, marginal groups of children and youth. He discusses, among other issues, the necessity of overcoming the social distance between urban African youth and those who would serve them; the importance, in early stages, of *not* going to scale; and the importance of a gender lens in programming for marginal youth.

**Bar-On, Litvak-Hirsh, & Othman** describe and analyze a workshop process by which they sought to create dialogue among a group of Jewish and Arab graduate students in Israel. The workshop on which the article is based was held in 2003/04 during the extremely tense years of the second Intifada, with suicide bombings and targeted assassinations creating a situation of extreme polarization. In such situations of protracted and unresolved conflict, both sides tend to have a history both of suffering from the actions of the other and of having helped cause suffering to the other. Each side typically constructs a somewhat forced “monolithic narrative” of that history, which emphasizes the purity and suffering of one’s own group while minimizing that of the Other.<sup>9</sup> This monolithic narrative also minimizes any suffering one’s own group may have caused, while failing to allow space or legitimacy for the Other’s experience. Dialogue, and learning, break down as each group hews ever more closely to the “truth” of its own story. The more each group insists on its own truth, the more it excludes and marginalizes the truth, experience and legitimate existence of the other. Thus the conflict is passed from generation to generation, taught and learned, and extremely difficult to unlearn.

The authors’ approach, which they call a “life story telling model”, is contrasted with other interpersonal approaches to conflict resolution, in particular, the “human relations model” which relies in the “contact hypothesis” – the notion that development of close personal bonds between members of opposing groups can resolve conflict at least among those individuals. The “life story telling model” also contrasts with the “confrontation model”, which while acknowledging the suffering and rightness of dominant groups, confronts members of such groups with contradictions in their positions and in the asymmetries of power which benefit them to the detriment of the disempowered group.

The workshop discussed here had graduate students interview their family members about their personal experiences with the “Other”. Stories were shared in uni-national and bi-national groups, where members developed relationships with members of the “Other” group while being forced to deal with the often extreme cognitive dissonance created when hearing the underlying premises of “one’s own” narrative questioned – e.g., that one’s group always acts out of a sense of justice – by others’ stories of family victimization at the hands of one’s own people. This approach “combines the opportunity for personal relationships from the first model with the second model’s potential for empowering the Arab minority group and presenting asymmetric realities (illustrated in family stories) within the group process. The mutual story-telling allows and encourages a more emotional dialogue, as well

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<sup>9</sup> See also Volkan (1988), and the concept of the “chosen trauma”, Salmi (1993) on education and violence, and Williams (2004).

as an intellectual discussion of the collective components of the stories (for example, the Holocaust for the Jews and the 1948 Catastrophe for the Arabs)". What was unusual about this workshop compared with previous workshops organized by the authors were the ways in which *differences* in the group members' stories helped challenge the monolithic nature of the enforced collective narratives, thus opening space for dialogue.

The article echoes the underlying theme of conflict pervasive in this issue. It suggests a pedagogy, admittedly experimental, of conflict resolution and of recognizing the role that one's own people have played in conflict. The article suggests ways in which education must extend beyond the purely cognitive, in a sense beyond the "comfort zones" of schooling and of "filling deficits in others" to deal effectively with marginality. Addressing marginality of this and other kinds involves changes in the power relationships among groups, and the cultural and educational means by which those relationships are understood, justified, perpetuated.

**Fatuuma Chege** reports on a body of research that she and colleagues have carried out in Eastern and Southern Africa on gender-based violence in schools. This article provides an example of the marginalization of a very large group of people, perhaps a majority, of girls and women in some places. The evidence of violence she presents is shocking in the anecdotes, which are extreme in their particularity, deeply disturbing in their cumulative detail, and indicative of the physical and psychic dangers many schools pose to girls and women in their care and employ. Gender-based violence marginalizes girls and women, establishes a broader climate of fear, and reinforces oppressive gender roles. Chege's schools teach more than the official curriculum: "...young people in the group and individual interviews described their relationships with male teachers as generally hostile and detached. ... While many of the boys narrated the feeling of hostility towards male teachers, it is likely that the same teachers represented powerful male role models for the boys to emulate as they matured into men". Violence was so much a part of school life in some cases that girls were disadvantaged by not being beaten as the boys were. In this climate of violence and sexism, not only are girls and women marginalized by fellow students and school personnel no less but they must keep silent, and the issue is substantially not discussed in polite (or policy) company. Chege's research shows girls being victimized, and then learning the necessity of silence about their victimization. Indeed, schools are the site of learning of much more than the official curriculum.

Chege intervenes with teacher trainees, recognizing that "teachers, as gendered beings construct non-cooperation between the genders, and thus enhance or reinforce sexism, sexism which provides fertile grounds for gender-based violence against girls and women in particular". To address gender-based violence in schools, Chege used "memory work" with student-teachers who were asked to recollect and journal incidents of violence in their childhoods, to bring those memories and subsequent thoughts to group discussion, and to reflect on resolutions for their own teaching practice. Her "pedagogy", like that of Bar-On *et al.*, is not featured in the curriculum of most teacher preparation programs. Approaches such

as Chege's may be necessary to counter the widespread prevalence of gender-based violence. Again, in addressing marginality, the education system is called to go beyond its conventional mission and accustomed modes of operation.

**Ono, Chikamori, & Kita** discuss research carried out in association with STEP,<sup>10</sup> a JICA-funded<sup>11</sup> teacher support project in Afghanistan. During two decades of civil war and under the Taliban, the education of children especially girls, and the role of teachers were substantially marginalized. During the conflict, education took a back seat as the political conflict and fighting dominated national life. Under the Taliban, girls were forbidden by law from attending school, and women were not permitted to teach. The transitional and elected governments have made education a high priority. Yet a majority of the country's schools were destroyed and teachers are poorly prepared. In this context, the Ministry of Education initiated an ambitious curriculum reform based on ideals of equality and the latest global, i.e., Western, thinking on good pedagogical practice.

If the schools in Chege's article teach a great deal more than is specified in the formal curriculum, the schools in the article by Ono and colleagues teach a good bit less. Example lessons show little quality instruction going on, traditional or constructivist. In the Afghan context of reconstruction, decades of neglect have left the Ministry with little technical "infrastructure" or knowhow on the reform of teaching and learning. Revised textbooks are being distributed in line with the new pedagogical and social ideals of the Curriculum Framework, yet many teachers lack the experience or training to use them as intended. Even the textbook writers had difficulty preparing illustrative exercises to teach and assess student "competencies."

STEP prepared practical teachers' guides to help teachers use the new curriculum in their classrooms, and developed a training protocol for inexperienced teachers. Researchers observed and videotaped the classrooms of "least qualified" teachers who received no teachers' guides, and compared their instructional technique with other least qualified teachers who received the teachers' guides, and with a third group who received both teacher's guides and training. Teachers provided with the teachers' guides and trainings clearly used more varied and advanced pedagogical approaches, thus suggesting some of the additional support materials needed to carry out the reform.

In this article, Ono and colleagues remind us of the primacy of classroom instruction. Top-level reform works only to the extent that implementers are able to carry it out, an old lesson, usefully repeated. In schools, this means teachers. Even so, remediation may be relatively simple: Provision of teachers' guides and training appeared to hold potential for improving the quality of instruction. Finally, teacher training institutions need to use the methods they expect teachers to use in training student teachers under their charge, another old lesson generally forgotten.

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<sup>10</sup> Strengthening Teacher Education Program

<sup>11</sup> Japan International Cooperation Agency

**Jimenez, Kiso, & Ridao-Cano** present a human capital rationale for investment in “second-chance” educational programs for youth. Too many children and youth, they argue do not get from school the knowledge and skills they need for adult work and life. Some children never enroll or drop out before completing a sufficient amount of schooling. In other cases, schools are of such poor quality that students learn too little to participate fully in society and the economy. Citing data from background studies to the 2007 *World Development Report* (World Bank 2006), 40 percent of students in the last year of primary school in one country, for example, were unable to read a sentence. The authors argue for well-designed government action, in view of the high social benefits to investments in the human capital of youth and the high social and individual costs of failure to do so. They give five reasons for such investments: Individuals needing second chances are more often the poor, who may have missed out because of the cost of education or the poor quality of opportunities available to them. Moreover, young people may lack the perspective or information to make the best long-range decisions on their own. In addition, dropping out of school increases the chances of risky or anti-social behavior or of early pregnancy. Additionally, returns are greatest to human capital investments in the young; the sooner second-chance programs are utilized, the better. Finally, failure to acquire a sufficient amount of education wastes earlier investments in primary, or early childhood care and education.

Government’s role, they argue, should be one of strategy, coordination, development of appropriate standards, articulation between second chance education and the formal education system, and diversification of funding. The authors list principles on which interventions should be based.

Jimenez and colleagues also identify four of the primary obstacles to the education of marginal children and youth, the rigidities of formal schooling, and the lack of second chance educational opportunities when children run afoul of those rigidities, the general lack of political will to support funding and programming for marginalized children and youth, and the lack, in most countries, of a coherent strategy for reaching children and youth who have missed out on schooling and for linking them to the nation’s overall human resource development planning/efforts. Given these obstacles, good arguments are needed to convince governments to prioritize education of marginal children and youth, given the general shortage of resources; the higher financial, organizational, and conceptual costs of reaching marginal groups; and the inherent political challenge of mobilizing support for marginal groups. In these ways, Jimenez and colleagues highlight the importance of evidence-based advocacy to governments on behalf of second-chance, and other, educational efforts for marginal children and youth.

**Cooper, Drake, Risley, & Bundy** discuss the implications of increased survival and participation both of HIV-infected and HIV-affected children in school. As effective treatments expand and more and more infected children survive to adolescence and beyond, schools remain a critical locus for prevention and management of the disease. As the disease continues to play out its course, more children are affected by the disease loss of parents; additional

responsibilities for care of parents, siblings, and self; stress. Based on epidemiological and clinical research, Cooper and colleagues identify the ways in which homes, schools, and systems will likely need to adapt to handle expected cohorts of HIV-infected and affected children, at the same time that prevention efforts, school- and home-based, assume greater importance with the onset of puberty. HIV-infected children will need to be identified for intervention and care, yet protected from social stigma associated with the disease. Education remains among the most effective weapons in fighting the disease, yet its role is shifting as the pandemic develops.

Noted by Jimenez and colleagues, the costs of schooling, not only direct costs but also opportunity costs as well perhaps as cultural or social costs, are often too high in the short run and from the perspective of family decision makers for some marginal children and youth to participate. Among the strategies adopted in recent years to address those costs are conditional cash transfers (CCTs), essentially small grants given to children or families who carry out desired behavior, for example, attending and staying in school, attending health classes, etc. The rationale for such programs is that they put cash directly into the hands of beneficiaries, they target scarce resources and are pro-poor, and they encourage “healthy” behavior. **Schwartz & Abreu** provide an overview of conditional cash transfer programs in Latin America and in Brazil, which has developed the world’s largest and among the most complex programs, *Bolsa Escuela* and *Bolsa Familia*.

Like many government activities in Brazil, social assistance is decentralized, with each level of government playing a role. In the case of *Bolsa Familia*, the city of Campinas developed two “complementary” programs targeting youth who had graduated from other social assistance programs but had yet to complete their schooling and were at high social risk. The authors trace the evolution of these programs, Youth Agent (*Agente Jovem*) and the Youth Action (*Ação Jovem*), and consider the issues needed for successful implementation. Both include an educational component, either in conjunction with formal primary and secondary schools or in non-formal programs outside. Both address issues of livelihood as well as social exclusion and community integration. Despite problems of coordination and implementation and lack of evaluation (currently underway), the complementary programs have reached a number of youth who would otherwise not be receiving educational services. Preliminary evidence suggests that many youth who would ordinarily have dropped out have remained engaged.

The success of *Bolsa Familia* in reaching school-age children, coupled with its failure to serve overage youth still in need of services, increased the visibility of youth, raising awareness of their needs among political and policy leaders, and thus leading to development of the two supplementary programs. The programs have stimulated development of service delivery at the municipal level and increased civic accountability by focusing public attention on the coordination of services and programs at local, state, and national levels. In these ways, the Brazilian case provides an example of how committed government can learn to see and then program for the larger educational needs of marginal youth. The cases focus

attention on approaches that take seriously the calculus of educational costs and benefits calculated by family decision makers, and seek to increase the immediate as well as longer-term benefits of socially-desirable behavior to families and communities.

**Brophy & Page** consider Somalia, a country emerging from conflict and having one of the world's lowest rates of literacy and school participation. Lack of an effective central government with recognized authority over the national territory and ongoing unrest make Somalia a difficult place in which to run a school system. Accordingly, primary gross enrollment rates are estimated at less than 28% of all school age children, 22 of girls. In this context, the push to increase participation in primary schooling is extremely important, and scarce public resources are devoted to this end. At the same time, a generation of Somali youth is effectively unschooled, and yet too old and disinclined to take part in conventional primary schooling, even if available.

The authors describe the process by which the NGO for which they work, Africa Educational Trust, in collaboration with the BBC, developed a non-formal radio education program to serve out-of-school youth. Radio instruction is particularly suitable for Somalia, given its linguistic homogeneity and the widespread availability and use of radios. Through consultation with a large range of stakeholders, instruction was organized around literacy and key life skills in health, nutrition, environment and human rights. The article discusses the difficulties of providing education in the context of a failed state along with the participatory strategies used to develop the radio instruction program.

It is estimated that SOMDEL has reached 30,000 youth who missed out on education as well as many individuals not enrolled in the program. Instructive in this case is the willingness and ability of program designers to focus delivery around the expressed needs and constraints of learners, another old lesson in frequent need of revisiting. By focusing on learners, programmers realized the differential needs of female youth in terms of timing and location of lessons. Programmers realized that radio enabled them to target a wider range of youth and others than could be reached by land-based methods on land occupied by rival political groups. Interestingly the project managed to avoid getting caught up in the politics, perhaps because of the third party nature of the BBC, its history and popularity in the country. Longer-range issues remain, especially training and payment for teacher-facilitators.

While finite space obviously precludes complete coverage of the topic, it is hoped that the special issue will promote awareness, discussion and research on the issue of marginalization. Supporting materials for the 2007 *World Development Report* dramatize the issue, pointing out that almost half the world's population is under 25, that 90% of those children and youth live in developing countries, and that most of the world's poor are under 25. (World Bank 2005, p.xiii) Numerically, most of the world's children and youth are "in school." Yet, those on the margin are considerable in number and significance. Even at, say, 20%, marginal children and youth represent the failure of the world to achieve its ideals, indeed the legal obligations most nations have agreed to the Convention on the Rights of



the Child, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Dakar Framework for Action, and the Millennium Development Goals. Out-of-school children represent the failure of our values and commitments. Out-of-school youth, unemployed and disengaged, represent a political threat and source of potential unrest, a waste of human capital, or at the very least an unexploited resource.

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