CIES Abstracts and Presentations

Theme: Problematizing (In)Equality: The Promise of Comparative and International Education
Atlanta, Georgia, USA 5-9 March 2017

Poster Session, Thurs. 6 March
Session Title: Acting differently to make a difference
Presenter: Sabrina Hervey, Senior Education Specialist, Educate A Child

In 2012, Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser of Qatar launched a program to address the inequality of access to quality education for 10 million out of school children (OOSC) at the primary level. Within its first 4 years, Educate A Child has partnered with and financially and technically supported 59 projects in 48 countries that have committed to and are engaged in educating over 6.9 million OOSC.

Objective:
To demonstrate that educational inequality experienced by the most marginalized, OOSC, can be addressed at scale across very different contexts in a relatively short time period by implementing a funding model that builds on lessons learned from past decades. This session will highlight the innovative means by which EAC has been able to accomplish its ambitious objective.

Perspectives:
Only by recognizing the inequalities in the existing education systems and insufficient models for reaching those children who remain out of school has EAC has been able to build a flexible model for supporting tailored solutions to the multiple context-specific barriers children face in accessing their right to a quality education.

Modes of Inquiry:
As a poster session, this "moderated" visual display will outline key principles that have underpinned the work of this "start up" program and review strategies that were employed to reach significant results in a short period of time. Among the principals that will be addressed are:

- Focus on most marginalized: EAC supports the most educationally disadvantaged children who cannot get a primary education for a myriad of reasons. It retains a sole and singular commitment to OOSC enrolment and retention at the primary level.
- Rights-based approach: For EAC education is a fundamental human right that facilitates the fulfillment of other rights. The barriers OOSC face that keep them from education are EAC's target.
- Not a donor or charity: As a financial and technical partner EAC funding is a function of agreed-upon legal terms and conditions. EAC's financial support is designed to be an infusion of resources to help breakdown the obstacles to education and the seemingly intractable problem of OOSC.
- Partnership model: EAC recognizes and builds on existing projects and promotes collaboration around effective practices using a responsive rather than a prescriptive approach.
- Scale: EAC scales up successful activities in educating the most marginalized to make a significant difference.
- Co-funding and leveraging resources: EAC funds are catalytic for leveraging greater resources in addressing the inequalities to education faced by OOSC; therefore EAC requires a minimum 50% co-funding commitment from each partner.

- Non-competitive: EAC is selective in funding projects, but not competitive. Emphasis is on partner collaboration over competition. Funding levels are not set for each country allowing EAC to provide a diversity of educational programming and approaches according to need.
- Commitment to results: EAC demonstrates that it is possible to show significant rapid results in the short term. EAC's quality assurance system includes its commitment to track individual OOSC through an education programme.
- Working within national education systems: EAC is committed to supporting national education systems for sustainability.

How was it accomplished will be addressed by focusing on the following actions:
- Mobilize resources
- Advocate for OOSC
- Maintain focus on OOSC at the primary level
- Identify successful program models and implementing partners
- Think creatively about addressing OOSC barriers when soliciting partnerships

Results:
Program results are summarized in the introductory paragraph. As a result of this poster session it is expected that participants will have:
- Engaged in substantive dialogue about how the most marginalized are excluded from primary education
- Learned about an approach that has "hit a respondent chord"—one that has much higher demand on its resources than expected because of its approach
- Considered the value of focusing on the most disadvantaged as a way to decrease inequality at speed
- Understood why some of the traditional modalities of providing foreign assistance do not meet the most disadvantaged

Significance:
The Educate A Child program may stand alone as the only new initiative with commitments in place to enable millions of children to access a quality primary education since 2012. The experience demonstrates that, while education is complex and long term, there are practical and immediate ways that educators can combat inequality in their sector. Furthermore, this session suggests that there is a need for more diversified approaches to providing financial assistance if the most marginalized are to be reached.

Acting Differently to Make a Difference - Poster

Panel Session: Out of School Children – who they are, why they're excluded, and how they can be reached: Experience from Educate A Child, Qatar

Wednesday, March 8

Chair: Dr. Mary Joy Pigozzi, Executive Director, Educate A Child

Objective: *Those who are denied the fundamental right of compulsory and free education at the primary level must remain a priority so as not to compromise their educational rights at subsequent levels. Remaining committed to the unfinished agenda of excluded children not only honors these children's human rights, it also supports the economic, social, and political stability of their communities and countries. Without sustained commitment from the international community for ensuring access to a quality education for children who are outside of the system, the hardest to reach children will remain marginalized with insufficient resources to address the multiple barriers that keep them out of school.*

Perspective: Based on current experience in 59 projects in 48 countries, this panel will discuss the issue of out of school children, the scale of the problem, who the out of school children are, where they are, and the main reasons for their exclusion. Complementing the abundant literature that shows the health, economic, and other benefits of education, the panel will highlight the recent research showing that the cost of not educating out of school children is actually higher than the cost of educating them in many countries. A number of global initiatives targeting out of school children will be noted, highlighting the experience and lessons learned from a global initiative, Educate A Child, Qatar, which has in four years been able to identity and support projects that will provide educational opportunities to over 10 million out of school children (OOSC).

Modes of inquiry: Three papers will be presented by different panelists. A moderator will introduce the topic and set the framework for the papers. The Problem: Approximately 60 million children at primary level are not in school, despite the global commitment to full enrollment by 2015 as articulated in the MDGs. In the years immediately following the establishment of the MDGs significant progress was made in reducing the number of OOSC. Since 2008, however, the reduction has stagnated and in some cases the number of OOSC has increased. Conflict and high population growth rates, among other factors, further threaten progress in reducing the number of OOSC.

Results: In four short years Educate A Child has enrolment over 3.3 million out of school children in primary education programs with commitments in place to reach millions more. EAC has experience in 59 projects and over 48 countries with over 37 different partners which includes U.N. Agencies, bilateral agencies, foundations, and international and national NGOs. EAC's financial commitment to date stands at over $510 million with additional leveraged funds from partner co-funding totaling over a $1.2 billion portfolio.

Significance: By shining a light on effective educational programmes serving the most hard-to-reach marginalized children; targeting commitment and resources and setting ambitious targets; through global and country-level advocacy efforts; and establishing partnerships with governments and a wide range of multi-lateral and bilateral agencies and local and international NGOs, Educate A Child has shown it is possible to significantly impact the number of children who are no longer out of school.

Presentation 1: *Costs to countries and the global community from not educating all our children*

Dr. Nicholas Burnett, Results for Development Institute

Enrolling out of school children is not only a moral obligation but a productive investment. This presentation will focus on the results of Educate A Child commissioned research on the costs of not providing universal primary education – to individuals and to nations. The research reviewed the benefits of primary education and estimated the economic cost associated with large populations of out of school children. Subsequent research developed the estimation methodology further and expanded the estimation exercise to a set of 20 low- and middle-income countries. And similar research focusing on seven Southeast Asian countries confirm the findings of the earlier global work.

The key findings from this research are that the costs of not educating out of school children significantly outweigh the necessary investments for providing universal primary education, and that for some countries, these costs exceed the value of an average year of economic growth. Additionally, using the findings from this study, educating out of school children will also yield impressive savings in a range of other sectors including health, agriculture, and the environment, which can have a positive effect on growth and productivity. As an example, the estimated earnings cost of not educating OOSC varies substantially with OOSC prevalence rates across the sample, e.g., up to nearly 7% of GDP in Mali. These estimates do not take into account non-income benefits to primary education (such as improved health and citizenship) which can further increase the earning loss by several more percentage points.

Investing in basic education seems an obvious solution in a global community where economic disparities are increasing and becoming more visible, leading to dissatisfaction, and sometimes social unrest, among segments of society worldwide. The evidence exists for the wide-ranging benefits to primary education and now the evidence is coming to the fore to show the economic and other costs of not educating OOSC.

Out of School Children (OOSC): Global Costs and Investment Trends

Presentation 2: *Challenges and barriers that exclude OOSC from education systems*

Sabrina Hervey, Senior Education Specialist, Educate A Child

Ministries of Education are often constrained by a traditional paradigm that defines education as what happens in a school, thus focusing energy and resources to implement a model of education that does not meet the needs of millions of children; and in fact sometimes falls short of delivering quality education for those already in school. This is compounded by that fact that education systems are in many cases already over-stretched and under-resourced and are ill-equipped to accommodate huge numbers of additional children; and marginalized children may be more expensive to reach, thus those in-school are prioritized over those out of school. Furthermore, because out of school children are amongst the most marginalized/disadvantaged segment of the population, they are largely invisible and voiceless and not always in a position to demand basic services like education.   More perplexing, however, is that "inclusion" seems generally to refer to including all children in a formal school. But this

is a model that alone cannot accommodate all children, especially those that are ill-prepared for a formal school because of cognitive or other delays as a result of poverty, malnutrition, special needs, or trauma.

In addition to the barriers presented by education systems themselves there are a wide range of social, economic, and cultural factors that conspire to deny children their fundamental right to education. The key barriers to primary education include challenging geographies, lack of resources and insufficient infrastructure, gender, poor quality of education, poverty, and displacement by natural disasters and conflict. Conflict alone represents a major impediment to the realisation of SDG4, as more than half of the world's primary-aged children out of school are estimated to live in conflict-affected fragile states. Complicating the situation, the factors or barriers which keep children out of school are multi-sectoral and overlapping, requiring initiatives which are multi-faceted and extend beyond the education sector.

Further, the very success of universal primary education initiatives in many countries have led to education systems becoming severely overcrowded, with resources stretched, teacher shortages, and quality compromised. Each of these serves as further disincentive to increasing enrolments.

Despite the challenges Educate A Child has identified and supports effective models reaching the hardest-to-reach out of school children by addressing these barriers directly. The barriers are not intractable. There are solutions. The next presentation will draw on Educate A Child and partner experience in supporting flexible, multi-faceted, and multi-sectoral education programmes, underscoring the needs for a diversity of educational approaches – both formal and nonformal. It is not a matter of making children conform to rigid formal models of schooling, but having education programmes that meet the unique circumstances of individual children.

Challenges and Barriers that Exclude OOSC from Education Systems

Presentation 3: *The opportunity*

Dr. Karen Bryner, Director of Technical Department, Educate A Child

Despite the stagnation in progress toward full primary education enrolment there is cause for optimism. There is a global recognition that business as usual has not and will not provide educational opportunities to the world's most marginalized children. First, despite the broader educational focus of the Sustainable Development Goals, there remains a global commitment to OOSC as articulated in the *Education 2030 Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action.* Second*, s*everal global initiatives will be noted which are helping to ensure the most disadvantaged are not forgotten. UNESCO Institute for Statistics and UNICEF with support from the Global Partnership for Education have teamed up to form the Out of School Children Initiative with the goal to reduce the number of children who are out of school around the world by developing comprehensive profiles of excluded children and linking these profiles to the barriers that lead to exclusion; and then identifying, promoting and implementing sound policies that address exclusion. A new **Education Cannot Wait** fund is the first global fund to prioritise education in humanitarian action.

The bulk of this presentation will highlight the unique approach and lessons learned from Educate A Child. Educate A Child, a programme of the Education Above All Foundation based in Qatar, is one initiative with a core mandate of trying to significantly reduce the number of OOSC at the primary level. By working in partnership and emphasizing innovation, scale and sustainability, EAC has contributed to

the global effort to enable every child to fulfil her/his right to quality education. In four short years Educate A Child has identified programmes that will potentially reach more than 10 million out of school children with actual enrolments to date reaching over 3.3 million.

This presentation will highlight EAC strategies and operating principles including its singular focus on out of school children, its partnership model which recognizes and builds on what is working already, its willingness to support different partners and programmes in a single country to respond to the different needs of specific OOSC populations, and requirement to track individual OOSC from identification through enrolment and as they progress through an education programme. This approach has been key to rapid expansion of partner projects reaching large numbers of OOSC; sparked a renewed emphasis on the need for complementary efforts to improve both quality and access; and promoted new forms of collaboration between implementing partners and with governments. EAC's singular focus has shined a light on OOSC and is re-shaping the way implementing partners, donors and governments are looking at and responding to the issue of providing out of school children with quality education. The presentation will highlight key aspects of the EAC approach including the creation of large consortia of local and international NGOs to address multiple barriers to access and strategic partnerships with multi-lateral and bilateral agencies, as well as a diverse set of EAC-supported projects.

 Reaching the Hardest to Reach

Panel Session: Diversifying educational opportunities to ensure the inclusion of the most marginalized

Thursday, March 9

Chair: Dr. Mary Joy Pigozzi, Executive Director, Educate A Child

Objective: To present educational models that provide inclusion of children who are excluded from receiving an education due to the inflexibility of formal national education systems.

Perspective: Inclusion is often presented as highly problematic—as a challenge that is difficult to overcome and one that takes a great deal of time. This panel acknowledges the challenges of long-term reform but provides evidence that models for inclusion exist and provide an immediate alternative to exclusion. The exclusion of out of school children (OOSC) from receiving an education is in part due to the lack of flexibility of the formal education system model. Nearly 60 million OOSC at the primary level face barriers to accessing an education that are as diverse as the contexts in which they live. Diversifying educational opportunities is crucial to providing all children the opportunity to realize their human right to receiving an education.

Research methods or modes of inquiry: Non-formal education models accommodate the geographic, economic, livelihood, security and cultural realities the exclude children from the formal system. This panel explores various educational programs that accommodate the needs of children who otherwise do not obtain an education. More specifically, the panelists discuss the models that encourage learning opportunities for children who: never enrolled or enrolled and dropped out at an early age and are now older than the grade they should be enrolled; children in mobile populations who are not accommodated by the standard academic school year; and children whose access to education is disrupted by conflict and insecurity. Qualitative research focusing on larger questions as well as practical experience from project implementation inform the presentations.

Results: These three papers, two based on research across multiple projects and countries, demonstrate that quality educational programs can be put in place to ensure that those who are most often excluded from education due to age, mobility (nomads, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees, for example), and conflict can fulfill their right to a basic education.

Significance: For all children to realize their right to an education, children who are excluded and not easily assimilated or accepted into common public education systems must be reached through alternative opportunities. Diversifying education opportunities that are responsive to students' needs is imperative. Attention must be paid to how children and youth can be included in quality education programs so that they can learn and achieve. The presentations on this panel contribute to knowledge building and feed into policy dialogue and advocacy around alternative education.

Presentation 1: *Educational opportunities for over-aged children through accelerated education programs (AEP)*

Michael Morrissey, EAC

The need for flexible age-appropriate programs, that provide quality education in at an accelerated pace for out of school children (OOSC) who have missed out on education is obvious. Less obvious is how, when and where these varied programs succeed and the extent to which their content is valued, acknowledged and attributed with formal accreditation. UNHCR took the initiative in 2014 to establish an Accelerated Education Working Group (AEWG). The working group has included participation of UNICEF, USAID, INEE (Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies) and four INGOs, including the Norwegian Refugee Council, and Save the Children. UNHCR and other members have contributed initial knowledge products. UNHCR commissioned a literature review collating different approaches to AEP globally (not yet published). USAID has also commissioned several studies on education in conflict-affected environments, including accelerated education. Other members of the working group are undertaking individual evaluations of AEPs being implemented by their separate organizations. Although not a member of the AEWG, Educate A Child (EAC) agreed to contribute a preliminary analysis of its support for AEPs to the growing body of knowledge.

This paper provides concrete examples of context-responsive models developed for educating over-aged children supported by EAC in countries such as Burkina Faso, India, Mali, Niger, Sudan and Syria. The programs demonstrate the flexible approaches necessary for meeting students' needs shaped by rural, urban and conflict settings as well as economic, geographic, and societal situations. The models vary in length of student participation in the program, type of certification, level of support offered to students who transition back in to the formal system, and role of the government in directly supporting the programs.

 Diversifying Educational Opportunities to Ensure the Inclusion of the Most Marginalized

Presentation 2: *Educational opportunities for mobile populations*

Dr. Caroline Dyer, University of Leeds

While efforts to extend educational services to mobile children have expanded, there remains a paucity of rigorous research and analysis of the effectiveness of past and current programs and methodologies used to deliver education services. Experimentation has not been accompanied by analytic, thoughtful and rigorous evaluation of, for example: what comprises 'innovative', and issues such as whether provision is cost effective, scalable, and sustainable. Without such detailed analysis, there is a gap in the evidence that hampers identification of education models that deserve funding and/or can be scaled up to meet demand from mobile populations. A mobility-focused research project, jointly funded by EAC and the German government, has been conducted to investigate the global experience of providing effective and efficient education programs to mobile children. The populations considered in the study

comprise nomadic groups pursuing a range of livelihoods; economic migrants, including seasonal labourers; and refugees and IDPs who are forced to relocate due to conflict and security. The overarching question that the paper addresses is "What are the key characteristics of effective programs for the delivery of quality learning opportunities for mobile children?" This study reviews the challenges and opportunities of providing high quality, meaningful and relevant education to children on the move.

Ensuring High Quality Primary Education for Children from Mobile Populations

Presentation 3: Educational opportunities for IDPs and refugees through Self Learning Program.

Barron Segar, US Fund for UNICEF

This presentation discusses the Self learning Program (SLP) which was a developed jointly by UNRWA, UNICEF and the Syrian Ministry of Education (MOE) as a response to the educational needs of Syrian IDPs and refugees with limited or no access to schooling as a result of the conflict. Against the backdrop of five years of conflict, a devastating toll has been exacted on Syria's education sector. In 2011, prior to the crisis, in terms of enrolment rates in basic education (classes 1 – 9) , Syria ranked amongst the highest-performing countries in the Middle East. As a result of the conflict, there are approximately 2.1 million out of school children (OOSC) in Syria and 1.4 million at risk of dropping out. One out of every 4 schools is no longer operational, as schools and educational facilities have been regular targets for attacks and/or are occupied by internally-displaced persons (IDPs) or warring factions.

The SLP provides OOSC who have missed out on regular schooling due to insecurity, displacement or other constraints, an opportunity to resume their education. The core aims of the SLP project are increasing access to learning materials and safe-learning spaces; expanding access to psychosocial support and recreational activities; and training teachers and resource persons. The self-learning materials align with Syria's national curriculum and enable pupils to sit for government exams. The program is designed in such a fashion that the use of materials can be supervised by an adult who has not had formal training in education. The students can continue their education at home or in Community Learning Centers (CLCs) , run by local NGOs. For students who will use the materials at home, the CLCs will act as a resource centre where they can go for assistance when needed. Two packages of self-learning materials – those with and without logos of the Ministry of Education, UNRWA and UNICEF—are distributed. The latter was particularly designed for children living in opposition-controlled areas. Operational guidance for implementing partners (i.e. NGOs) and a user guide (general instruction for learners and adults) in both English and Arabic are also provided.

Education Opportunities for IDPs and Refugees: Self-Learning