Policy Guide 1

Education Policy Guide

Chronic Poverty and Education:

A guide to what works in policy and practice

Naomi Hossain with Lucy Scott and Andrew Shepherd (2012)

Chronic Poverty Advisory Network

www.chronicpovertynetwork.org

The Chronic Poverty Advisory Network (CPAN) is committed to producing a portfolio of sector and thematic policy guides to show how policy makers and programme designers can use evidence about chronic poverty and poverty dynamics in designing policies and programmes which will:

- help address the causes of chronic poverty
- assist poor households escape poverty
- prevent impoverishment

The intended audience for the guides is primarily policy makers and practitioners in developing countries, working for government, civil society, the private sector and external development agencies. This would include organisations working directly with and for the poor. The guides are also intended for the inter-governmental, bilateral and non-governmental international agencies which support those domestic actors.

This particular policy guide aims to steer educational policymakers and practitioners through recent evidence about the relationship between education and chronic poverty. Specifically, it draws out practical lessons about the related issues of what works to educate the chronically poor, and about where and how chronic poverty is successfully being tackled through education. The Guide does not undertake a general overview of developments in policy, practice or thinking about education: instead, it focuses on the point at which the concerns of education and chronic poverty policy and practice successfully meet, and where the evidence exists to understand why and how they do so.

Educational policymakers and practitioners here, means not only government departments and agencies, but also private sector and NGO programme designers and implementers. It is also intended to support the work of organisations representing poor people and social movements for poverty eradication through improved education.

The Guide is organized into four parts. The first looks at the intersections between chronic poverty and education, the second looks at what has been learned about how to make schools more pro-poor, the third addresses what methods successfully enable young people living in poverty to progress through education systems into the adult worlds of work and citizenship. The fourth and final section looks at some of the transformations that education policies and practices can help deliver in the lives of poor children.

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Education offers some of the best policy options available for tackling long-term poverty, and is the single best means of preventing children from inheriting their parents' poverty. At the same time, children from chronically poor families are typically among the hardest to reach and to teach. The policy concerns of education and chronic poverty overlap at several key stages in the life cycle, and a growing body of evidence shows how, why, and where action at these strategic points succeeds.

The Chronic Poverty and Education Policy Guide aims to steer policymakers and practitioners through recent action and debates about the relationship between education and chronic poverty. Evidence from low and middle income countries shows that, in the right conditions, smart interventions can make rapid, permanent inroads on poverty and inequality reduction, boosting upward mobility and social inclusion. Education policies and programmes that succeed in reaching and teaching children from chronically poor backgrounds are associated with faster and more equitable economic growth, more inclusive and cohesive societies, and social transformations, including greater gender equity. The combined policy stakes of education policy and chronic poverty reduction may be high, yet well-designed education interventions can also be strategic, cost-effective and sustainable.

The Guide is organised into four substantive sections. Section 1 introduces the background and aim of the discussion while Section 2 considers the method and approach that will be adopted in the Guide. Section 3 then looks at the intersections between chronic poverty and education, with a focus on tools for conceptualising and operationalising these links. It situates the problem of gender disparities in education among poor children and reviews recent evidence on the importance of early childhood care and development for interrupting the inheritance of poverty by the children of poor parents, and the implications for education policy. Early childhood care and development, particularly investment in pre-school provision are highly promising entry points for tackling chronic poverty through education and for educating the chronically poor.

Section 4 looks at what has been learned about how to make schools more pro-poor. It discusses lessons about policies that balance quality with expansion, in a context in which many developing countries have increased enrolments rapidly over the past decades. The Guide then turns to what goes on within schools. Here the biggest single advance in thinking about school reform in the past decade relates to school governance, and specifically efforts to make schools and education systems more accountable to parents and communities. Governance and accountability reform is not easy, but several promising approaches and important lessons emerge, including an appreciation that accountability reform takes time. The Guide looks at evidence on how and the conditions under which social accountability tools work to deliver more accountable education systems, at the variable achievements of school-based management reform programmes, and at what has been learned about the role of choice, in particular the mixed impacts of access to low cost private schools in terms of access and attainment of poor children.

Section 5 covers what works to enable young people living in poverty to progress through education systems into the adult worlds of work and citizenship. A large number of innovative financial and other means of support have been shown to sustain poor young people through the often difficult transitions through education and into work. Conditional cash transfers, school feeding schemes and scholarships can all play important roles, particularly in the present era of global economic volatility. Although the global youth unemployment crisis shows no signs of abating, a great deal is now known about how to help young people into – or back into – work, and about the potential for new kinds of transferable '21st century skills' to lift poor youth out of poverty and into fast-changing global labour markets. 'Second chance' programmes are particularly innovative and important in rerouting young people back onto positive pathways to adulthood.

Section 6 reviews some of the education policies and practices that transform the lives of poor children and their societies. This section looks at the practical and policy implications of growing evidence that suggests it is education quality and skills acquired, rather than years in school that deliver pro-poor growth and therefore poverty reduction. This section also looks at some of the wider effects of declining gender disparities in education, and at what has been learned about why inclusive education matters, and how to deliver it.

Section 7 concludes with a summary of the policy messages from the Guide. Links to online and pdf tools, metrics, and other resources are provided throughout.

Table 1 below provides a brief indication of how the different policy measures discussed in the Guide can address chronic poverty, and the situations in which they are especially needed.

Table 1 Strategic action on education and chronic poverty

Intervention areas	Aspect of chronic poverty addressed	Where it works
Early childhood nutritional, care and pre-school programmes	Prevent or reverse under-nutrition in vitro and the first 1,000 days, and compensate for inadequate care and stimulation and lagged cognitive development in early childhood, which set children on a lifelong path of educational, economic and social disadvantage.	Early childhood interventions are particularly relevant for low income countries with significant problems of under-nutrition. Evidence from the US is that early childhood intervention also has large payoffs by reducing inequalities in educational outcomes, and improving attainment among poor and marginalised groups in middle and high income countries.
Education quality improvements through school governance reforms that increase accountability to and power of parents over how schools are run	Demand for poor children's labour means that schooling must be seen to be worthwhile if poor families are going to invest; low quality education has higher opportunity costs for poorer children. Social and economic power inequalities make it harder for poor parents to hold school authorities to account to demand improvements in education provision.	Quality reforms are key in low income countries which have experienced rapid system expansions, and where the overall quality of schooling provided is quite low, e.g. low income sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. Successes with improving teacher quality in poor regions in middle income countries such as Brazil have lessons for other countries. Increasing parental choice has succeeded in raising quality in high income countries those with strong egalitarian traditions, but there is no strong evidence that low cost private schools or voucher schemes improve education outcomes for poor children in low or middle income countries.
Positive action to promote girls' education and	Positive action can reduce discrimination against girls in schools and at home. Gender disadvantage is	Gender discrimination is most acute in low income countries, but also in the low, middle and high income countries that comprise the

tackle social and institutional constraints to girls' learning	more acute in poorer households, and interlocks and reinforces with other disadvantages common among the long-term poor. Education tends to strengthen women's social, economic and political rights, so that investments in educating poor girls can set in train a virtuous cycle of gains including early childhood development, women's employment prospects and citizenship and participation.	'patriarchal belt' from the Middle East and North African region into South Asia. Gender discrimination and gender-based violence are also significant influences on education uptake among poor girls in conflict and post-conflict settings.
More accessible and affordable schools, including cash transfers and scholarships and inclusive approaches to education	The direct and opportunity costs of school are major deterrents for chronically poor families. Socially excluded and geographically marginalised groups often lack physical access to education. Poor girls' access can depend on school proximity, because of safety and girls' responsibilities for care work. Protection against economic shocks can help to reduce dropout and erratic attendance, which are endemic among vulnerable poor people.	Innovations in education for hard-to-reach groups have been developed in low income countries with significant pastoralist or peripatetic populations, and in remote regions with dispersed populations. Countries with educationally marginalised linguistic minorities can benefit from mother tongue programmes; all places can apply the lessons of inclusive learning for children with disabilities. School expansion programmes have been important in increasing access across low and middle income developing countries, particularly in countries with large gender disparities. Cash transfers have worked well in low and middle income countries, including with chronically poor groups in rich countries e.g., the US.
'Second chance' schemes that reconnect young people to education and training	People from chronically poor backgrounds are at greater risk of early dropout and associated risks of low paid or risky work. Schemes that enable re-entry into education and training, and which offer life-long learning are particularly key.	In low income countries with high dropout rates, second chance schemes can focus on enabling working children to continue basic education, as well as on enabling youth to connect to vocational and life skills learning. In middle income countries, second chance schemes may focus on at-risk groups and on returning to education and training for poor youth and adults.
Skills development linked to employment and entrepreneurship	Chronic poverty often means a lack of access to the broader life and social skills that are increasingly important in 21st century job markets. It can also mean lack of access to the social networks through which jobs and entrepreneurial opportunities may arise.	Low income countries, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, rely heavily on informal apprenticeships for skills training, so there is much room for investment in programmes replicating schemes such as the *Jóvenes* programmes in South America.

ASER	Annual Status of Education Report
CAMPE	Campaign for Popular Education
CCT	Conditional Cash Transfer
DME	Deprivation and Marginalisation in Education
ECD/ECCD	Early Childhood Development/Early Childhood Care and Development
EFA	Education For All
FAWE	Forum for African Women Educationalists
GMR	Global Monitoring Report
HDI/HDR	Human Development Index/Human Development Report
IGT	Intergenerational Transmission
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MPI	Multidimensional Poverty Index
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
PTAs	Parent-Teacher Associations
RCT	Randomised Control Trial
TVET	Technical Vocational Education and Training
WDR	World Development Report

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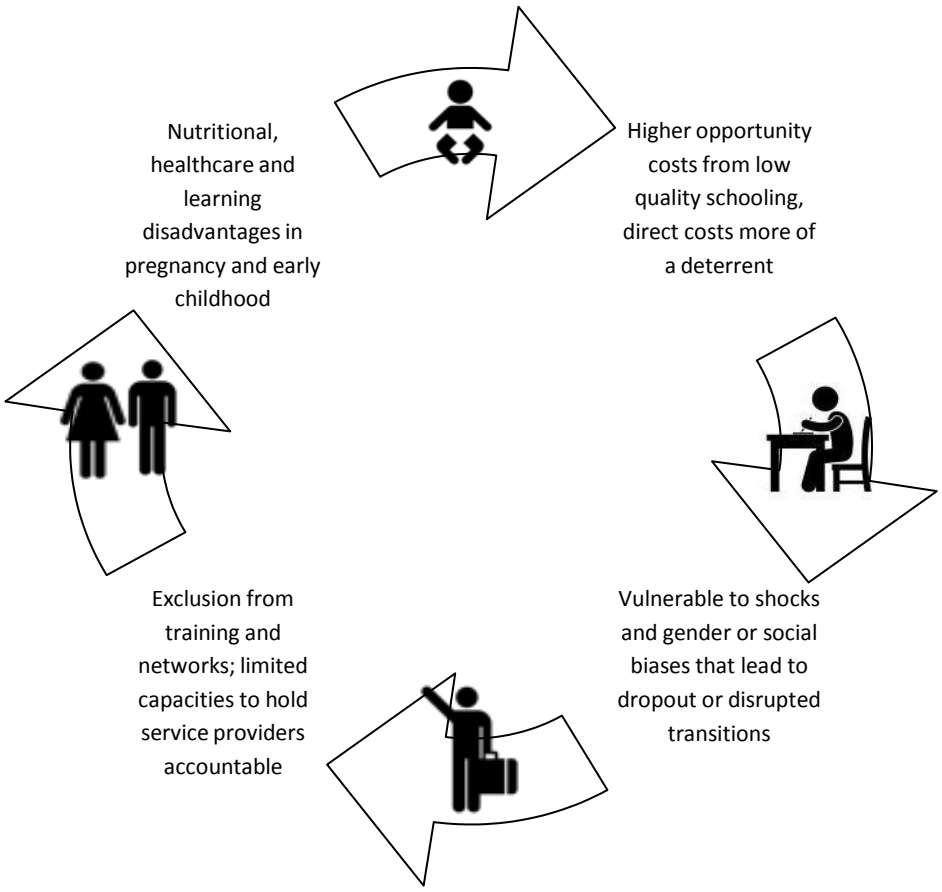
1. Background and aims

The Chronic Poverty and Education Policy Guide aims to steer policymakers and practitioners through recent evidence about the relationship between education and chronic poverty. Education is the single best means of stopping the transmission of poverty from parents to their children: evidence from low and middle income countries shows that smart interventions can make rapid, permanent inroads on poverty and inequality reduction, boosting upward mobility and social inclusion. Education policies and programmes that succeed in reaching and teaching children from chronically poor backgrounds are associated with **faster and more equitable economic growth**, **more inclusive and cohesive societies**, and **social transformations**, including **greater gender equity**. The combined policy stakes of education policy and chronic poverty reduction are high, yet well-designed education interventions can be strategic, cost-effective and sustainable.

So what kinds of policies and practices work to tackle chronic poverty through education and educate the chronically poor? This Guide brings together recent evidence about some of the more successful approaches. It features analysis and examples relevant to both low income and middle income countries, particularly those with significant numbers of chronically poor, marginalised people. It will a). guide education policymakers in thinking about how to improve results for 'hard-to-reach, hard-to-teach' children; b). support poverty reduction programmers, including social protection agencies and planning ministries in identifying how, where and what interventions work to halt the transmission of poverty from parents to children (see Figure 1); and c). aid advocacy efforts by providing evidence and arguments to sharpen the education public policy focus on chronic poverty.

Figure 1 Education and chronic poverty over the life cycle



Chronic poverty is a durable set of social and economic deprivations that parents sometimes pass onto their children. Education policies attuned to how chronic poverty endures offer some of the best means of cutting the chances that children will ultimately inherit their parents' poverty. Figure 1 Education and chronic poverty over the life cycle illustrates how intervening at strategic stages in their life cycle can prevent the disadvantages of parental poverty from turning into cognitive under-development, low levels of educational attainment, social exclusion, and low-skilled, poor job prospects. This Guide focuses on policies and practices that have been shown to work to stop the inheritance of poverty by educating children from chronically poor families, and provides insights and resources on what has worked and the contexts and conditions under which they have succeeded.

2. Method and approach

The links between education in development and chronic poverty are significant determinants of policy and practice outcomes running in both directions, yet sectoral and disciplinary distinctions mean the two are often understood, researched and evaluated in distinctively different ways. Identifying sound evidence that explores the relationship between the two in a useable way requires searching and sifting across disciplines, sectors and institutions.

The Guide groups the material into four broad organising themes that address the dynamic, non-linear relationship between education and chronic poverty across the life cycle (see Figure 2):

a. **Understanding the links**: new ideas and tools about how to understand, measure and operationalise the relationship between chronic poverty and education;

b. **Pro-poor education processes:** what has been learned about how to couple progress on access with quality gains for children from poor and marginalised backgrounds;

c. **Successful transitions:** what has worked to enable poorer children to attain and retain the skills and resources to transition through the system, into work, and to gain broader life-skills;

d. **Social and economic transformations:** what kinds of social and economic transformations result, including contributions to economic growth, development, equality, wellbeing, citizenship and rights.

The material is organised to provide brief analyses of what has worked, examples and resources, and discusses partnerships involved and implications for policy.

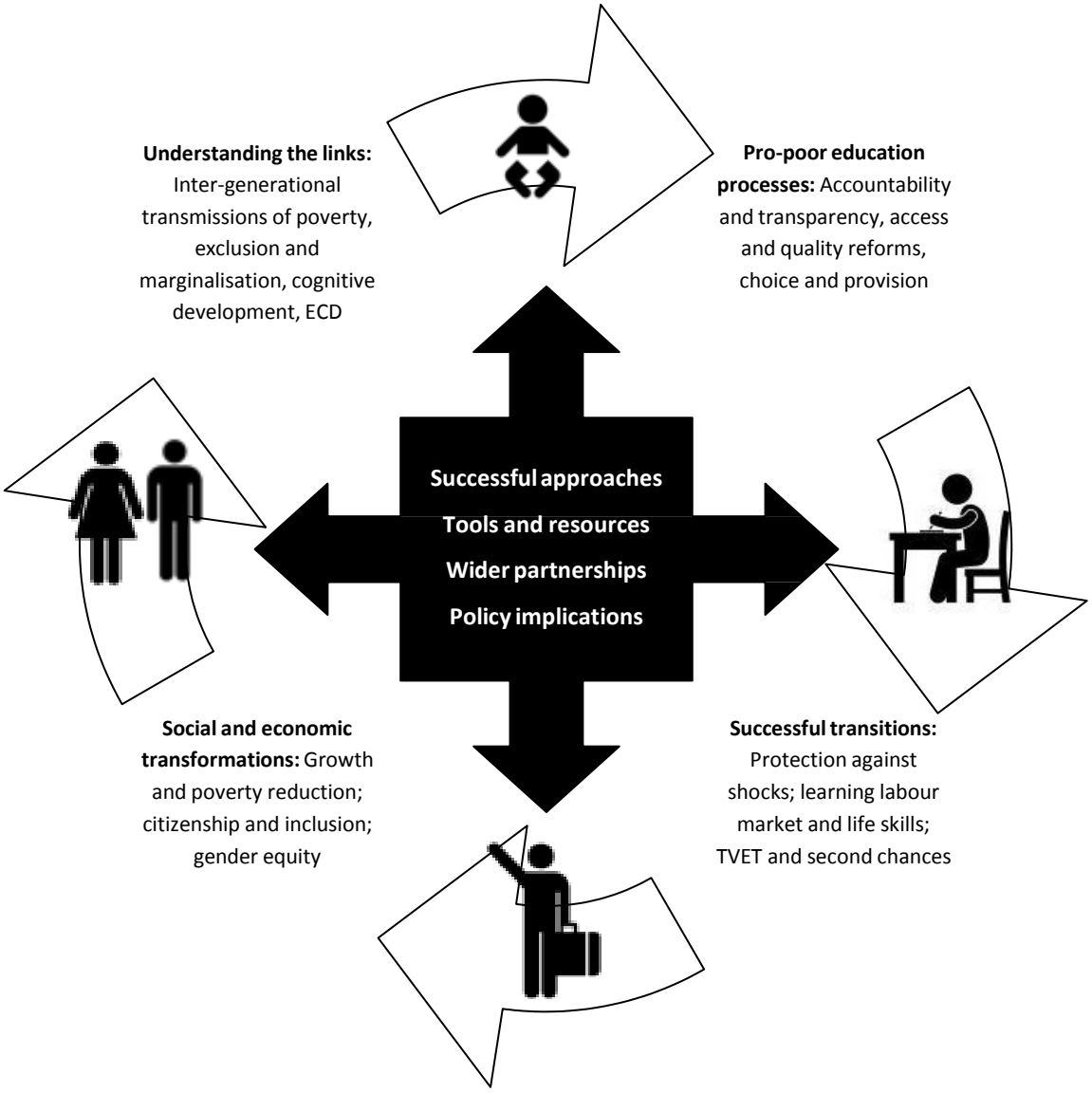
The team undertook an extensive online literature review. This involved searches using relevant key words and phrases in academic databases and online databases; hand searches of key institutional, regular report and major project searches; key author searches; and major policy document bibliography reviews. Search results were included on the basis that they followed key criteria and:

- Directly addressed the relationship between chronic poverty and education. Studies about general education policy were excluded unless they specifically addressed particular hard-to-reach groups or practical challenges associated with chronic poverty;
- Met a good standard of quality of evidence;
- Provided practical (rather than theoretical or academic) insights into what works; and

- Addressed issues relevant to the four organising thematic areas identified from the initial survey of the evidence and current debates.

We also searched for evidence of the partnerships and actors involved in successful interventions and reforms. The potential literature is very large, yet the body of studies and reports that meet the inclusion criteria is considerably smaller. Furthermore, literature on practical solutions is not always of high quality, and much policy relevant literature focuses on broad policy issues and does not always make it possible to extract the findings relevant to discussion of chronic poverty. The literature on which the review draws directly comprises more than 150 documents, reports and web resources, although more were surveyed for an overview of the debates.

Figure 2 The organising themes of the Guide



Box 1 Selected sources for up-to-date evidence

Education and chronic poverty

Collections of policy briefs and research summaries on selected themes such as conflict, inclusive education, gender, etc.: http://www.eldis.org/go/topics/resource-guides/education

The Department for International Development's (DfID) Human Development Resource Centre brings together research and evidence syntheses: http://hdrc.dfid.gov.uk/category/education/

Three recently completed 5 year programmes of research relevant to understanding the links between education and chronic poverty include the DfID-funded Education Research Programme Consortia:

http://www.create-rpc.org/: The Consortium for Research on Educational Access, Transitions and Equity worked on Bangladesh, Ghana, India and South Africa;

http://recoup.educ.cam.ac.uk/about/: The Research Consortium on Educational Outcomes and Poverty worked on Ghana, Kenya, India and Pakistan;

http://www.edqual.org/: EdQual is a collaborative research programme focused on improving the quality of school and classroom processes in low income countries.

Skills and labour markets

Regular reports on world skills and labour market conditions: http://www.mckinsey.com/insights/mgi/research/labor_markets

Reports from the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment: http://www.pisa.oecd.org/pages/0,2987,en_32252351_32235731_1_1_1_1_1,00.html

3. Making the links between chronic poverty and education

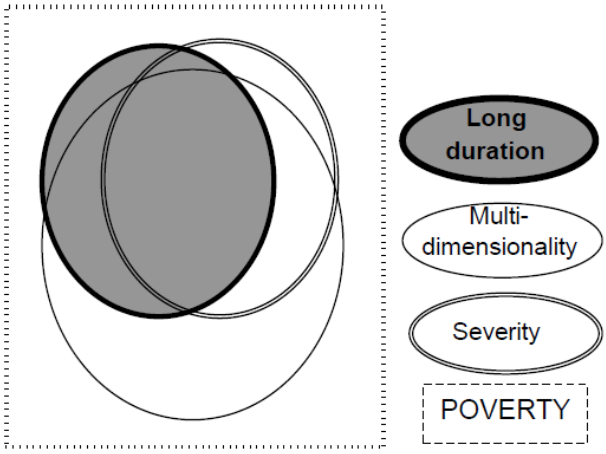
Many developing countries have succeeded in boosting school enrollment since the 1990s. But progress on achieving the Education For All (EFA) goals slowed or stalled after a decade or more of successful expansion. The pattern that emerged was common across a variety of contexts: children from poor or marginalised backgrounds were 'harder-to-reach' than those from better-off families, ethnic or social majority groups, or more accessible, stable areas of the country. In many countries, the last 10% remain unreachable and unteachable:[1] not only is basic access a problem, but better-off children consistently learn more in school than those from poorer and marginalised groups. The last 10% mainly comprises children from households living in chronic poverty in its many different forms.

3.1 How chronic poverty and education intersect

Chronic poverty is a set of social and economic deprivations which interlock and endure over a long period. According to the Chronic Poverty Research Centre, chronic poverty refers to the experience of

being poor for at least five years, while the 'tightest' definition of chronic poverty is that it endures across generations. As Figure 3 illustrates, being poor for a long time does not always mean experiencing poverty in all its many dimensions – people may be income-poor but not socially marginalised, for instance; nor is chronic poverty the same as extreme poverty in all contexts. However, in many low and middle income developing countries, being poor for a long time is often associated with, e.g., ethnic or religious minority status, or remote location, and with extreme poverty and impoverishment, as it can become harder to move out of poverty if you live in conditions of chronic insecurity over a long period.[2]

Figure 3 Intersecting features of chronic poverty



Source: Hulme *et al* 2001

The evidence from the past decade shows that it is not only low incomes that keep children from education: more often, a multi-dimensional set of deprivations and disadvantages interlock, keeping people poor over long periods, including generations, and excluding them from educational attainment. The evidence is of strong links between education and other human development outcomes that are connected to poverty, child survival and reproductive health. The 2011 Ethiopian Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) provided a recent example of the association between education and other human development outcomes (see Figure 4).

Figure 4 Education and human development in the 2011 Ethiopian DHS

Source: Central Statistical Agency [Ethiopia] and ICF International 2012

Chronic poverty takes the following forms:

- **Material poverty:** assetlessness, low incomes, vulnerable livelihoods; location in poor areas with limited economic opportunities; lack of social networks connected to livelihood opportunities (e.g., migration);
- **Low human capital endowments:** parents, grandparents and other relations with little formal schooling or skills; vulnerability to sickness and malnutrition;
- **Social exclusion or marginalised social and political status:** minority communities, groups subjected to stigma or discrimination by law or in social practice; groups excluded from public services or policy spaces because of policy biases (e.g. against nomadic communities);
- **Vulnerability to violence or shocks:** people living in conflict or post-conflict areas, or areas subject to climate-related or other environmental shocks; remote or urban communities lacking protection under the law.[3]

Education has clear and strong potential to impact positively on each of these dimensions of chronic poverty: through increasing skills for better jobs and livelihoods; reducing vulnerability to ill-health and malnutrition; eliminating stigma, combating discrimination and empowering people to claim rights; and increasing resilience to shocks and conflict, and reducing the prevalence of violence. Yet it is also precisely the conditions of chronic poverty that ensure policymakers fail to develop appropriate policies to reach and teach the children of poor and marginalised households; education systems and their timetables may not fit with livelihood patterns and seasonal cycles common to very poor people; it may be costly or difficult to provide and regulate schools in conflict zones and inaccessible areas; policymakers and providers may themselves be biased or discriminatory towards cultural, social or

ethnic minorities; or the poor quality of teaching typically available to poor children may simply not compensate enough for the opportunity costs of not working.

3.2 Conceptual tools

A number of policies and programmes specifically geared towards reaching and teaching the long-term poor have demonstrated success in the past decade. Learning from these, replicating their lessons, and scaling up where possible are challenges for the remaining period of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Closely associated with the problem of chronic poverty in education is the growing emphasis in global public policy on tackling inequality, both as a problem in its own right, but also as an obstacle to faster social progress, including on education.[4]

Interventions better tailored to educating children from chronically poor backgrounds emerged partly out of better understanding of why some children are 'hard-to-reach', vulnerable to dropout, or gain little learning while in school. These in turn reflect recent advances in thinking about and measuring poverty as a multi-dimensional, social, economic and political condition. This has brought some – but still not enough – productive convergence in thinking about the intersections between education and chronic poverty.[5] Important and practical additions to the conceptual tools include:

- The **inter-generational transmission of poverty.** Until the 2000s, the idea that children inherit their parents' poverty through the interlinked material, socio-cultural, environmental, and political conditions of their lives, was only applied to industrialised countries. Since then, it has begun to inform more systemic approaches to educating poor children in developing countries, helping to identify strategic entry points through which to prevent this inheritance. Girls' education has long been recognised as one such entry point, as more educated mothers are better at protecting their infants' nutritional and cognitive development. Intergenerational transmission frameworks provided the underlying conceptual tools for approaches such as **conditional cash transfer** (CCT) schemes, typically designed to interrupt intergenerational transmissions, and **early childhood development** interventions, which are explicitly designed to reduce the disadvantage of early childhood deprivation, to generate more equitable educational and development outcomes.[6]

- While the intergenerational transmission of poverty is about households, **marginalisation and/or social exclusion** result from wider social and political relations of discrimination and disadvantage. These extreme and enduring forms of deprivation are usually linked to membership of a socio-cultural, ethnic or occupation group minority, or remote location; people also often face exclusion or discrimination because of gender, disability or sexuality. Marginalisation is usually closely associated with chronic poverty, because marginalised groups lack the political power to challenge their treatment by wider society and to secure their rights. Education deprivation is an indicator of the severity of people's marginalisation, but also a cause and effect of it. Thinking about marginalisation and/or social exclusion has informed action to reduce stigma, target discriminatory materials and practices, and tailor provision to different needs, such as initiatives with **inclusive education** in relation to disabilities and **mother tongue learning** for minority groups.[7]

Box 2 Measuring and Tracking Educational Deprivation

Two new tools are now available to help measure educational deprivation and its relationship to chronic poverty.

The Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI), launched by the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative and the Human Development Report (HDR) in 2010, makes it possible to include measures of educational deprivation within a broader index of poverty. The MPI combines indicators of living standards, health and education (years of schooling of household members, and current school attendance of school-aged children). The MPI is an advance on the old Human Poverty Index because it makes it possible to measure deprivation of individuals rather than just the aggregate national level (as in the past). It allows measures of how many people are experiencing overlapping deprivations, and of the severity of their deprivation for each dimension. The MPI ensures that future HDRs will provide a more accurate and more detailed picture of how educational deprivation intersects with other aspects of poverty.

While the MPI makes it possible to measure the contribution of education to poverty, the Deprivation and Marginalisation in Education (DME) tool from the UNESCO EFA Global Monitoring Report now makes it possible to measure the extent of educational deprivation. Also launched in 2010, the DME captures both the extent of marginalisation with respect to education in countries, and the profile and composition of marginalised groups.

Both MPI and DME have been designed to track the progress of policies to tackle deprivation over time, and may be used as the basis for monitoring systems for addressing the intersections between chronic poverty and education.

Sources: http://www.ophi.org.uk/policy/multidimensional-poverty-index/; http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/themes/leading-the-international-agenda/efareport/dme/

3.3 Tackling the links between education and chronic poverty

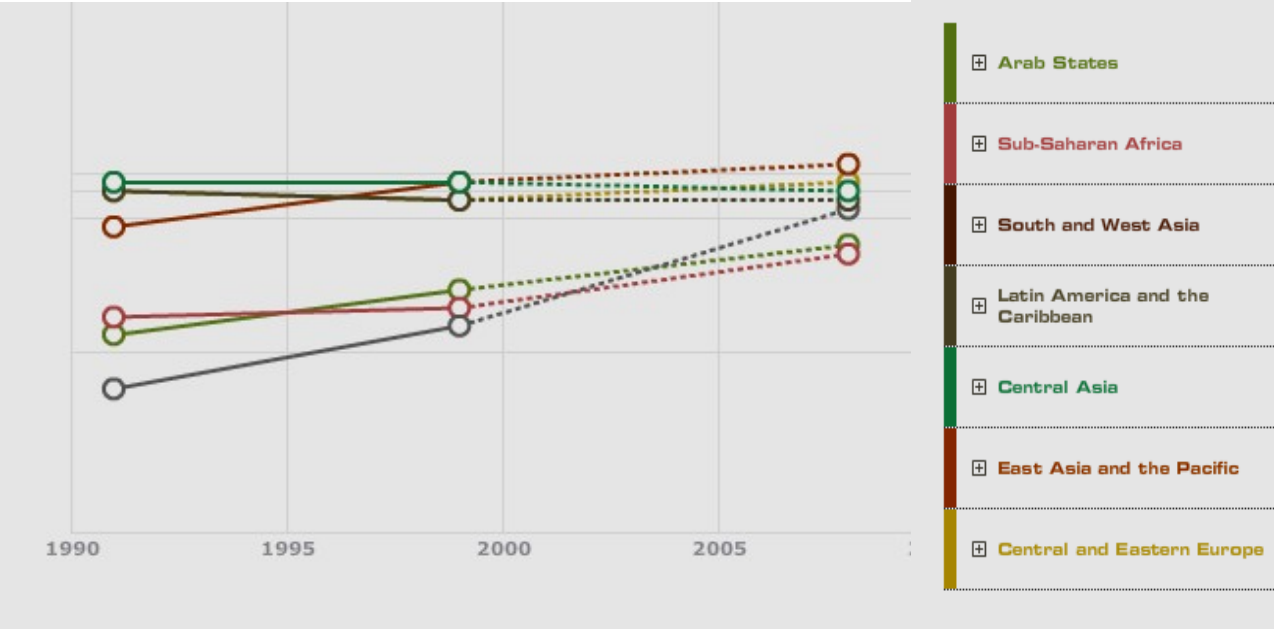
Reducing gender disadvantage among poor children

The gender gap in primary school enrolment has declined over the past 20 years (see Figure 5), and has recently improved fastest in areas where gender disparities were most acute, such as South and West Asia. The numbers of countries in which girls are disadvantaged at secondary equals those in which boys are disadvantaged; and at tertiary, overall, girls are at an advantage compared to boys.[8] However, patterns of gender disadvantage vary: in Latin America, boys are more likely to be out of school; by contrast, in northern Nigeria it is girls, and in the urban south of Nigeria it is boys who are more likely to be out of school.

The conceptual and programmatic links between poverty, gender disadvantage and education outcomes remain under-explored both in theory and practice, as a recent study of initiatives in Kenya, South Africa and in international organisations found.[9] This is a particular concern because gender inequalities tend to be more acute among poorer households,[10] and inequalities and disadvantage are often overlapping and cumulative. Most of the poor girls currently out of school are from socially marginalised and deprived groups: 43% of girls from the poorest Kurdish households in Turkey had fewer than two years of education, compared to only 6% across the country; almost all Hausa-speaking girls from poor families in Nigeria counted as ‘educationally deprived’, as many as 97% had

fewer than two years of education.[11] Because gender inequalities tend to compound the disadvantages of poverty and marginalisation, the challenge of educating poor girls is often particularly great. Just over half of the world's out-of-school children are girls, despite the extensive global and national efforts invested in reducing gender disparity in education.[12] Almost half of countries are unlikely to meet the MDG target of eliminating gender disparity in basic education by 2015.

Figure 5 Progress towards gender parity, 1991-2008



Source: UNESCO GMR statistics http://www.unesco.org/en/efareport/ddm/

Early childhood development

The single most important advance in tackling the intersection between chronic poverty and education is in understanding the importance of early childhood care and development (ECCD)[13] and the scope for effective intervention. One study found that globally, early childhood stunting and absolute poverty levels are closely associated with poor cognitive and educational performance in children, and that 200 million children under 5 were not fulfilling their potential.[14]

ECCD comprises nutrition, care, and cognitive development or learning in the pre-school period of childhood, including nutrition during pregnancy. The past decade has seen ECCD emerge as a key policy area linking education and chronic poverty, and the evidence base supporting the case for investment is growing fast. While early childhood development matters for all children, ECCD interventions are a particularly 'smart' investment for tackling chronic poverty because they are seen to cut the link with disadvantaged backgrounds, and their positive impacts are amplified into educational attainment in later childhood and beyond.

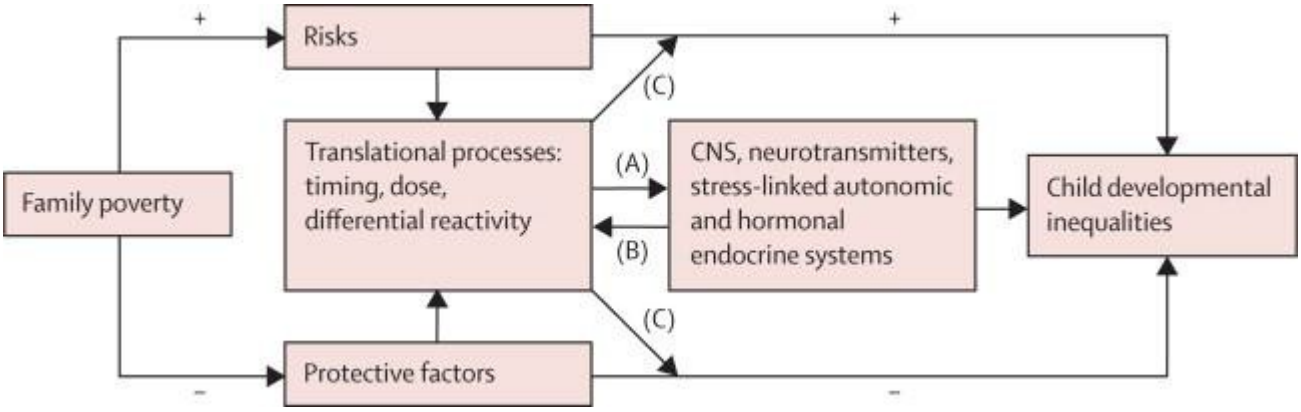
At the heart of thinking about ECCD is that brain and cognitive development is shaped by very early influences, including how genetic, biological and psychosocial factors and child behaviour influence

each other, sometimes changing brain structure, functions and behaviour. In turn, behaviour affects development. Childhood risks linked to poverty, such as lack of stimulation or excessive stress, affect brain development and functioning. Figure 6 illustrates how poverty can lead to unequal childhood cognitive developmental outcomes: poverty influences both risks and protective factors that directly and indirectly affect cognitive development. A series of recent state-of-the-art studies in *The Lancet* has set out the arguments in scientific but accessible terms:

http://www.ecdgroup.com/pdfs/Lancet%202011_papers%201%20and%202.pdf.

The evidence to date has primarily been based on developed country experiences, but a growing body of data from developing countries provides strong support for viewing ECCD as a strategic entrypoint for addressing the intersections between chronic poverty and education within development. Data on ECCD from Cambodia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Madagascar, Mozambique and Nicaragua has found that differences in cognitive development by socioeconomic status emerge very early in children's lives, and by the time they are five, the poorest children are already experiencing serious delays in their development. These findings are so consistent across the countries that they are likely to be valid for low income countries more widely.[15] One study found that adult men in Guatemala who had been enrolled in an early childhood nutrition programme earned 46% higher wages than they were otherwise likely to have done.[16]

Figure 6 From poverty to unequal child development



Source: Walker *et al* 2011.

The evidence is that investing in care, early nutrition and pre-school learning combines:

- **Direct or immediate strategies** for interrupting the inheritance of poverty: ECCD interventions in nutrition, care and early learning cut straight into the cycle of deprivation through which malnourished and unschooled mothers rear under-nourished children who are then ill-prepared for school;

- **Effective means of reducing inequalities** between richer and poorer children: under-development in early childhood is compounded and magnified into larger inequalities of cognitive ability and educational attainment in later life. In Ecuador, children from poorer households performed less well on a language test than other children, but the differences increased as children got older, meaning that the disadvantages of poverty accumulated[17];

- **Cost-effective interventions** for tackling chronic poverty: this is because addressing the causes of under-developed cognitive capacities is cheaper and faster than attempting to remedy it later, with remedial nutritional and educational action. Annual rates of return from ECCD interventions have been estimated to range from 7 to 16%.[18]

Nevertheless, investment in and action on ECCD remains at a low level, and progress is overall slow (see Box 3).

Box 3 Indicators of early childhood under-development

While much is known of the value of intervening early to boost children's cognitive development, globally, poor children have a number of disadvantages which start early and stay with them through their lives:

- More than a quarter of all children under 5 in the developing world – 171 million children - are stunted; 40% of them live in South-Central Asia, while 45% of Eastern African children are stunted
- Global enrolment in pre-primary schools increased by 40% up to 2009, but 46% of children still lack access
- Poorer children are far less likely to attend pre-primary school than their richer counterparts: in Ghana, rich children are nearly four times more likely to attend school than poor children
- Some 200 million developing country children under 5 are not meeting their full developmental potential
- OECD countries spend on average 1.6% of GDP on family services and preschool for children under 6 and 0.43% on preschools alone; Nepal, Kenya and Tajikistan spend only 0.1% on preschool, while Nicaragua and Senegal spend less than 0.02%

Sources: UNESCO 2012; Walker, Wachs et al. 2011; Abadzi 2008; Engle, Fernald et al. 2011; Gove and Wetterburg 2011

What works for poor children in ECD/ECCD?

Cutting out the link between childhood poverty and cognitive development delays involves targeting three main areas: nutrition, care, and early learning. [19]

Under-nutrition is the single greatest concern with respect to children's early cognitive development, and pregnancy nutrition and the first 1,000 days are critical for lifelong capabilities. Yet progress on nutrition has been disappointingly slow of all the MDGs, and food price volatility since 2008 has meant the situation has actually worsened as we near 2015. The 2007-08 food price spike is estimated to have kept or pushed 105 million people below the poverty line, while the 2011-12 spike did the same for around 49 million people.[20] The scale of the global food crisis has meant a stepping up of global political will to act on nutrition, including in 2010 the establishment of the 'Scaling Up Nutrition' movement, to which education policy and practice on ECCD can usefully connect (http://www.scalingupnutrition.org/).

One review found that known approaches like complementary feeding, micronutrients and breastfeeding could reduce total stunting globally by more than one third, at a cost of only $10 billion per year. Some interventions seen as both effective and low-cost include providing micronutrients, such as folic acid and iron supplements during pregnancy, and Vitamin A (deficiencies of which account for 6% of child deaths alone).[21] Providing micronutrient supplements in pregnancy lead to increased birthweight, some benefits to infants' motor (in Bangladesh and Tanzania) and mental (in China) development, compared to iron and folic acid supplements alone. In Peru, zinc supplements had no effects on cognitive, social, or behavioural development in later childhood, but Nepalese children whose mothers received iron and folate during pregnancy had better intelligence quotient (IQ), executive, and motor skills. [22] In Chile, children aged 6 and 12 months who had iron-deficiency

anaemia benefited significantly in terms of their cognitive and social-emotional scores from oral iron supplements and home visits from professional educators.[23]

Although some catch-up is possible, the first two years are formative. Interventions to improve school performance through interventions to address micronutrient deficiency, parasites or infectious diseases have also had significant successes for young school-aged children. In India, an experiment in the Delhi slums with a group of children of whom 69% had anaemia and 30% worms found that treatment significantly increased children's weight, pre-school participation rose by nearly 6%, and school absenteeism dropped by one-fifth; these gains were highest in the poorest areas.[24] A comparison of the costs and benefits of a deworming and a free school uniform programme highlights how cost effective early interventions can be. The deworming programme, including the positive spillover effects from lower infestation in untreated schools nearby, increased school participation for $3.50 per year, compared to (an estimated) $99 per year added for free school uniforms.[25]

Being enrolled in pre-primary education is associated with more developed cognitive and social skills, more readiness for school, and better school performance in the early and sometimes longer-term. Effective programmes included structured pre-reading programmes in Bangladesh and Costa Rica, formal rather than informal preschools in China and Cambodia, teacher-training in Jamaica, child-centred or interactive teacher–child instruction methods in Bangladesh and east Africa, and interactive radio or audio instruction for teachers in Zanzibar. Critically, the effects tend to be largest for children from more disadvantaged backgrounds, so the returns in terms of educating the chronic poor are considerably higher.[26] Of vital importance here is the issue of quality: these effects are mainly found where pre-primary schools are formal, institution-based and where instruction and other inputs are of a high quality (see Box 4).[27] Any interventions that support women's roles in providing care – feeding families, sourcing food, fuel or water, looking after children and the elderly – are likely

Box 4 Parents on pre-school: quality and transitions matter

Research from the Young Lives longitudinal study found that the parents of Lupe in Peru worried about the transition from pre-school to primary school, and needed more support making the transition:

It's like she's on her own, not like in pre-school, it's completely different .... In pre-school they also take care of her, they looked after her. Here [in primary school] they don't, here the teacher stays in the classroom, she looks at them for a while but when all the children are together in the school-yard. Then she [Lupe] could tumble and fall, she might be pushed and hit… so many things can happen during the break time.

In Andhra Pradesh, the concerns focused on the poor quality of the state-provided *anganwadi* or pre-school:

"What is there. She [the anganwadi worker] doesn't know anything. She doesn't know which children are registered in the anganwadi and which are not. ... She comes to anganwadi, stays for some time with the children who turn up on that day, and then leaves. Sometimes she doesn't come. Only 'ayah' [the helper] manages… They don't even look after the children. If she comes that's it, they sit … and both of them talk with each other.

Source: pages 11 and 16 in Woodhead 2009

to reduce the time and effort burden of care, to improve its quality and free up time for girls to study and learn (see Box 6).

While much is known about what needs to be delivered, the challenge has often been how to deliver the necessary care. Programmes providing parenting support to encourage and teach stimulating interaction and play with infants, in groups, homes or institutions have been found to be highly effective, particularly where these are delivered through parent-and-child rather than parent only schemes (i.e. training or information). As with pre-primary programmes, the quality of the staff and their training mattered considerably for how well these performed; as did structured opportunities for parents with children, and for feedback.[28]

Box 5 Resources on early childhood development

Early Childhood Development is a theme under WHO's social determinants of health programme. Resources include a framework for assessing the environments for early childhood development: http://www.who.int/social_determinants/themes/earlychilddevelopment/en/index.html

The Canadian Centre for Excellence on Early Childhood Development (CEECD) gathers resources on ECD, including in Portuguese and Spanish: http://www.excellence-earlychildhood.ca/home.asp?lang=EN, and produces the Encylopaedia on ECD: http://www.child-encyclopedia.com/en-ca/home.html

The Early Childhood Care and Development theme under education in sub-Saharan Africa at the World Bank contains key resources on African ECD, including newsletters and the Handbook of African Educational Theories and Development: http://go.worldbank.org/I2IWKZN0H0

The Bernard Von Leer Foundation, one of the major philanthropic funders of ECD programmes, publishes a journal and working papers and reviews and evaluations of its funded programmes: http://www.bernardvanleer.org/English/Home/Publications.html

The Early Childhood Development Virtual University at the University of Victoria publishes materials, including programme evaluations, video and learning and advocacy materials: http://www.ecdvu.org/publications.php

3.4 Priority areas for future action

Water and sanitation

Future research and policy could usefully take into account how the provision of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities, particularly toilets, affects children's health, girls' attendance and performance. Separate toilets for girls have been promoted as a promising option for improving retention and attainment, particularly for older girls. Yet a recent systematic review found that while there was too little evidence to arrive at robust conclusions, separate toilets for girls were likely to be a necessary condition but not sufficient condition to impact on educational outcomes. The study identified a need for evidence about the overall effects of WASH facilities on educational and health

outcomes, to study the process through which changes in toilet provision and conditions change behavior and thereby outcomes.[29]

Conflict

Reaching and teaching children in conflict and post-conflict zones remains a significant policy challenge relevant to chronic poverty. Some 28 million children, around 42% of the world's out-of-school children, are in conflict affected areas. Conflict is associated with high levels of income vulnerability and human insecurity as well as education poverty. And as figure 7 suggests, wealth and gender disparities may also be exacerbated by conflict: in the Democratic Republic of Congo, for instance, the richest urban boys on average have more than three times more years of schooling than the poorest rural girls. Gender disparities are more acute among poorer and rural boys and girls, although not always in favour of boys: the richest rural girls have around 50% more years of school than their male counterparts. These sharp differences highlight the distortionary effects of conflict on different children's schooling careers.

Efforts to reach groups affected by conflict need to combine lessons about what has worked in more stable settings, with the flexibility to respond to insecurity and the threat of violence. This is so because schools are often targets during conflict: in Afghanistan and Pakistan, schools have been deliberately targeted by the Taliban since the 2003 war; several thousand across both countries have been bombed or attacked, most recently concentrated in the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa region.

One challenge is to enable poor girls to access education in insecure, poor areas highly vulnerable to armed violence, and often featuring customary forms of discrimination against women and girls, extreme poverty, and raised risks of gender-based violence. Conflict zones also feature significant challenges of addressing destructive and violent models of masculinity among boys, and one of the policy challenges is to offer positive alternative pathways to male adulthood in contexts where male leaders may be armed and violent. Socialising and reintegrating survivors and child perpetrators of conflict into society is an additional area of focus.

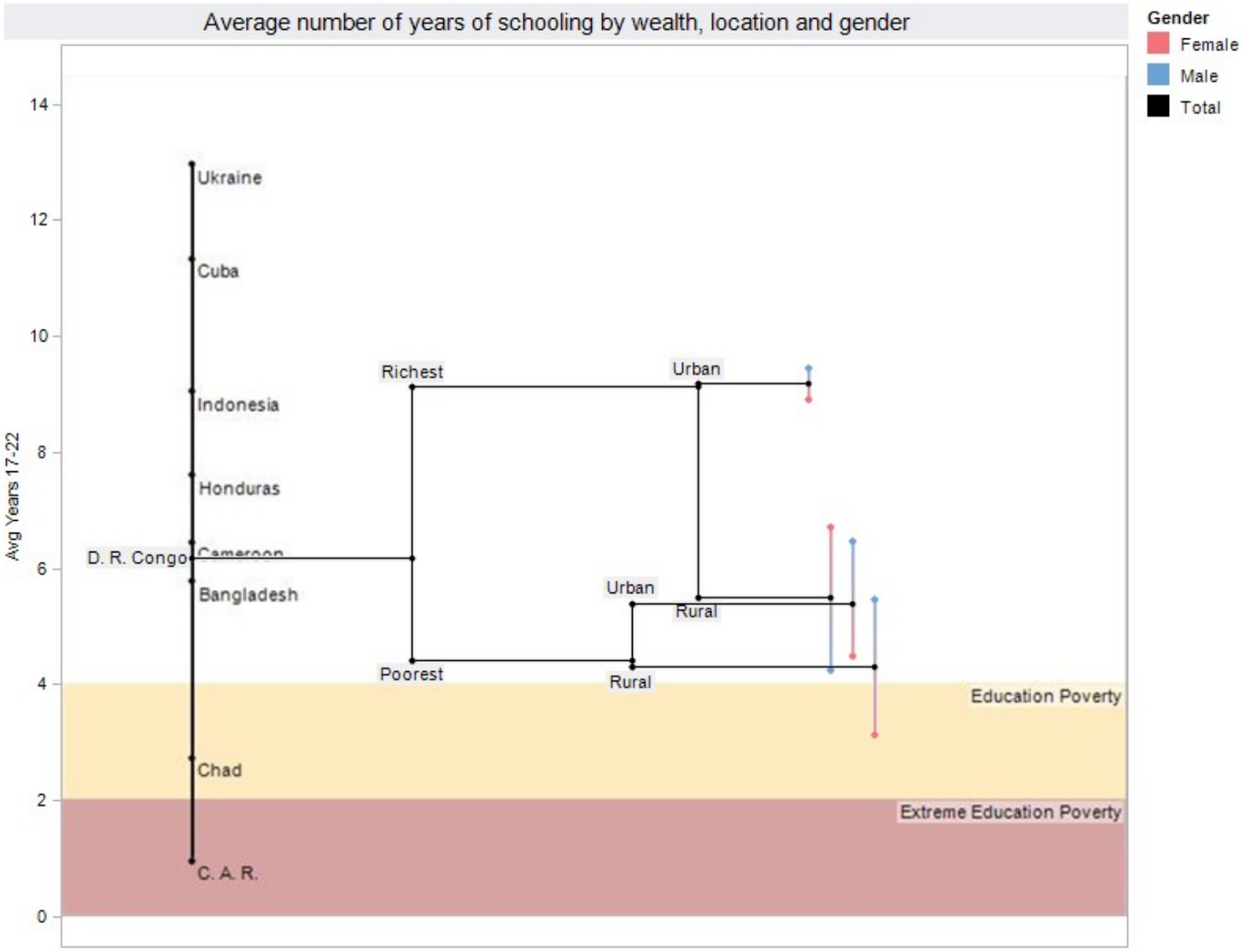
Areas for intervention relating to conflict are not limited to protecting children and schools from the effects of conflict: evidence from northern Uganda also found that education increased the resilience with which people responded to and recovered from conflict.[30] Men who had experienced the conflict there explained that:

> *Education is more important in protecting you from bad events than land, cattle, good connections or relatives working in town. It provides you with a salary and good connections and networks outside the community [...] People who are educated have an easy life. They are employed and can save money in the bank.*
>
> *The LRA [Lord's Resistance Army] war clearly showed the difference between the educated and the uneducated. During the conflict, most of the educated who were already living and working outside the district remained safe. Those who were educated and were within [the district] quickly ran away and sought refugee with someone living outside Uganda while others went to other districts and to the city. It's mainly the uneducated who stayed behind to suffer the consequences of the conflict and the floods that followed the conflict.*[31]

Above all, the key challenges here continue to be that of financing: conflict-affected countries typically spend far more on arms and the military than other countries, and this has the effect of crowding out social expenditures. Pakistan spends nearly eight times as much on the military as it does on education, for instance. Chad, with some of the worst education and human development indicators in the world, spends four times more on defence than on primary education.[32] And humanitarian aid to education was only US$149 million or 2% of total humanitarian aid in 2009.[33] The 2010 UNESCO

GMR calculated that it would take only 6 days of rich countries' spending on defence and arms to meet the US$16bn funding gap to meet the Education For All targets.

Figure 7 Education poverty in the DRC



Source: UNESCO GMR Deprivation and Marginalisation in Education index

(http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/ED/GMR/html/dme-3.html)

One recent development has been the *Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack* (GCPEA), which since 2010 has worked to strengthen the UN's monitoring and reporting mechanism (MRM). It is also working to develop programmatic responses to protect schools from involvement in conflict[34]. One means of action to protect education from conflict is to strengthen accountability, through the naming and shaming of parties that actively recruit children as fighters, who attack schools and hospitals, use rape as a weapon of war and abduct children. Tools specifically geared towards rapid and accurate assessment of educational needs during crises can also aid education planning in conflict zones.[35]

Quality and equity in pre-primary school

The rapid rise in pre-primary school enrolments – up 40% in the decade to 2008, highlights growing parental and policy interest in this sector. Yet poor quality unregulated pre-primary schooling may not provide safe childcare, and is likely to make only limited contributions to early learning and stronger cognitive capacities. Inevitably, higher quality provision is associated with higher cost, so that there are signs of growing inequities in access to pre-primary school in developing countries around the world. A focus on high quality, affordable and accessible pre-primary schools for poor and marginalised children is a clear policy priority for addressing the intersections between chronic poverty and education. Recent evidence based on a randomised control trial (RCT) evaluation of Save the Children's preschool programme in Mozambique found that a relatively low cost scheme (US$2.47 per month) lead to positive child development outcomes and increased school readiness. However, the study was of a small programme, and the demand-side constraints to participation mean that such positive results would not necessarily be gained from a programme on a larger scale.[36] Close attention needs to be paid to evaluating such programmes in developing countries and in particular where these serve chronically poor communities.

As Box 6 illustrates, gender-sensitive support to infant care also has the potential to address some of the gendered constraints to education among poor girls.

Box 6 Girls' unpaid care roles and ECCD: strategic synergies

What appear to be cultural preferences to keep girls at home may actually be the more practical matter of the demand for girls' labour to clean, cook, and care for children or older people, or gather fuel or water. One study in the rural districts of Tharako and Kajiado and the informal settlements of Nairobi in Kenya found a direct trade-off between girls' care work and their schooling:

> *If there is a baby to be taken care of, it will be the girl to do so – at the expense of her education.*

Many girls take their younger siblings to school with them, although it is against the rules:

> *But teachers also realize that forbidding girls to bring siblings increased the girls' dropout rate, so they allowed them.*
>
> *My sister is my mother's assistant. She even takes the baby to hospital. She also goes looking for water, where she might have to queue the whole day.*

As unpaid care work is unmeasured in most official statistics and girls' domestic work is typically excluded from child labour surveys, how much time girls spend on care and its impacts on their schooling are not known. Time-use surveys can help identify how girls' domestic responsibilities are allocated, so that education provision can be better shaped to fit or alleviate – rather than add to – these workloads. A study in Zambia found that if woodlots were within 30 minutes of the homestead and water sources within 400 metres, women and girls would save 125 to 664 hours a year on collecting water, and 119 to 610 hours a year on collecting firewood.

If designed to be sensitive to women's and girls' responsibilities for the work of care, support to early childhood care and education programmes should reduce mothers' dependence on girls' help, and have positive effects on girls' attendance and performance in school.

Sources: See UNICEF 2005; Kenyan quotations from Elimu Yetu Coalition, 2005, pp. 109 Elimu Yetu Coalition 2005; Blackden and Wodon 2006; Abadzi 2008; also Abadzi, Crouch et al. 2005; Budlender 2007; Abadzi 2008.

4. Pro-poor schools

The last decade has seen a rapid growth of innovations designed to improve outcomes through changing what happens within national and local education systems and schools and classrooms. This section gathers evidence of what has worked to enable poor students to enroll, persist and perform better, including:

- Reforms that successfully balanced wider access with quality;
- What has worked to make schools more accountable to poor people;
- How and where wider choice has improved outcomes for poor children; and
- Efforts to improve the inclusiveness and strengthen the rights of marginalised children in schools.

4.1 Wider access with quality

A common concern is that rapid increases in the number of school places will have adverse effects on quality or educational outcomes. The perceived decline in quality is most closely associated with unplanned expansionary policies, as, for example, occurred in Uganda and Malawi. In countries where expansion was not supported by planning, a bulge cohort, often including students over and under the official school age crowded into classrooms poorly equipped to enable their learning, and teachers were rapidly recruited, sometimes by lowering formal qualifications criteria or training.[37] In some countries, the expansion was also inadequately resourced, although financing was a necessary rather than sufficient condition for successful reform: allocations and efficiency in public spending mattered as much, if not more, than absolute levels of spending on education.[38]

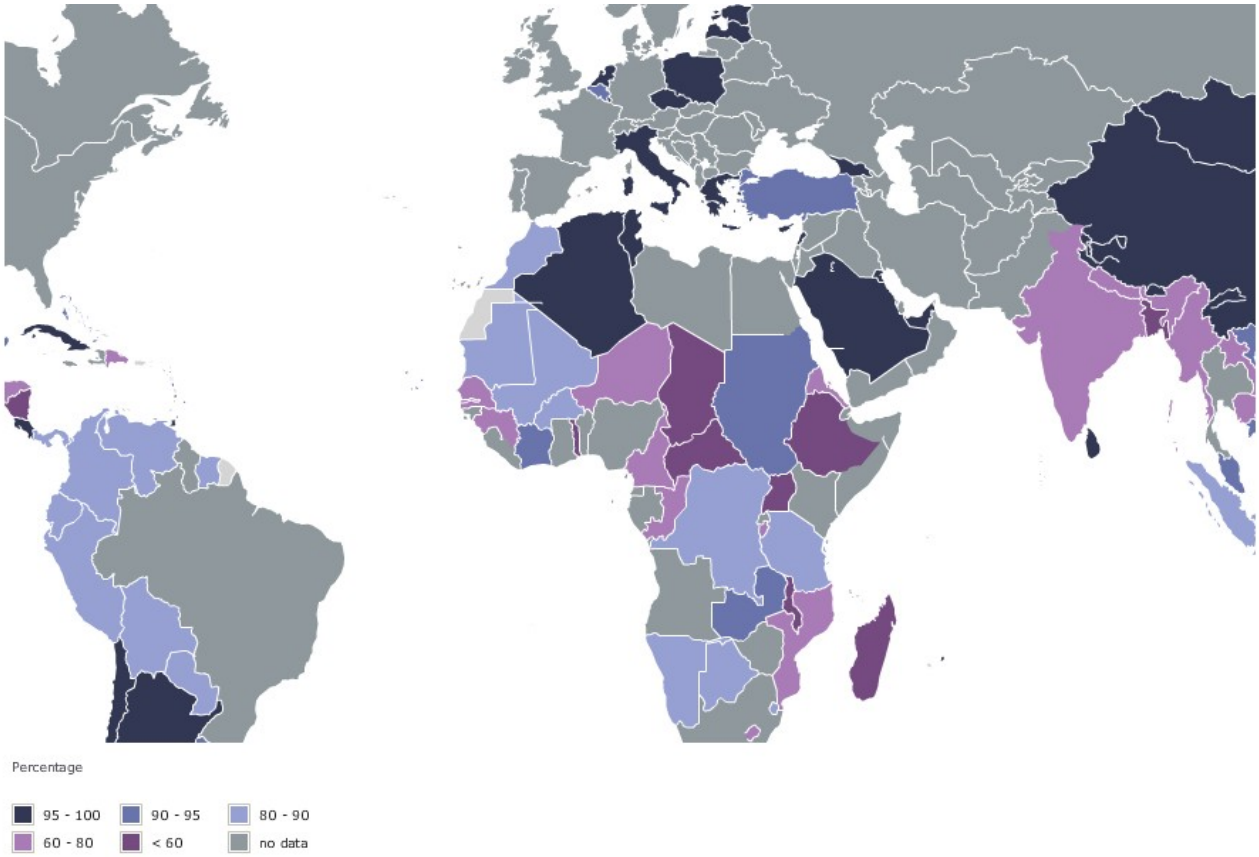
In practice, the picture of how quality or educational outcomes have fared during the drive for Universal Primary Education (UPE) is mixed. Given that the academic and developmental disadvantages faced by children from poorer backgrounds means they are likely to do less well in school than better-off children, extending school access to large numbers of poorer children is likely to lead to lower attainment levels, on average.

What does poor quality education mean in practice? One example comes from the recent *Early Grade Reading Assessment* in Northern Nigeria, which found that after three years of school, most students did not have the basic reading skills necessary for later learning, including:

- More than half of pupils in Bauchi state and nearly three quarters of pupils in Sokoto state in Northern Nigeria could not identify a single letter sound;
- On average, pupils could correctly identify the initial sound of 1 out of 10 words, and more than 80% scored 0;
- More than 70% of pupils in both states could not correctly read any syllables;
- Seven out of 10 pupils in Bauchi and more than 8 pupils out of 10 in Sokoto could not read any words correctly in one minute.[39]

These stark findings indicate that by the end of primary, a large majority of children in this region will be unable to read, and therefore progress with their learning. This demonstrates clearly that failure in the early years sets children up for failure in later years, and highlights the limited value of additional years of schooling in contexts where learning is so limited.

Figure 8 Primary school survival rates, 2007



Source: UNESCO GMR EFA statistics, http://www.unesco.org/en/efareport/ddm/; data for 2007

Several countries have struggled to ensure basic quality indicators keep pace with expansion: after rapidly increasing its net enrolment rates (NER) in the 1990s, Malawi failed to improve its survival rates, so dropout remains a serious concern there. In the Philippines and Madagascar, survival rates actually worsened with raised NER.[40] Figure 8 shows survival rates across much of the developing world, illustrating that it is not only in much of sub-Saharan Africa but also across South Asia that between one-third and one-fifth of children who make it into school fail to complete primary. Repetition rates are also high in many places: 11 sub-Saharan African countries have grade 1 repetition rates of over 20%; for 9 of these countries, one-fifth of children also repeat grade 2. Grade repetition is expensive and inefficient, and has adverse consequences for equity and learning among poor children.[41]

Yet in several countries, educational attainments - measured in terms of survival and retention - have improved as provision widened. This means that policies of increasing enrolment alongside improving quality – reducing dropout and repetition and increasing survival rates through the primary school cycle – can work. A particularly good example of this is Tanzania, where planners and policymakers applied the lessons of the failed 1980s' effort to universalise primary education. After abolishing primary school fees in 2001, the Government of United Republic of Tanzania took on a programme of tackling access and quality simultaneously, through increasing public spending, from 3 to 4.5% of GDP between 2000 and 2005; adding schools and teachers - 30,000 more classrooms and 32,000 more teachers in the early 2000s; double shifts, to make it possible to teach the bulge cohort properly, and school grants to pay for teaching and learning materials and staff development.[42] Civil society

activism raised popular awareness of the issues and ensured education remained a high national priority, for instance when the civil society organisation HakiElimu conducted research on the conditions of teachers that led to a national debate.[43]

Broader lessons about how some countries have managed to raise quality while expanding access include that:

- Strong political will backed by good working partnerships between governments, donors and civil society are the foundation for sustainable, properly resourced policies;[44]
- Better education is the most effective means of strengthening demand for school;
- Policies need to focus on enabling progress through the system and on learning outcomes, rather than on counting pupil numbers;
- Improving textbook quality and supply, teacher training and support, keeping class sizes to a conducive level, and teaching in an appropriate language are the key elements.

Table 2 Trends in essential teaching and learning materials in SACMEQ schools, 2000-07' highlights some trends in provision of essential supplies in 15 African schools.

Table 2 Trends in essential teaching and learning materials in SACMEQ schools, 2000-07

TREND: 2000 - 2007	TEACHING & LEARNING MATERIALS						EQUIPMENT & FACILITIES					
	Teacher Guide (Reading)	Teacher Guide (Math)	Dictionary	Exercise Book & Pen/Pencil & Ruler	Own Reading Textbooks	Own Math Textbooks	Writing Board	Pupil Sitting & Writing Place	Teacher Table & Chair	Library (Class/School)	Radio	Water
Botswana	▶	▲	▶	▶	▼	▼	▶	▶	▶	▶	▼	▶
Kenya	▶	▲	△	▶	▽	▽	▶	▶	▽	▽	▲	▲
Lesotho	▶	▶	▼	▶	▶	▲	▶	▶	▶	▲	▼	▶
Malawi	▶	▲	▶	▲	▼	▼	▽	▶	▶	▼	▶	▶
Mauritius	▲	▲	▶	▽	▶	▽	△	▶	△	▶	▶	▽
Mozambique	▲	▲	△	▶	▶	▽	▼	▲	▽	▼	▶	▶
Namibia	▶	▲	▼	▶	▼	▼	▽	▶	▶	▲	▲	▶
Seychelles	▶	▲	▶	▲	▶	▼	▶	▶	▶	▶	▶	▶
South Africa	▲	▲	△	▲	▶	▶	▽	▶	▼	▽	▲	▶
Swaziland	▶	▲	▶	△	▲	▲	▶	▶	▶	▼	▶	△
Tanzania	▲	▲	▲	▲	▶	▶	▶	▶	▲	△	▲	▼
Uganda	▶	▲	▶	△	▶	▶	▽	▲	▽	▽	▼	▲
Zambia	▽	▼	▲	▲	△	▶	▼	▽	▶	▶	▲	▽
Zanzibar	▲	▲	△	▲	▲	▲	▶	▲	▲	▼	▶	▲
Zimbabwe	××	××	××	××	××	××	××	××	××	××	××	××
SACMEQ	△	▲	▶	△	▶	▶	▶	▶	▶	▽	△	▶

Note:

▲ Improved by more than 10 points
△ Improved by 5 to 10 points
▼ Deteriorated by more than 10 points
▽ Deteriorated by 5 to 10 points
▶ Remained the same (less than 5 points change)
×× Data not available for either SACMEQ II (2000) or SACMEQ III (2007) or both

Source: Hungi, Makuwa et al. 2011

Box 7 Time to read: the importance of early literacy

Making sure children can read early on, preferably by the end of second grade, is crucial for their learning, perhaps more so than how many years they finally spend in school. This is because making sense of a sentence means decoding it in around 12 seconds: fluent reading is the foundation without which the more complex lessons of higher grades cannot be absorbed. But in some countries, most children cannot read *a single word* in a simple paragraph in the language of instruction by the end of second grade. Children from chronically poor backgrounds face particular challenges because their parents are less likely to be able to read. Research into literacy pedagogy with disadvantaged Indian children uncovered this exchange with teachers:

Teacher 1: *It is not possible for us to do revision with all of them. The grasping power of all the children is not the same. . . no!!*

...

Teacher 3: *We have to teach them personally because nobody teaches them at home. At home they don't do anything. Next day they come back the same. They don't even open their bags. They go home and forget what they have learnt ... How can it increase? We should also have that much time. That is why some remain kachha (unripe or raw). Why do they remain kachha? When sufficient time is not there for each one of them.* (Dyer 2008: 244).

So what can be done to improve early grade reading?

A. Focus firmly on reading (and mathematics) in the first two years, to ensure a solid grounding in the basics.

B. Increase time-on-task: time spent learning is a good indicator that governments can use to target absenteeism, reduce closures and use classroom time more productively.

C. Give children their own textbooks: they will learn faster if they can read and review at home.

D. Provide remedial classes to children falling behind.

E. Apply simple, robust tools like Early Grade Reading Assessments (EGRAs) that parents, teachers and policymakers can all understand, to monitor and measure progress.

The increasing use of EGRAs demonstrates the value of a good monitoring tool in guiding policies and programmes and tracking their impacts. EGRAs are quick (15 minutes), intuitive tests of reading speed and fluency now being used in around 100 countries. They have been used – with greater and lesser success – to influence national education diagnostics, literacy and primary school policies, and to raise awareness to increase pressure for accountability on governments for education policy reforms.

An adapted EGRA – known as a 'fluency battery' – has been used by the Indian NGO Pratham to monitor its *Read India* campaign, which in 2007-8 reached almost 30 million Indian children. The campaign combined participatory teaching and learning activities for ability-appropriate groups. A recent evaluation found *Read India* had strong positive effects on disadvantaged children through its volunteer summer camps, but limited or no effects on regular classroom instruction. The reason they had little effect in regular classroom settings? Mainly that too little time was spent on instruction in classrooms for disadvantaged children to gain sustained benefits from reading support.

Sources: Banerjee, Cole et al. 2005; Abadzi 2006; Abadzi 2008; Dyer 2008; Gove and Cvelich 2011; Gove and Wetterburg 2011; Bruns, Evans et al. 2012; Pratham evaluation by Banerjee and Walton at the J Poverty Action Lab: http://www.povertyactionlab.org/publication/what-helps-children-learn-evaluation-prathams-read-india-program; also Banerji *et al* n.d.; Cerdan-Infantes and Vermeersch 2007

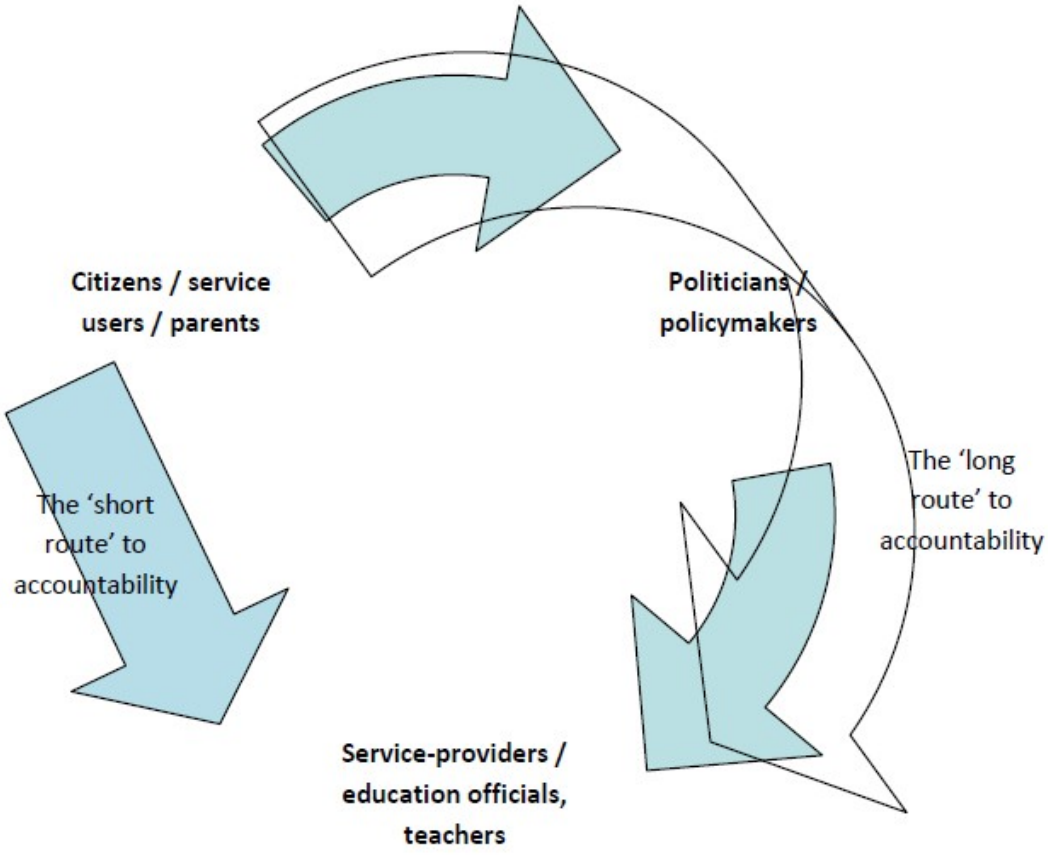
For EGRA instruments, data and multimedia from USAID: https://www.eddataglobal.org/

4.2 Voice, choice and control: school accountability

Information for accountability

Governance failures are increasingly accepted as the main source of problems with public service delivery. Specifically, the weakness of mechanisms for ensuring accountability between citizens and service-users and policymakers and providers is acknowledged to be at the heart of failures to improve public education services. Delivering services to poor people presents particular accountability challenges: poor and marginalised parents and students must overcome social, economic and political power inequalities to hold school and education management and governance systems to account. One set of efforts to short-circuit these inequities has been to equip poor parents with information about how services are performing, and the spaces in which to call powerful policymakers and service providers to account. A range of social accountability initiatives and experiments have been tested to do this across developing countries in the past decade. A second broad set of approaches has been to decentralise, by bringing the management of core school functions closer to their primary users: the school-based management movement has similarly attempted to strengthen accountability 'downward', to parents and communities.[45]

Figure 9 Relationships of accountability in education



Source: adapted from World Bank (2003)

An enduringly influential idea behind the thinking about social accountability is that services for poor people can be improved sustainably if relationships of accountability between citizens or service-users, policymakers or politicians, and service-providers (in this instance, education officials, teachers and other 'frontline' school staff) can be strengthened. Specifically, citizens or service-users should have information about how well their services are being provided, and they should be able to use this information to demand answers and action when provision falls short. In practice, social accountability mechanisms lack the teeth of official systems, as citizen user-groups typically cannot fire teachers - although they may withhold their votes from politicians who fail to deliver effective education policies. Social accountability mechanisms are reasonably effective at getting answers from officials and providers. However, evidence indicates that they tend to work most effectively when they enable collective rather than individual action by citizens and service-users. Mechanisms may also be equipped with the power to enforce action, for example by triggering sanctions such as withholding teacher salary payments, firing staff or controlling school grants. However, the evidence is that grievance mechanisms are typically under-used, particularly by poor people, and even in high income countries.[46]

Table 3 Impact evaluations of accountability interventions

Programme	Type of intervention	Results
Chile school rankings	Publicising information about top-performing schools contrasted with schools serving similar groups	No effects on learning outcomes or practices
Uganda newspaper campaigns	Using media to publicise amounts of timing of school grants	Reduced leakage and increased learning and enrolment
Pakistan report cards	School performance data disseminated to parents, teachers and school administrators	Improved learning outcomes in public and poor-performing private schools; fees drop in high performing private schools
India three state study	Raising awareness of the roles of school management committees	More awareness, some impacts on learning outcomes
Liberia Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA)	Disseminating EGRA results, training teachers in reading instruction	Large impacts of combined programmes, but not from information only component

Source: Bruns, Filmer et al. 2011

There are two routes to strengthening accountability relations in the World Bank's 2003-04 formulation (see Figure 9). The first is the two-part 'long route', through which citizens vote and otherwise influence politicians to make policies that deliver services they want. Politicians in turn establish policies and mandate administrations to deliver those services, monitor their performance and hold them to account through the administrative system. The second is the 'short route', through which citizens and users directly influence the services they receive, by what they choose to use and through their feedback.

To date, optimism about the prospects for improving the governance of education systems through school-based management, social accountability mechanisms and the exercise of choice over types of service provider (Section 4.3, below) has focused on strengthening relationships of accountability through the more direct 'short route'. Efforts to strengthen accountability of service providers to parents has involved trying giving parents and communities more information over what goes on in schools, including how resources are spent and managed, teacher attendance, and student and teacher performance. In addition to the tools with which to monitor what goes on in schools, social accountability mechanisms and school-based management approaches have also involved organising parents and communities to claim better services, often through School Managing Committees, parent-teacher associations or other 'user groups' at district or provincial levels.

Box 8 Social accountability: when is information power?

The evidence that social accountability tools improve education outcomes is mixed, but examples show such tools can have the power to bring about the intermediate goal of improved information about system performance. Common features of effective accountability interventions include that their champions:

- build up their credibility over time: information is rarely a quick fix;
- use robust participatory methodologies and data: the information must reflect the realities of the experience of education services;
- have a reputation for integrity and autonomy from politics.

Initiatives to improve information about spending on education include **public expenditure tracking surveys** which in Uganda and Bangladesh uncovered system-wide corruption, leakage and inefficiencies, leading to design changes. In Malawi, the Civil Society Coalition for Quality Basic Education has been **monitoring education budgets** since 2002, pushing the Government into increasing allocations to priority education sectors and challenging it to account for its spending. In Kenya, the NGO Muslims for Human Rights (MUHURI) has been using **community social audits** to check how constituency development funds - most of which are spent on education projects – are actually being used. MUHURI recently succeeded in getting members of parliament to open their books to public scrutiny and uncovered poor quality projects, leakages and other fund misuses.

Social accountability tools also improve information about what is happening inside schools. In the Philippines, the **participatory community monitoring** programme 'Check My School' uses digital technology including Facebook and Twitter as well as mapping and mobilising communities (offline and online) to report problems with school facilities and other issues directly to the central education authorities. Schools involved in 'Check My School' report that the education department is more responsive to claims for repairs and facilities backed by validated evidence, including photographs. A **school and student report card** intervention in Pakistan found that it improved learning outcomes in poor performing schools and led to lower fees in higher performing private schools. Yet as a well-known study in India found, **providing communities with information** about the accountability systems available (such as School Managing Committees) had no impact: the obstacles to people's participation in holding education providers to account cannot be reduced to a lack of information.

Sources: Banerjee, Banerji et al. 2008; Hanushek and Woessmann 2009 http://www.checkmyschool.org/; IBP impact case studies; http://internationalbudget.org/ibp_publication_categories/case-studies-methodologies-campaigns- and-impacts/; McNeil and Mumvuma 2006

While there has been considerable optimism about such activities, it is not easy to show how and whether they result in concrete improvements in educational outcomes. One reason is that the nature of education services means that they cannot be easily monitored from the outside, and quality must to a significant degree depend on the full set of motivations, incentives and ethos of service provision within the profession. Education service provision is discretionary, because teachers must use their own discretion in decisions about day-to-day teaching; variable, as teaching must be customised according to the students, class size, ability ranges etc.; and transaction-intensive, involving numerous regular interactions and relationships between teachers and students (and parents).[47]

Box 9 Social accountability resources

Online social accountability tools relevant to education and chronic poverty include:

Accountability Initiative is an Indian research initiative to develop and share lessons about innovations in social accountability. Its flagship PAISA social sector project tracks school spending as part of the ASER survey. Useful resources and links to other projects, research and tools: http://www.accountabilityindia.in/

The website of the Africa branch of the World Bank Institute's Affiliated Network for Social Accountability hosts a collection of tools relevant to tackling chronic poverty through education, including on budgeting for African children, and a guide for civil society organisations working on education budgets: http://www.ansa-africa.net/index.php/toolkits_and_methodologies/

Hosted by CIVICUS, Participatory Governance Exchange has a collection of tools for participatory planning, budgeting and M&E for public service delivery: http://www.pgexchange.org/

The South Africa-based African democracy institute website includes resources on social accountability from their work across the continent: http://www.idasa.org/our_products/resources/

While it is possible, then, to monitor whether teachers are present in ways that encourage students to attend – as the use of time-stamped digital photography has shown[48] – monitoring the quality of the teaching they provide while there is not amenable to quick fixes.

School-based management reforms: increasing control

Efforts to bring the management of schools closer to their users by decentralising decisions about their management and resourcing have been increasingly prominent in the past decade. In a parallel development, private schools have emerged in large numbers in some developing countries, often providing low-cost options where state schools are absent or of very low quality. Both of these shifts - the school-based management reform agenda and the growth of private schools - are seen to have the potential to improve educational access and quality for poor children; school-based management through devolving control, and private schooling by increasing choice. Both work in similar ways to information for accountability interventions: by targeting the 'short route' relationships of accountability between schools, parents and pupils, they are presumed to increase the incentives of teachers to perform well and ensure what is taught is relevant and appropriate. The theory of school-based management reforms is that they work by:

increasing choice and participation, giving citizens a stronger voice, making information about school performance widely available, and strengthening the rewards to schools for delivering effective services to the poor and penalizing those who fail to deliver.[49]

Other benefits of decentralising decisions about education provision often mentioned are presumed to include increased efficiency, partly because of the better fit with local needs and preferences, and closer scrutiny of resources over which people have greater local ownership. Bringing control over governance down to the community level, it is also supposed that poor and marginalised people may be able to participate more effectively, so that there may also be equity benefits.

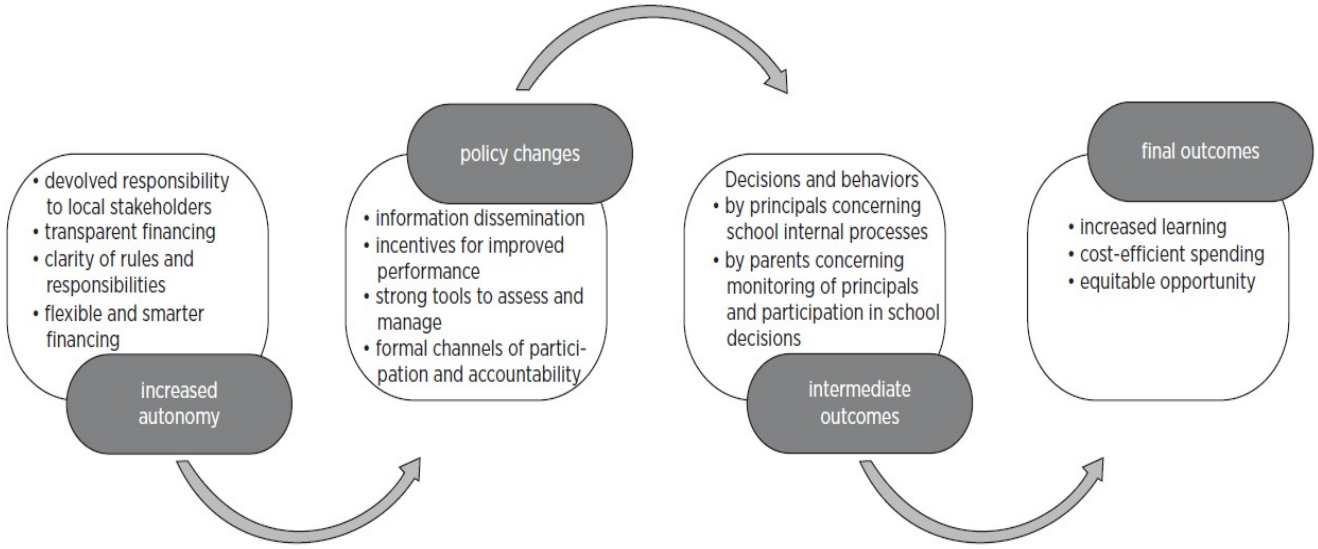
School-based management reforms have taken a range of different forms in different contexts, but generally involve devolving control over key school management decisions, including the allocation of spending, human resource management, curriculum development, procurement of teaching and learning materials, the maintenance of facilities and equipment, and monitoring teacher performance and education outcomes. In some settings, the reforms have permitted some autonomy within clearly defined limits. More ambitious schemes typically devolve power over aspects of staff recruitment and management; others promote private or community management of all aspects of schools; and at the extreme end, reforms encourage and support parents to start their own schools, as in the Charter School movement in the US and the 'free school' movement in the UK.

In developing countries, initiatives in this area have grown rapidly in number. A recent review identified reforms ranging from 'weak' (school councils are established but mainly play an advisory role) to 'strong' (almost full control by councils, parents and administrators) in six LAC, three SE Asian, and six sub-Saharan African countries, all but one since the 1990s.[50] School-based management reforms have enjoyed considerable donor support: some 11% of education projects supported by the World Bank between 2000 and 2006 had a school-based management reform component.[51] At one end of the spectrum, reforms have emerged out of demands by marginalised groups for more control over what their children were taught and how. An example of this is the movement among the Quechua people in Bolivia in the 1990s, which ultimately led to legislative and policy shifts that resulted in more autonomy within the public education system, and gave priority to indigenous language teaching.[52] In other settings, the effort has been driven from above, with the aim of gaining the benefits of increased efficiency and performance associated with successful decentralisation. Some school-based management reforms have covered a large proportion of schools: El Salvador's Educación con Participación de la Comunidad (EDUCO) programme accounts for about 37% of rural basic educational enrolment, providing the main schooling option for 80% of the poorest municipalities.

What are the effects of school-based management reforms on children from chronically poor backgrounds? Given a). the complexity and variability of the processes; b). the importance of the social, economic and political context in determining outcomes; c). the paucity of robust evaluations; d). the challenges of attributing impacts on educational attainments; and e). that neither evaluation nor the reforms themselves are necessarily focused on gains for poor children, it is not surprising that the evidence on this point is inconclusive. There is evidence of positive impacts on enrolment, teacher behaviour, parental participation, and to a more limited extent, educational outcomes, in specific, well-documented cases where school autonomy has been relatively 'strong'. For the EDUCO schools in El Salvador, which primarily serve poorer communities, several studies found teachers were less likely to be absent and/or put in more effort in the classroom and with meeting parents than in comparable schools; parent-teacher associations were also found to be more active. Evidence from other schools with 'strong' reforms was mixed and variable: there appeared, for instance, to be no impact from experiments with school autonomy in Nepal and Pakistan.[53]

However, studies appeared to show positive effects when schools used their devolved authority to hire teachers on a contract basis. In Kenya, one study found that where school committees also received training on how to manage contract teachers, the effects were stronger.[54] Another experiment in Kenya found that contract teachers improved test scores, but not because of reduced class sizes, as permanent teachers appeared to reduce the effort they put in when contract teachers were hired.[55] There are good reasons to believe that school-based management reforms positively influence the dynamics within school systems, in favour of openness to parental and community participation. Yet depending on community participation to drive school improvements may increase inequality, because community capabilities are unevenly distributed and poverty is generally associated with lower capacities for participation and service management: a programme in rural Mexico that funded PTAs and devolved school grant management succeeded in reducing repetition and grade failure rates in poor communities, but had no effect among the extreme poor.[56] Across contexts, the benefits of school-based management reforms depend closely on how the reform design interacts with the socioeconomic, political and administrative context. A key lesson is that the impacts on chronically poor children and communities will be affected by the conditions for participation. Since the initial endowments of community capabilities for school management are likely to be considerably lower in poorer areas, so school-based management reforms may be harder to implement and will require stronger support if they are to succeed.

Figure 10 School-based management from reform to outcome



Source: Bruns, Filmer et al. 2011

School choice

The last decade saw a heated political debate about the value of choice in education provision. This revolved around the benefits or adverse effects of increasing parental choice of schools, through permitting new types of private or non-state school to be set up, replicating market-like conditions through the use of vouchers and other forms of private or public-private provision such as 'concession' schools to exert performance pressures on schools and teachers. This debate has been

fuelled in part by the apparently rapid growth in the numbers of private fee-paying and other non-state schools that have emerged in developing countries, particularly in urban settings, over the past decades. For present purposes, the key questions are: why and under what conditions has non-state school supply increased access; created positive competitive pressures on other providers, and effectively extended the choices available to poor students?

As with all efforts to reform the governance of schools, context matters greatly, and the evidence is generally mixed. Non-state – both charitable NGO and fee-paying for-profit – schools have played a significant role in expanding absolute numbers of school places, in particular in under-served areas such as remote rural regions (NGOs) and urban slums (private schools). In Bangladesh, large-scale provision of NGO schools that succeeded in attracting poor girls to school en masse are believed to have created competitive pressures on the Government to expand rural provision, and to experiment with efforts to reach poor children, particularly girls.[57]

By contrast, the impacts of schooling designed to replicate the positive effects of choice on children's learning outcomes have been mixed. Chile is known for its national scheme of vouchers through which parents can select schools and public funds go with the student. Reforms have increased coverage, particularly at secondary, and given Chile a global reputation as an education success story. However, the evidence on educational outcomes points fairly clearly to a lack of (positive) impact:

- Private schools with state subsidies do perform better, but this impact disappears when socioeconomic differences are controlled for; state schools do a better job of improving performance among the least able pupils, and it is only among middle class children that subsidised schools appear to impact positively on achievement.

- Its governance reforms have not helped Chile close the gap with OECD countries, and it has not improved its performance on international achievement tests such as the TIMSS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study) assessment over time. Its position in 2003 was about the same as in 1999, and it had not caught up with even Thailand or Egypt, neither of which are considered globally to be education success stories.

- Educational inequality remains a serious concern in Chile, which continues to have some of the worst disparities in terms of achievement in the region.[58]

Sweden's experiences with choice-type reforms have been more positive, but the socioeconomic and political contexts – particularly the strong commitment to equality - mean their relevance may be limited to developing countries with a stronger tradition of egalitarianism, for example, countries like Vietnam or Tanzania with an institutional legacy of the socialist past.

The growth in different types of non-state school, particularly private schools, in developing countries over the past two decades has undoubtedly increased the range of types of school available. However, it is not clear under what conditions this had made a positive difference to the schooling of poor children, nor is there much agreement about the policy implications: policymakers could usefully bear in mind that this is a particularly thorny political debate, and it is no simple matter to extract the facts without the influence of interpretation. For some, the interpretation of the evidence is unequivocally that an unregulated expansion of private schooling will increase inequality over time, as better-off pupils opt out of state schooling and/or poorer children are crowded into poorer quality facilities. Inequalities may increase because more able children become concentrated into 'chosen' schools; poorer parents may be unable to exercise effective choice, lacking the experience or knowledge of what to seek; parents may choose better schools for their sons, exacerbating gender inequities; better-off parents may support chosen schools with additional resources or time.

Looked at closely, the choices in fact available to poor children and their effects on their schooling careers are quite variable and context-specific. One study in Bangladesh found that growing choice of school – particularly the new private 'kindergarten' and 'cadet' schools – was only really relevant to better-off children, whom school career histories showed were increasingly exiting state schools, while poor children remained concentrated in state and NGO schools. The overall quality effects and outcomes of choice were mixed.[59] New types of private school were also found to be accommodating better-off children's exit from state schools in recent work in Pakistan.[60] Unlike in Bangladesh, however, the choice of private schools was also leading to increased gender inequality, as parents preferred to pay for their sons to attend better private schools and leave their daughters in free public schools. By contrast, a study in Hyderabad in India found that children performed better in mathematics and English in private than in state schools, and that the difference could not be explained by resourcing.[61] A recent review of the evidence on behalf of the UK DfID concluded that there was no systematic evidence that private schools were 'better', and that although teachers were more likely to be present (partly because private schools do not generally allow unions), teaching quality and facilities were likely to be poorer.[62]

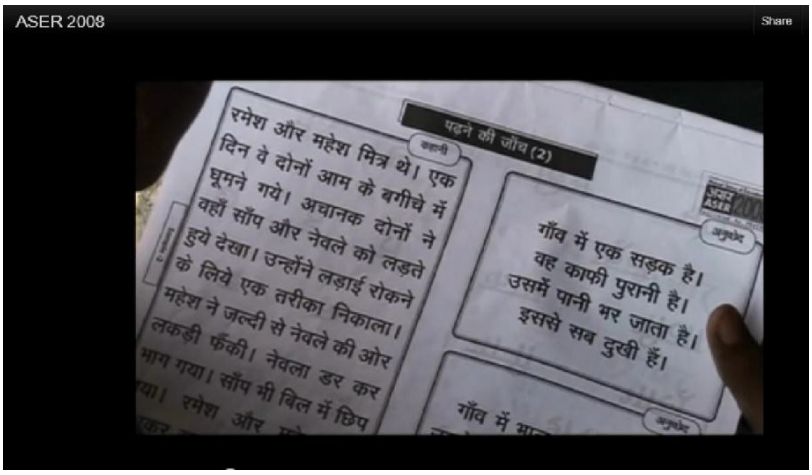
4.3 Lessons about how to tackle school governance

As recent syntheses of the evidence have shown, the evidence about the contribution of governance reforms through social accountability interventions, school-based management reforms and wider choice to improving education outcomes is overall mixed.[63] The evidence of how such interventions and reforms impact on education services to poor people is also, as a result mixed. A general conclusion is that the socioeconomic and political context is an important determinant of how these interventions and reforms deliver for pupils and parents. The particular contexts and characteristics of poor communities and people, and specifically their endowments of material and human resources and capabilities, mean that while they would benefit more from their success, they are on average less likely to be able to participate effectively in, or to benefit from social accountability, school-based management or school choice-type reforms. Other relevant lessons include that:

- **Social accountability is typically soft**: tools focused on increasing information flows to service users generally lack enforceability or the power of sanctions to bring about change. People may know teachers are absent or funds for textbooks are being stolen, but that does not mean they have the power – in principle or in practice - to punish wrongdoing. Knowledge without the power to act may lead to frustration, or to lawless or violent responses.[64]

- **Accountability interventions work best when they 'fit' the policy space**: generating information that is detached from or actively hostile to the concerns of policymakers or service providers may raise public awareness about service delivery issues. But it is when the intervention communicates knowledge that triggers public policy engagement that policy and practice change. The ASER education survey by Pratham in India and the Education Watch series by the Campaign for Popular Education in Bangladesh are both annual surveys of the state of education. The ASER survey has had some direct influence over policy through central Government planning processes and state government educational programmes. Education Watch plays more of a watchdog role, and has increased pressure on successive governments to perform, in a highly competitive political environment.

Figure 11 The ASER annual survey being undertaken in India



Source: http://pratham.org/viewvideo.aspx?url=http://www.youtube.com/v/Y84e_Dd2rAg&hl=en&fs=1

- **Strengthening accountability relations takes time**: the ultimate purpose of social accountability is not to catch and document each failure of education services as it occurs, but to create a culture of accountability in which such failures are reduced or sanctioned. The changes that social accountability tools seek to create often involve a change in incentives, and of the cultures and ethos of public organisations and their personnel. These changes can take several years or even decades to come about, and may only be learned through an iterative process, in which institutions change to reflect the reduction in impunity for poor performance or corruption. It is often intermediate outcomes – teachers and officials more inclined to consult parents or provide information about a service – rather than measurable, direct improvements in education outcomes that will emerge in the first few years.

- **For poor people, strengthening accountability means the long route:** there is little evidence that education services for poor people can be improved sustainably or on a sufficient scale through interventions that increase choice or control only by working at the point of service delivery. There is an understandable temptation to believe that quick fixes can shift teacher incentives in ways that lead to better quality teaching and improved education outcomes. Yet where improvements have occurred it has been through a combination of more effective demand and more responsive policymaking processes with the result that stronger accountability has been built through the 'long route' of relationships between citizens, policymakers and providers.

- **The challenges of participation are particularly severe for poor people**: significant social, economic and political power inequities mean that demanding answers or action from (typically higher status, more powerful) teachers and education officials is more than likely to transgress social norms and behaviours; individuals who do so are more likely to jeopardise than to strengthen their access to service benefits. For poor women to engage in contentious activities such as monitoring teacher presence or behavior or questioning high status government officials may be particularly challenging. The same applies to school-based management reforms: while devolving management closer to service users through the participation of user groups is sound in principle, in practice, poorer parents are less likely to be familiar with formal rules and organisational procedures than people with formal jobs and education; and social and cultural rules are likely to prevent them from participating equally in the same space as higher status and/or more powerful people, particularly for women.

- **Some governance reforms risk increasing inequality**: without proper policy and regulatory safeguards, some of these reforms, interventions and new private schools may increase inequality, by concentrating material and human resources in schools with better initial endowments. If the aim is to avoid exacerbating inequalities, public policies need to be aware of these risks and capable of tracking, for example, per capita spending across different regions, and trends in educational outcomes, so as to be able compensate and equalise resourcing and target problematic trends. (See Figure 12: The *Check My School* programme in the Philippines has put in place offline platforms and systems to help avoid the possibility that only (better off, more educated) online communities benefit from its activities).

Figure 12 Online instructions for the *Check My School* process

Source: http://www.checkmyschool.org/video/2012/06/29/check-my-school-process

- **The evidence base remains weak**: because social accountability interventions target social and political institutions, evidence of their impact will need to be tailored to assessing changes in those institutions. To date, the emphasis on 'robust' evaluations of interventions has resulted in an excessive focus on randomised control trials (RCTs) and measurable results. Future research should focus more on assessing how social accountability interventions bring about systemic, attitudinal and relational changes in the long-term. Evidence of school-based management reforms and choice-type interventions must similarly be more systematic in documenting the key context variables to do with social structures and relations and features of the political and economic system if they are to provide robust evidence of what works and the changes they introduce.

5. Successful transitions

Educating the chronic poor and tackling chronic poverty through education means sustaining participation and achievement across the transitions from early childhood through primary and secondary, into post-secondary or tertiary, vocational or professional training, and into the world of work and beyond. Transitions through and across these different phases and forms of education are not always smooth. Some of the reasons that poverty may make people vulnerable to disruptions, obstacles and dropout from education include:

- **Vulnerability to livelihood shocks that disrupt school careers**: there is evidence, for instance, that the recent food, fuel and financial crises increased dropout rates and led to more erratic attendance among affected poor households;[65]

- **The direct costs incurred as learners move up levels of education**: the new fees, uniforms and books and other costs associated with entering a new institution can be prohibitive for poor families, and commonly mark a break with formal education for poor households;[66]

- **The high short-term opportunity costs of education**: as young people move from primary to secondary and beyond, the opportunity costs of staying in education are likely to increase, particularly for young men in areas with good job prospects in low-skilled sectors;

- **Pressures on girls to become women**: girls and young women from poorer households are likely to face strong pressures to contribute to household domestic, care and subsistence work, particularly where adult women are in paid work. There are often economic pressures on girls to work or marry to ease the costs of their keep. In some contexts, poorer girls are seen as particularly vulnerable to sexual violence or reputational risks, so that as they become adolescents, family and social pressure to marry may also increase.[67]

Marginalisation and social exclusion, gender and location combine with poverty to create the chances that any individual girl or boy will last through the basic education cycle. The transition from education into work is difficult for people from poor backgrounds and not only because of lower skill levels. Poorer people are more likely to:

- **Lack the 'right' kinds of skills** - better-off school graduates will, for instance, be more familiar with information communication technology than poorer classmates;

- **Lack the social networks through which jobs and information about employment opportunities are shared** – for instance, international migration from many developing countries is facilitated through personal social networks rather than formal channels;

- **Experience discrimination** on the basis of race, class, ethnicity, religion, gender and disability that creates segmented labour markets.

What has worked to help people from chronically poor backgrounds transition through the stages of learning and into work, adulthood and citizenship? Three types of approach stand out, often working in combination:

- Cash-based support to stay and achieve in education, including scholarships and conditional cash transfers;

- The new generation of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), including 'second-chance' programmes;

- Life-skills development and other broader approaches to education.

5.1 Cash for continuing education

Over the past 15 years, conditional cash transfer (CCT) schemes and similar scholarship or stipend schemes have taken off as the programmatic intervention best suited to tackling inter-generational transmissions of poverty by tackling low income, under-investment in health and education among poor people, and (to a lesser extent) gender inequality. CCTs have been evaluated and studied, the evidence synthesised and the issues debated extensively in around 30 countries to date (see Box 10 for some relevant resources).[68] Rather than reproduce those debates, this section will focus on the evidence that CCTs enable poor children to make sustained education transitions.

Box 10 Resources on CCTs and education

To date there have been no published systematic reviews on the impacts of CCTs on education, but a review looking at the 'Relative effectiveness and cost effectiveness of conditional cash transfers versus unconditional cash transfers in improving education' is due to be published in 2012: http://www.campbellcollaboration.org/IDCG_updates/IDCG_News.php

Insights policy brief from the IDS from 2009 synthesises the evidence that CCTs work: http://www.eldis.org/go/topics/insights/2009/cash-transfers-to-condition-or-not-to-condition

Annotated bibliography containing abstracts and titles for 132 studies (mostly evaluations): http://siteresources.worldbank.org/SAFETYNETSANDTRANSFERS/Resources/281945-1131738167860/CCT_Biblio_6Feb2009.pdf

Comprehensive 2009 report by the World Bank: 'Conditional Cash Transfers: Reducing Present and Future Poverty', chapter 5 addresses Human Capital: http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTCCT/Resources/5757608-1234228266004/PRR-CCT_web_noembargo.pdf

The gendered effects of CCTs are examined in work by the *Pathways of Women's Empowerment* research consortium: http://www.pathwaysofempowerment.org/PathwaysWP5-website.pdf and the ODI: http://www.odi.org.uk/resources/details.asp?id=4942&title=conditional-cash-transfers-gender-latin-america

The evidence is that providing regular – and fairly small – cash payments conditional on children being enrolled in school has a strong effect on enrolment. But more directly relevant to the question of transitions is:

- Evidence from Mexico that *Oportunidades* led to more rural children making the transition from primary into secondary;
- The finding from Jamaica's PATH (Programme of Advancement through Health and Education) programme that children were attending school half a day more per month (erratic attendance is linked to dropout and low attainments);
- The striking impact of the JFPR (Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction) programme in Cambodia, where 31% more girls transitioned from primary into lower secondary school; the follow-up programme CESSP (Cambodia Education Sector Support Project), which was also available to boys, saw the rate of transitions increase by 21%.[69]

When cash is received also matters. An experiment with the *Subsidios Condicionados a la Asistencia Escolar* CCT in Colombia tried postponing cash transfers to just before re-enrolment, when school fees were due, and to graduation, making them partly conditional on tertiary enrolment. The timing had a significant impact, and increased enrolment and attendance at both secondary and tertiary. Students who received the large sum just before school fees were due were 4.5% more likely to enroll than those who did not, and 3% more than those who got the regular transfers. Students who received a large award on graduation were 49% more likely to enroll in higher education than other students. And postponing payments were most effective for the poorest students and those most at risk of dropping out.[70]

One concern noted of the Colombian experiment was that families started to concentrate education spending on the children who were candidates for the grant at the expense of other children, highlighting how interventions can unwittingly create inequalities even within households.

While it is clear that CCTs can support early childhood development with later positive effects on children's learning, there is no good evidence that CCTs lead to better educational outcomes when targeted at children of school-age. This might mean that children receiving cash transfers do no worse than other children, which if they are from poorer households may itself signal a positive impact. However, it is clear that persuading (or paying) poor parents to send their children to school, keep them there and ensure they meet some basic attendance and performance criteria (often very loosely observed in practice) is not the same as ensuring they learn while they are there. Improvements on the supply-side of CCTs, to the quality of schools attended by participants, have yet to be addressed in any serious way.[71] A future policy area is to identify and strengthen strategies for ensuring CCTs lead to more learning through better schools.

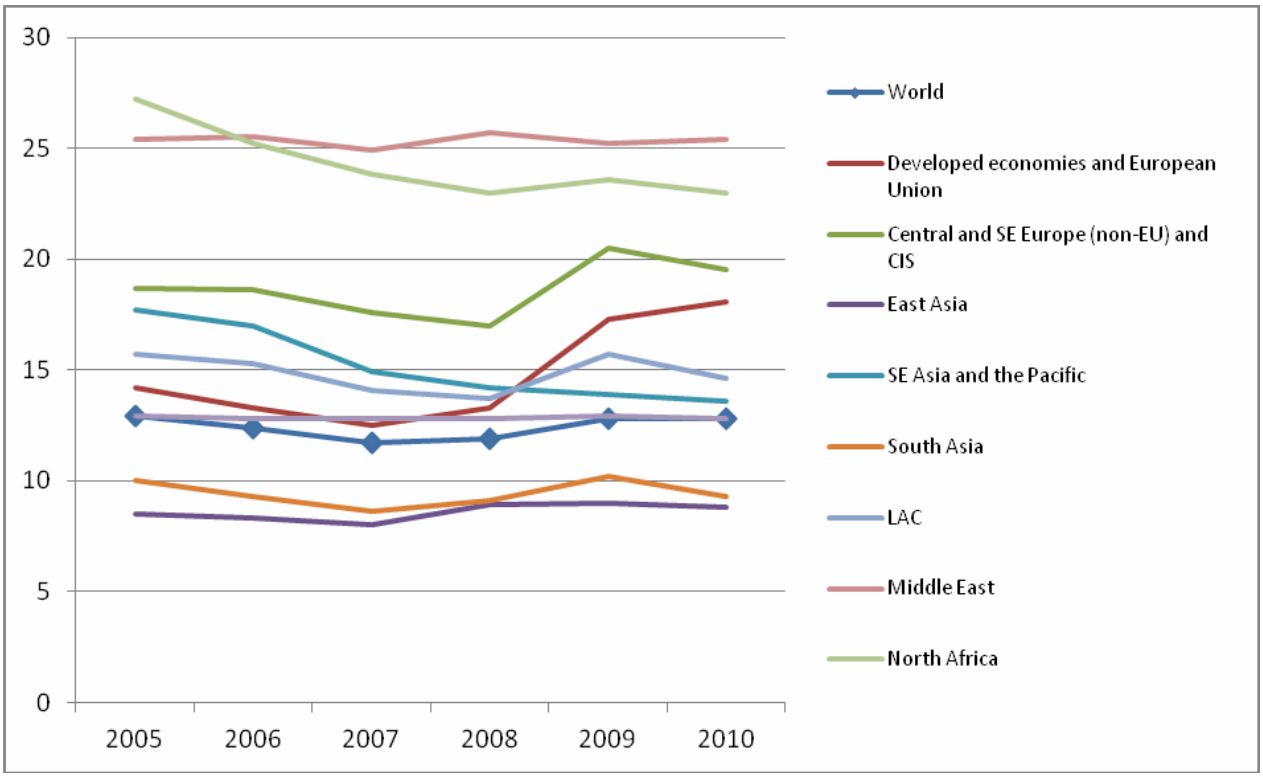
There is also evidence that CCTs can help households cope with income or livelihood shocks. This has become particularly important in recent years, with the wave of global economic crises in food, fuel and finance, and the fiscal retrenchment that has followed, including in education and social welfare systems.[72] One review of the evidence found that while CCTs and unconditional cash transfers helped families keep children in school during crises, children also often increased their working hours.[73]

5.2 Youth unemployment and the new generation of TVET

The problem of enabling poor youth to transition into work has become embedded within the problem of youth unemployment globally: this has risen up the policy agenda since the global financial crisis, the 'jobless recovery' which followed, and the wave of youth-led protests, riots and revolutions, since 2009. One indicator of the urgency with which global policymakers view youth unemployment in the present period can be seen in the wave of major reports focused on the problem: the World Bank's 2013 World Development Report is on jobs; UNESCO's 2012 Global Monitoring Report focuses on youth and skills; the ILO's International Labour Conference 2012 report is on 'The Youth Employment Crisis: Time For Action'. As

Figure 13 shows, the global economic crisis saw a sharp rise in youth unemployment, in particular in developed countries; 75 million youth are unemployed worldwide.[74]

Figure 13 Youth unemployment, 2005-10 (%)



Source: Data from ILO Global Employment Trends 2012: pp. 93. (http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_171571.pdf)

In this context of historical highs in youth unemployment levels (see above) and evidence that it is the skills acquired through learning that reduce poverty and generate economic development (see below), there has been a renewed emphasis on the role of technical and vocational education and training (TVET). The new generation of thinking about TVET is about learning more systematically from the experiences of high income countries, and applying these to replace older supply-driven training with flexible and responsive programmes, in partnership with businesses and employers.

A recent review of the situation in Africa found that while the evidence suggested returns to vocational education were often higher than to general education, the sector was neglected and often irrelevant, lacking qualified staff and useable equipment, and featuring poorly designed programmes that were unintegrated with the job market. Research in 2011 found that of 23 rural vocational training centres directly managed by the main vocational training authority in Tanzania, only three had training linked to agriculture; in Malawi, no rural training centres provide training related to agriculture. Meanwhile, the overwhelming majority of training in the informal sector is through apprenticeships: in Senegal, 400,000 young people are apprenticed each year, while there are only 7,000 graduates from formal

vocational training centres; apprenticeships account for up to 80% of skill development in Ghana and 90% in urban informal sectors in West Africa.[75] Similar accounts of the importance of informal apprenticeships compared to the limited role of formal vocational training emerge from other low income developing countries.[76]

Recent syntheses and studies have identified common features of contemporary TVET systems that are more effective at equipping young people for the job market. Those with strong potential for smoothing the transitions into work of poor and disadvantaged youth in particular include *Jóvenes* programmes in Argentina, Chile, Peru and Uruguay. These combine good targeting methods – 60% of participants are from low income families - with programmes designed to link training to wider skills with work experience in firms, and strong central management and financing with decentralised delivery.[77]

Strong links between education, training and employers. Involving employers in designing and delivering training links the skills being acquired directly to the jobs and sectors in which they can be used. The best model of employer involvement in TVET provision to date has been Germany's dual system, in which schools are connected with work experience and vocational learning through training from employers in skills relevant for their own needs, but also for the wider economy. The dual system approach was adapted for a successful programme in the 1990s in Egypt. Targeted learners from poor families were given classroom learning for two days per week and factory floor learning for four, compared to conventional technical training of six days of classroom theory and practice. The evaluation found that 85% of participants who completed the programme were offered jobs, and earnings were higher than for graduates of the regular training programme. The cost of training was lower and employers mobilised additional funds in support of the programme.[78] Private sector involvement in design and delivery does not remove all the challenges of delivering TVET: the recent downturn saw a drop in the number of apprenticeships in Germany, serving as a reminder of the need for economic growth to underpin demand for trainees and workers. In Japan, companies' commitment to training declined over the recession of the 1990s.

Flexible systems that respond to fast-changing global economy conditions and demand for skills. The experiences of Germany and Japan's TVET systems during recession highlights the need for TVET – and skills training, in general – to be flexible and responsive to the fast-changing needs of the global economy. This may include the delivery of broader capabilities such as the so-called '21st century skills', combining technical capacities with 'soft' inter-personal skills, learning how to learn, problem-solving, teamwork, and so on. These more generic skills are transferable and appear to be in increasing demand in the relatively fast-growing knowledge, ICT and service sectors.

Box 11 Some resources on youth un/employment

Inventory of 400 projects on youth employment in 90 countries, including design and evaluation materials: http://www.youth-employment-inventory.org/

Collection of ILO resources including Global Employment Trends for Youth report: http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/youth-employment/lang--en/index.htm

Background papers on youth and skills for forthcoming 2012 UNESCO Global Monitoring Report: http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/themes/leading-the-international-agenda/efareport/reports/2012-skills/

In-depth exploration of current situation with NEETs in Africa, from the African Economic Outlook 2012: http://www.africaneconomicoutlook.org/en/in-depth/youth_employment/youth-in-african-labour-markets/who-are-the-unemployed-discouraged-inactive-youth- in-africa/

Summary of preliminary findings and graphs on NEETS from the 2013 WDR on Jobs: http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTYTOYCOMMUNITY/Resources/Samuel_Freije_World_Development_Report_WBG.p df

TVET systems are more effective where they develop **qualifications systems based on broad-based capabilities**, established with support or recognition from employers.

A focus on skills and training for the informal sector. Youth from poor backgrounds are concentrated in the informal sector, but the poorest are often excluded from apprenticeships and other relevant vocational training opportunities. Supporting TVET in the informal sector could involve upgrading and accrediting apprenticeships, as well as monitoring, evaluating and collecting data on informal sector TVET. Evidence indicates that success with informal sector TVET often has to do with the pre- and post-training activities, including market research, business advice and marketing.

Other policy lessons include the need to research and evaluate how different models of provision – **separated from and integrated within academic training** – impact on delivery. There are some indications that TVET systems that are integrated into formal schooling work better, partly because early streaming and separation leads to concentration into low status, low-skilled vocational training. There is some evidence that streaming into vocational training affects girls and women particularly adversely, as they end up being channeled into highly gender-segmented job markets before they have had the chance to acquire more transferable skills. Yet as most countries provide TVET in separate streams, it is important to understand better where and why this works. The striking success of Singapore's Institute of Technical Education in turning low academic achievers into highly employable young people while also reversing the low status of vocational learning has been seen as a model for other developing countries.

Finally, there are good reasons to believe that investment in TVET could have exceptionally strong and direct payoffs for gender equality. Labour markets are currently both discriminatory and highly gender-segmented, with women crowded into lower-paid occupations seen as lower-skilled and less physically demanding. The new ICT and related service sectors are less rigidly gender-segmented to date, and the growing emphasis on transferable and 'soft' 21st century skills offers less immediately obvious prospects for gender discrimination. Investment in girls' access to TVET in non-traditional sectors in particular offers good prospects for reducing gender divisions in labour markets and increasing the returns to poor girls' education and training.[79]

'Second-chance' programmes

Interventions to provide a kind of education safety net, to catch dropouts and early school-leavers and enable them to return to learning, have been emerging as a response to problems of interrupted transitions. Children who never enroll or who drop out to work or avoid the direct costs of schooling may be enabled to start late, re-enter or re-start learning in less formal settings better suited to their needs. Such programmes can be designed to support children from marginalised and poorer households, who are likely to experience more interrupted educational careers, to need more than one attempt to stay the course, and will often require closer support to do so. Box 12 presents the account of the difference one 'second chance' programme claims to make in young people's lives.

A range of programmes and interventions fall under the 'second chance' category, combining elements of vocational training, career and jobs advice, social support and networking, safe spaces for youth, and information about employment and entitlements to training or support. Some schemes focus on rehabilitating youth who have fallen into crime, and equipping them with life skills and other resources. One example is the *Khulisa* programme in South Africa, which returns youth to education and training, cuts recidivism, and reduces the reliance on the court system for handling juvenile delinquency.[80] USAID, which funds these programmes, notes that whereas 85% of young offenders typically return to offending, 80% of participants in the second chance programme remain out of crime.[81]

Second chance programmes have taken on renewed significance globally with recognition of the large and growing number of NEETS – or young people who are Not in Education, Employment or Training. Preliminary analysis for the forthcoming 2013 WDR on Jobs indicates that NEET rates in the developing world are mostly due to low levels of educational enrolment and linked to poverty, while unemployment is concentrated among non-poor youth.

Characteristics of effective second chance programmes include that they:

- **Reintroduce people to the world of work, education or training**; this can be important for people who have fallen off the conventional pathways to adulthood. The Open Secondary School system in Mexico makes it possible for young people who have dropped out of secondary school to study 33 subjects, with no entrance or time limit restrictions or schedules. Students can use the qualifications they gain to re-enter formal education. Second chance programmes are increasingly used in fragile, conflict or post-conflict settings, both to help youth avoid involvement in violent or criminal livelihoods, and to aid the process of reintegration and peace-building. Save the Children is providing accelerated learning and TVET programmes tailored to former child combatants and young survivors of conflict in South Sudan and Nepal;

- **Target low-skilled youth for training, often in 'new' skills**: the Entra 21 programme in Bolivia, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Panama, Paraguay and Peru trains unemployed youth in ICT, among other skills;

- **Connect unemployed people with employers**: effective second chance schemes, like many of the new generation TVET programmes, involve strong partnerships and working practices with private sector employers. This means that participants can gain work experience and that programmes are informed by employers' need for skills. The highly regarded *Jóvenes* programmes, started in Chile in 1990 and now found across Latin America, combine training with internships, life skills training and other support services;

- **Support and advise young people through the transitions into work**: schemes often include advisors and mentors to provide role models and practical support with developing the basic life skills and social support networks needed for work and adult life;

- **Offer access to qualifications**: some schemes result in qualifications or credentials that employers and young people value. The Califica programme in Chile places targeted young people in academic and vocational institutions that provide certification;

- **Enable income-earning while in the programme or soon after**: the best programmes show results in terms of higher levels of employment, self-employment or incomes; for youth from poorer households, internships – or the possibility of earning while learning – are more practical than training-only programmes;

- **Help instill self-respect and optimism in participants, making social integration a possibility**.[82]

Box 12 Seizing a Second Chance: D'Andra's Story

Spanish Town, Jamaica – D'Andra Haynes knew the absences were piling up. If she kept missing school, she wouldn't be able to complete her final year at Jonathan Grant High School and earn her diploma. But she didn't have a choice. She couldn't leave her house.

"It was war," says D'Andra.

Living in the conflict-ridden area of March Pen Road, D'Andra was caught in the middle of a dangerous situation. "If you left the neighborhood, either you got death threats, or something similar," she adds.

D'Andra stayed at home, and after incurring too many absences, was dismissed from school. The whole ordeal left her wondering about her options for the future.

Three years later, the 20-year-old is wrapping up a successful internship at Rapid True Value Hardware in Kingston organised by the Children First Agency in Spanish Town.

Haynes is one of 100 at-risk youth, ages 17 to 25, to receive vocational training to prepare them for the workforce through the Obra project, an initiative of the International Youth Foundation supported by the U.S. Agency for International Development. Classes are offered in data operations, cosmetology, housekeeping, customer service, and photography/ videography.

For D'Andra, it was a second chance. She wanted to gain skills to help her get a job and Obra provided that opportunity. She decided to enrol in a customer service class to help overcome her natural timidity.

"I wanted to be more comfortable talking and relating to people," she said. "During my internship, when I'm helping customers, they smile at me and it's a positive influence. It's helped me gain confidence."

D'Andra has excelled both in class and at her internship. At True Value, she assists customers, re-stocks shelves, and makes sure the sales area is neat and tidy. Her supervisor, Assistant Branch Manager Mary-Ann Meggs described D'Andra as "reserved, but very well-mannered. She is willing and eager to learn, and that made everything easy. If I were ever called about her, I would give a good recommendation."

Following her internship, D'Andra plans to complete classes at Children First and secure a job. Eventually she hopes to serve her country by joining the Jamaica Defense Force.

No matter what's in store for D'Andra in the future, she has more opportunities and a newfound confidence thanks to Obra and Children First. She has moved away from March Pen Road to the Ensom City neighborhood, separating herself from the violence that limited her options in the past. She has taken charge of her life.

"I've learned how to speak up," says D'Andra with a smile.

Source: http://www.obrayouthalliance.org/success-stories/seizing-second-chance-d%E2%80%99andra%E2%80%99s-story

5.3 Life skills development

Transitions to adulthood are also enabled by the wider contributions of education to the acquisition of life skills. The contribution of life skills to poverty reduction is difficult to measure, but the qualitative evidence of its impact in changing people's aspirations and attitudes suggests greater control over the day to day management of life can be transformative. Life skills learning embedded in classroom learning can play an important role in introducing poor families to understandings of rights and citizenship. An important contribution of schooling to poor people's development in Bangladesh is the new capacities and confidence it gives them to engage with formal institutions such as government officials or employers.[83] This quotation from a young man in urban Ghana emphasizes the roles of schools in growing a sense of citizenship:

> *My rights are the right to speak and the right to go about everywhere, the right to choose the kind of things, the right to be respected… to walk around the country, right to worship God, rights to make an operation and to serve my country. The right to decide what I want to do in the future. I learnt all these rights from TV, Radio and from people's mouths, but where I got it most is the school*.[84]

For UNICEF, life skills education involves knowledge, attitudes and behaviours that enable healthy behaviour, including problem solving in daily life, relationships and parenting, personal care and health, finances and careers, general knowledge about the world and important institutions, and citizenship. Life skills education has been prominent in approaches to peace-building and on work on HIV/AIDS among youth. Lessons about what works best in life skills education drawn from 45 cases of HIV/AIDs work shows that it succeeds when it:

- is designed to be relevant to the risks and challenges of the particular setting; generic content works less well than tailored materials;
- works with what learners already know and are able to do;
- personalises theories of how change happens, and makes them real and relevant to the learners' lives;
- embeds skills and practical changes into other kinds of learning;
- is participatory in its content development, feedback and delivery.[85]

In an unusual example of South-South learning, the NGO BRAC has adapted its Empowerment and Livelihood for Adolescent girls (ELA) programme in Bangladesh for Uganda, Tanzania and South Sudan. The programme combines social empowerment approaches including delivery of life skills and development of peer group and support networks with livelihoods and enterprise training and micro-finance.[86]

6. Social and economic transformations

The last decade has seen several advances in our knowledge of how and under what conditions education policies are influencing positive societal changes that address chronic poverty and its causes through:

- Pro-poor and/or equalizing patterns of economic growth;
- Transforming gender relations;
- Strengthening the basis for social inclusion and rights.

6.1 Education and pro-poor growth

A crucial development in thinking about the relationship between education, poverty and growth is acknowledgement that it is less the quantity than the quality of schooling that generates growth. The link between education, economic growth and poverty reduction had for several decades been consistently shaped by faith in the idea that additional years of schooling would generate high returns in developing countries.[87] This view was complemented by a rights-based perspective on education for all, which combined with domestic political motivations to provide popular policies, provided the rationale for policies promoting universal education.

Yet the assumption that increasing access to schooling alone will contribute to sufficiently fast economic growth to reduce poverty has been interrogated in recent years. Underpinning the view that more schooling leads to higher returns are assumptions that these are the same everywhere: but the skills and knowledge children can gain from a year of schooling vary greatly across school systems, and the returns to education are not evenly spread. Newer analysis looking more closely at the relationship between cognitive skills and growth rates provides strong reasons to believe that it is what is learned rather than how long is spent in school that matters. And it is both the quality of education at the top end of the spectrum – elite institutions - as well as at the lower end – mass cognitive skills and learning achievements – that explains economic growth and poverty reduction. In addition, education quality seems to complement the quality of economic institutions (e.g. property rights, openness of economic policies) so that better economic institutions are likely to mean education quality will have an even stronger impact.[88]

So what are the policy implications of the evidence that quality matters more than quantity for growth?

- As was seen above, **investment in early cognitive and childhood development is the starting poin**t for policies aiming to tackle poverty through education.
- **A policy emphasis on expansion will remain important in its own right in countries with high levels of education deprivation and marginalisation**. This is so for reasons of social inclusion and justice, political accountability, and rights. The challenge then is to ensure an emphasis on expansion is not actually adverse for poor people's education in the medium-term, as policies tolerating the expansion of bad school provision may crowd out policies promoting improvements in quality. This is partly because resources – time, effort, money, administration - are expended on schools that reproduce illiteracy just as much as on schools that teach children to read, and policies of expansion are typically more politically feasible than policies to, for example, improve teacher performance. Building the evidence base and improving its uptake within education ministries and policy networks in developing countries matters here, as the Latin American experience shows.[89] Over time it should also be possible to build popular demand for better quality schools through the regular use of social accountability tools that link student achievement to policy, highlighting where and why systems fail and what the policy options are.

- **In terms of school quality, it is reasonably clear that what teachers do matters most**. The quality of the physical infrastructure – of school buildings and so on – matter far less, within reason. Yet the evidence on what contributes to and what teacher quality means in developing countries is relatively limited. Much more needs to be understood about the characteristics of teachers who deliver higher quality education, and what works to improve how they perform. Evidence suggests that training and qualifications may not actually make a large difference, and little is known about how teacher characteristics shape what they do in class. Contract teachers are currently much discussed as a solution to issues of teacher performance, yet the evidence that contract-based teaching staff yields better outcomes is mixed: overall it points to quick but temporary fixes rather than to solutions for system-wide problems. Teacher management systems clearly matter.[90] It seems that performance-related pay may only work to improve performance where teachers' salaries are low – where they are comparatively high, pay for performance appears to worsen outcomes.[91] There is evidence, however, that a 'crisis' in teacher motivation is driven by low levels of job satisfaction.[92] A clear policy implication is the need for research on the determinants of teacher motivation and performance in developing countries, and on the policies which have worked to promote these.[93]

Box 13 Rocket scientists or quality basic education for all?

Debates over what 'quality' means in education continue to frame policy options. There are good pedagogical and practical reasons to resist policies framed around a narrowly quantifiable idea of quality, including the broader human developmental and social objectives of education. By some measures, the quality of an educational system overall must connect to how well it contributes to national objectives such as social justice, equity and the protection of rights. In the case of South Africa, for instance, policies aiming to advance quality in education have necessarily taken in wider social goals and not only student test scores.

Yet the renewed emphasis on quality as the main source of the contribution of education to economic growth has revived questions of quality-quantity trade-offs, in light of the social justice and equity considerations of the Education For All agenda. Can an economic growth-focused education policy agenda also align with broader social concerns? Or should growth-focused education policies concentrate on instrumental policies that raise standards and achievements among a high-achieving elite? What then of the wider human rights and social effects of schooling? How can broader considerations of equity and equal rights to education be met within such an agenda?

The evidence is that the economics and the social justice approaches to quality may not be as polarised as the literature suggests. Equity may well be intrinsic to quality, even within an economistic understanding of quality. Analysis of international student achievement tests indicates that the numbers of high performing students and the numbers achieving basic literacy goals matter, separately, in terms of their contributions to growth. And in many developing countries, it is likely to be more feasible to raise basic education standards than to suddenly increase the numbers of high performers. This means a pro-growth education strategy must enable the rocket scientists, but it also needs to make sure that all students actually have a chance of becoming rocket scientists in the first place.

Source: on South Africa, see Sayed and Ahmed 2011; Bruns, Evans et al. 2012; on contributions of education to growth, see Andrabi, Das et al. 2009; Hanushek and Woessmann 2009

- **Better metrics for measuring quality are needed**. While there are several tools and indices for measuring children's learning and cognitive skills across country and over time, many of these are overly narrow and do not capture the 'softer' skills that education brings, nor do they include the social justice considerations that inform policies on education quality in poor countries.[94] Brazil's Index of Basic Education (IDEB) is an example of a national index for tracking quality that has helped guide and correct its successful education policies in recent years (see Box 16).

6.2 Transformed gender relations

There are clear signs that education policies have helped transform gender relations towards greater equity and opportunity for poor girls and women. These transformations can be seen in fundamental changes in how girls and boys and men and women are valued, their power to make choices and their opportunities. Those most closely associated with gender equitable access to education include:

- Changing valuation of girls and boys: in some contexts, rising levels of girls' and women's education has been associated with less marked forms of son preference, and improved social and cultural portrayals of daughters. In Bangladesh, for instance, son preference measured in terms of the sex ratio has declined more than in neighbouring India over the past two decades[95];

- Later age of marriage, more marriage partner choice and later fertility[96];

- Increased labour force participation by women – participation rates increased by 2.5 times between 1995 and 2000 - accompanied in some contexts by narrowing gender wage gaps.[97]

A particularly direct effect of policies to advance gender equity in education provision has been the recruitment of large numbers of women teachers. This has created new role models of young professional women in positions of authority, while also increasing demand for educated girls. It is also likely to impact on gender mainstreaming within the public administration. By contrast, there is little evidence that reduced gender disparity in education has had directly positive impacts on transforming gender relations in terms of addressing violence against women and girls, and more understanding is needed of how processes of empowerment through education are connected to exposure to violence.

Girls may be in schools in greater numbers, but they are not necessarily safer spaces for them. Tackling violence, including sexual and gender-based violence in schools is a key concern in a number of areas. One study cited the following: one-third of men who raped girls aged under 15 in South Africa were teachers; nearly half of women in Uganda and more than half in Tanzania reported physical abuse by a male teacher; teachers were the perpetrators in between 15 and 30% of cases of women who had been physically assaulted in Bangladesh, Namibia, and Samoa.[98] While fears of sexual abuse and violence by teachers may deter parents from sending girls to school, girls in school remain less likely to have had sex than those out of school; this means that making schools safe from violence is a priority area for gender equality in education.[99]

Box 14 Getting poor girls into school: what Ethiopia did right

In the mid-1990s, boys were 50% more likely to go to school than girls in Ethiopia, although neither boys nor girls were particularly likely to attend: only 31% of all boys were in primary school, and only 20% of girls. But by 2008-09, girls were catching up with boys: 91% of girls and 97% of boys were enrolled in primary. And most impressively, the situation was improving fastest among the poorest Ethiopians. How did Ethiopia do it?

First, it increased spending - from only 8% in 1985 to almost 24% of government spending in 2009, making Ethiopia one of the biggest spenders on education (as a proportion of overall spending) in Africa. Fees were abolished, but efforts were made to plan the expansion so that quality would not suffer.

Second, it reached out to underserved areas: a big programme of rural school building and teacher recruitment and training was rolled out.

Third, particularly vulnerable groups were targeted through non-formal schemes for hard-to-reach groups and school feeding programmes.

Fourth, more regional autonomy over education policy made mother tongue instruction possible: Ethiopia now has one of the best-regarded policies in this area. Decentralisation and block grants have enabled education priorities to be set locally, with unequal financing addressed through central grants.

Fifth, community participation worked: local people through parent-teacher associations, district and education officials have all invested considerable time and resources in the system, particularly in the rapid expansionary period in the early 2000s.

Finally, the policies of equitable expansion have been backed by a strong partnership of development actors, led firmly from the front by a highly committed Ethiopian Government leadership.

Sources: Engel and Rose 2011 and Rose 2003

What works for poor girls?

What have we learned about what works to reduce the educational disadvantages of poor girls and transform gender relations? The evidence indicates a combination of increasing demand for and improving supply of education that suits the needs of poor girls and their families.[100] The demand for girls' education emerged out of: a). an emphasis in the international community, NGOs and civil society and the women's movement on gender-equitable access to education as a human right; b). a growing demand for and rising returns to women's paid work, which is encouraging more households to seek schooling for their daughters;[101] and c). recognition among policymakers of the contribution of educated women to the unpaid work of care, particularly the roles of mothers in infant care, family nutrition, early learning and basic healthcare. Fast progress on reducing gender-education disparities in poor countries has combined the following interventions:[102]

- **Clear, strong signals that girls' education is valued, particularly by government**: Through legal or policy reforms, communications and public statements, and direct material support through girls' scholarships, stipends and cash transfer schemes.

- **More schools near homes**: This addresses concerns about girls' security and the impact of school on girls' domestic work. In Ethiopia, bringing schools closer to homes reassured parents who were worried their daughters would be harassed or molested on the long walk to school.[103] Getting schools closer to girls is particularly important in conflict and post-conflict contexts, where sexual and gender-based violence levels tend to be raised.[104]

- **Plural partnerships**: Countries that succeeded in closing the gender gap had strong leadership from national governments, but also support from donors, NGOs and civil society. For the past two decades, the Forum for African Women Educationalists, a network of influential leaders in African education, has led advocacy campaigns, monitored progress, conducted research, experimented and raised awareness at global, national and local levels, disseminated lessons, and successfully lobbied development partners and particularly national governments to raise the priority of and resources to girls' education.[105]

- **Innovative provision**: Some of the fastest and most sustainable progress has come where governments have made space to test different models of education provision; non-formal NGO schools in Bangladesh were credited with helping the Government achieve gender parity at primary level as early as 2000, by getting thousands of very poor girls into school. The model is now being replicated in Afghanistan, Haiti, Pakistan, northern Uganda, as well as in southern Sudan.[106] In Pakistan, after the 2011 floods, UNICEF experiments with temporary learning centres in affected areas successfully introduced girls and their families to school who had no previous experience of it.[107]

- **Recruiting and training women teachers**: The popular response to policies of recruiting women teachers shows that this works. Yet the reasons vary, including that women teachers: a). are preferred by some parents, particularly where sexual violence and abuse are believed to occur in schools; b). have been shown to have a positive impact on girls' (and boys') achievement and retention; c). act as advocates for girls' interests within schools; and d). serve as positive role models as educated, professional women. In Nepal, the Feeder Hostel Programme provides boarding and other facilities for rural girls to help them complete secondary education and grow numbers of women teachers ready to return to their communities to teach.[108]

- **Reducing the costs of schooling**: This is particularly key for enabling poor households to choose not to discriminate against their daughters in favour of sons. The wealth of learning about how to provide direct support to families' efforts to educate their children in the past two decades has crystallised around three main types of support: school feeding programmes, conditional cash transfers (CCTs), and scholarships and stipends for poor students. Bangladesh achieved gender parity in primary enrolment before 2000, and has experimented with all three types of support over the past two decades. Success in attracting poor girls into school has meant a growing gender gap among the poorest against boys: stipend schemes are now being tested to draw boys from chronically poor backgrounds into school in Bangladesh.

6.3 Social inclusion through education

A striking advance in education policy and practice for the chronic poor in the past decade has been the increase in the use and evidence of results from approaches to inclusive education. Approaches to inclusive education operationalise a right-based approach to education, with an emphasis on

learners from marginalised, vulnerable or disadvantaged backgrounds. The objectives of inclusive education include creating a learning space and a system in which all children can participate and expect to be treated equally. Inclusive education is often associated with children with disabilities or other special needs, and/or minority social or ethnic groups. Yet it is an ethos and an approach with far wider application, and of particular relevance to the design and delivery of types of school that work well for children from all marginalised and disadvantaged backgrounds, including extreme and chronic poverty, particularly since disability, social exclusion and other forms of marginalisation are all closely associated with chronic poverty.

Box 15 Tools and resources on inclusive education

'Inclusive Education: Where there are few resources': a book on the origins of inclusive education with evidence from a range of contexts:
http://www.eenet.org.uk/resources/docs/IE%20few%20resources%202008.pdf

Toolkits for classroom use and training:
http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/themes/strengthening-education-systems/inclusive-education/toolkits/

The Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) Guide to setting up inclusive education in emergency situations:
http://www.ineesite.org/uploads/documents/store/INEE_pocket_guide_Final.pdf

Links to toolkits on mother tongue instruction:
http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/themes/strengthening-education-systems/languages-in-education/languages-and-inclusive-education/

The EdQual research consortium has been using participatory approaches to develop an inclusion index for Tanzania: http://www.edqual.org/research/inclusion

Save the Children views inclusive education as a type of education that is able to include children who currently remain out of the system. The evidence from developed and developing countries suggests that children with special needs learn best in more inclusive schools, and that specialist and additional support is most effectively provided in mainstream schools. A key lesson from initiatives with inclusive education is that such approaches do not need to be more costly, and in fact can offer more value-for-money because they are associated with reduced dropout and higher retention and achievement levels.[109]

Approaches to mother tongue instruction have had positive effects on a large and measurable scale, by making education systems more inclusive of entire otherwise disadvantaged groups of children. Ethiopia and Bolivia are examples of countries in which policies to support mother tongue instruction have significantly improved levels of education inclusion. The impacts of inclusive education targeted to children with disabilities or special needs are harder to demonstrate, as the effects are more dispersed and show up in the cultures and content of educational systems more than in numbers enrolling. Approaches to inclusive education for children with disabilities differ in practice from those aiming to bring schools to nomadic pastoralists. Yet they share a number of features to do with the principles governing their design and concrete practices.

Some of the lessons that emerge in common from across case study research in settings as diverse as India, Tanzania, and Papua New Guinea, among pastoralist communities in Kenya and Ethiopia, river communities in Bangladesh, and Quechua speaking people in Peru include that:

- For effective inclusive education policies to be developed, policymakers will need to view excluded groups as citizens with valid cultures, lifestyles and livelihoods, and equal rights to education. If education policymakers persist in stigmatising excluded groups or perceiving them as problematic residual groups, they are unlikely to develop or deliver sustainable approaches;

- Community participation in establishing and supporting inclusive schools and planning their activities is key: little success has been identified where this has not been present;

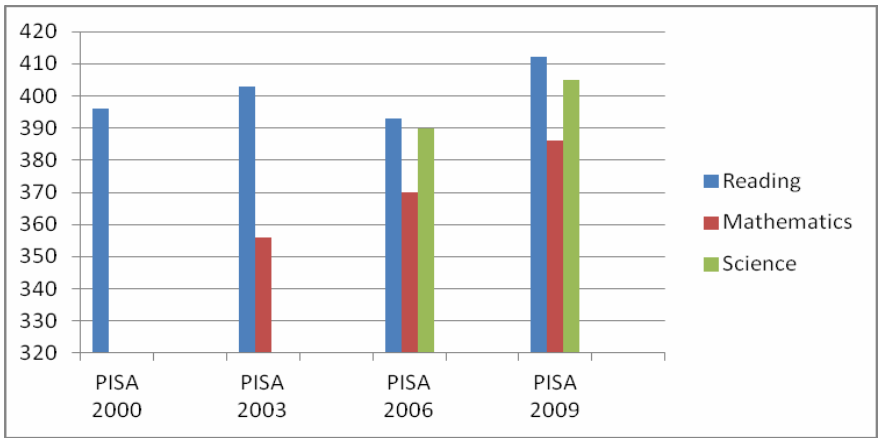
- Resources need to be available: teachers need to be adequately supported and trained in the delivery of new inclusive curricula, and schools need to be supported to plan their approaches;

- Content and approaches need to emerge out of and be rooted in and relevant to the local context, rather than imported from outside.[110]

Box 16 Brazil's successes with equitable quality reforms

Policymakers seeking inspiration for how to balance education quality reforms with equity increasingly look to Brazil. Brazil is still one of the most unequal countries in the world, measured by income inequality, but here - as elsewhere in the region – inequality is finally starting to decline. The best explanations for this include gains in education for poor people. Half of the Brazilian population was illiterate in the 1950s and a quarter in 1980. The 1988 Constitution committed states and municipalities to spending at least 25% and the federal government at least 18% of their revenues on education, and by 1995, 90% of all children were enrolled at age seven. Even then, only half completed eighth grade and nearly 14% of adults were still illiterate as late as 2000. Brazil was then the poorest performing country in the PISA tests of 15-year-old students. Its scores remain well below the OECD average, but are improving relatively fast (see below) making it a good case of reform balancing quality with equity.

Figure 14 Brazil's PISA scores improve



Source: OECD 2010

What policies have helped make Brazil raise quality in basic education so fast? The first steps were taken in the late 1990s and early 2000s, when the federal government took action on three areas:

- **Equalising school funding** through the Fund for Primary Education Administration and Development and Enhancement of Teacher Status (FUNDEF). **This increased finance for poorer areas** through federal top-ups, and **increased teachers' salaries**, in the poor northeast by 60%. From 2006, this was expanded from primary and secondary to early childhood, out-of-school and adult education, under the FUNDEB system;

- **Measuring the learning of all children against a common metric**. The initial small scale survey of student performance was replaced by a nationwide test, the results of which were used to develop the Index of Basic Education (IDEB). **IDEB has made it possible to benchmark student achievement**, and track who is improving their performance, where, and why;

- **Protecting poor children's access** through the *Bolsa Escola* conditional cash transfer programme (later *Bolsa Familia*) which protected poor families against the kinds of shocks that typically led to school dropout or poor attendance.

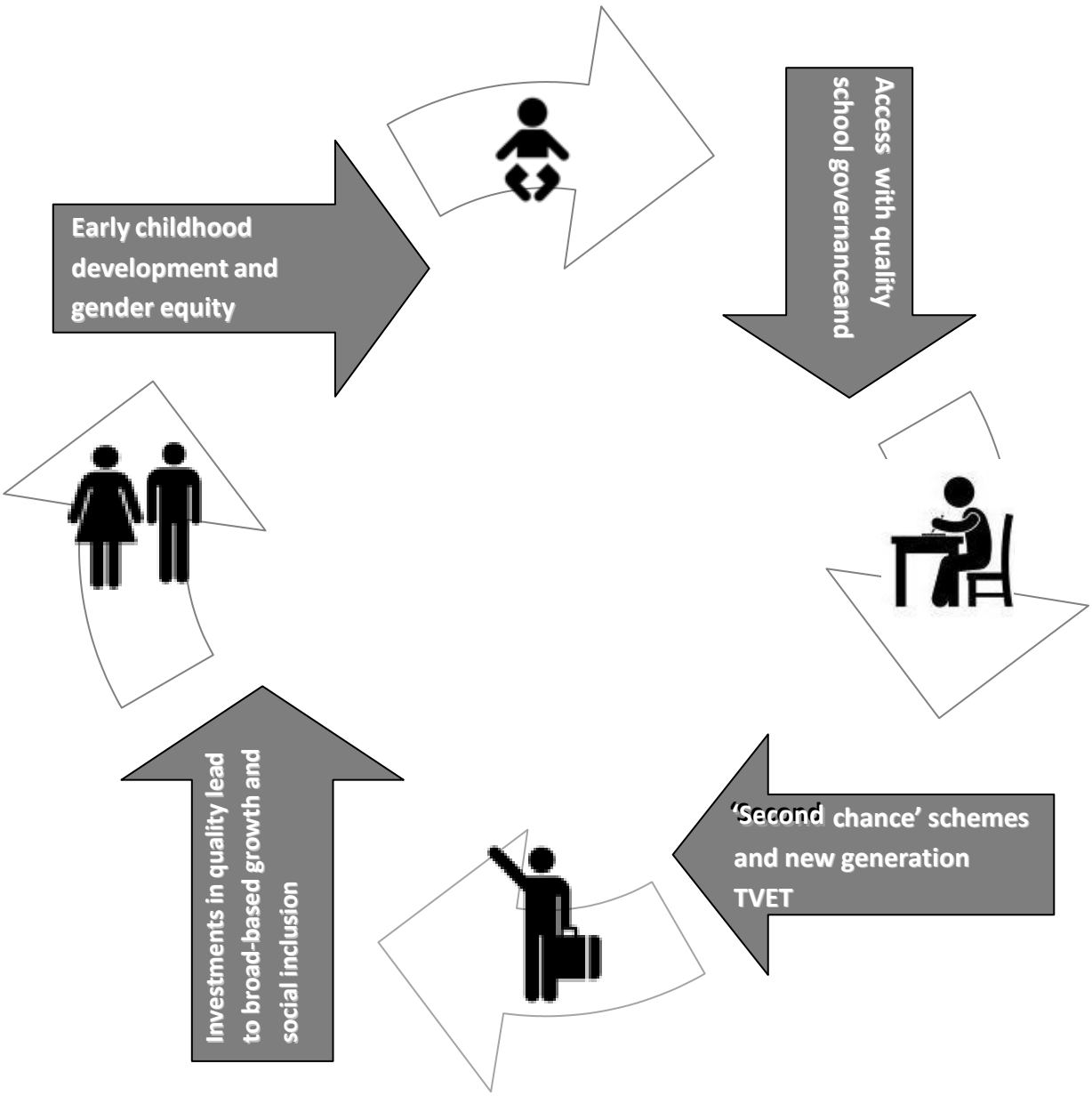
Other policy reforms that have contributed included new teacher standards and investment in high quality teacher training, policies encouraging innovations like school-level planning and multigrade teaching, and capacity building for education managers.

Sources: López-Calva and Lustig 2010; Bruns, Evans et al. 2012; PISA scores from OECD 2010

7. Conclusions

The Chronic Poverty and Education Policy Guide has presented evidence to argue that education interventions are among the best means of tackling chronic poverty, particularly if they interrupt the transmission of poverty across generations. At the same time, it is the children from chronic poor backgrounds who are most likely to comprise the hard-to-reach-and-teach group of children who never enrol, drop out early, or gain low levels of educational attainment. At several key points along the life cycle of chronically poor children, policy interventions can make a substantial and strategic difference to their life chances. As the Guide has summarised, a large body of evidence shows how, why and where these are likely to work, and the conditions under which they do. A schematic account of the arguments and evidence is in **Error! Not a valid bookmark self-reference.** and a more detailed explanation set out in Table 1 (which also appears earlier in the Summary).

Figure 15 Directions for policy in education and chronic poverty



Key policy messages from the Guide are that:

- **Well-designed, early action makes policy sense**: investments in early childhood – and reaching back into pregnancy and from there to gender equality – provide the foundations that make later educational and skills attainments possible. They also have strong potential to reverse or significantly curb the disadvantages of chronic poverty, and so lead to upward social mobility and more equitable societies.

- **Strategic actions interact:** action on gender equality is likely to boost early childhood development, and action to reduce the costs of education are likely to reduce gender disadvantage. Results depend on combinations of interventions working together across life cycles.

- **Equity goals are consistent with quality goals:** quality education provision matters even more for children from chronically poor backgrounds than for other children, and it is what children learn rather than mere attendance that makes a difference to their earning potential in later life.

Table 1 elaborates these key messages across the life cycle interventions discussed in this Guide. It illustrates how they work in addressing chronic poverty; and in what categories of country or situation they are most needed and/or likely to have significant effects.

To interrupt the inter-generational transmission of poverty it would be ideal to have interventions at all stages of the life cycle discussed here – early childhood, school age, and transition to work. The interventions discussed are mutually supportive. However, if choices have to be made because resources are scarce, there are three considerations to take into account:

- The nature of chronic and inter-generational poverty and the life cycle point at which interruption is most needed/feasible;
- The cost effectiveness of the different possible interventions;
- The political feasibility of each.

The first point requires an assessment of the stage at which it is easiest to break the cycle of poverty. For example, in Senegal, it was found that escaping poverty has recently been significantly easier for younger individuals entering the work force – it is they who find it easiest to find the occupations, networks and geographical mobility which lead out of poverty in that context. Assisting that process may bring the most immediate results in terms of addressing chronic poverty. This would suggest prioritising the transition to work.

Are there interventions which can be written off because they are not effective? The Guide has suggested that the choice agenda and having access to private schools does not offer much advantage. So they can be written off for the moment, until there is more convincing evidence.

Where resources are very scarce, improving the governance of schools may not be costly but can result in a more efficient use of resources to improve the quality of education. The challenge there is to establish governance reforms that are politically feasible without involving expensive concessions to bring teachers' unions on board. If there are no quality improvement programmes already in existence, this would almost certainly be the priority where resources are scarce, since getting the existing education system to work better must be a more cost effective approach than setting up new systems. Improving the quality of primary education would give poor parents and children the motivation to stay longer in school.

Where quality improvement programmes are already in place, and the problem is to get the poorest children to take advantage of primary education, early development and care programmes would be the natural priority. The advantage of this is also that the political ambition could be to take the new generation out of poverty. As they grow through the system, the resources could be provided to keep them in education through scholarships and/or cash transfers, continual improvements to quality, providing transitions to post-primary and then into work. Thereafter subsequent economic growth generates the resources for wider investments in education and the transition to work.

Politically, this agenda offers significant challenges. Finding the public revenues to enable extensive investments in expansion or new interventions implies raising new tax resources, or accessing additional aid as a stop gap measure in the anticipation of new revenues at a later date. However, investing in education can actually provide added legitimacy for raising new tax resources, since so many voters will support it. Channeling new revenues which come on stream to education – for example, from mineral resources – will help enhance the legitimacy of what can otherwise be an enclave industry with little connection to the broader political economy.

The challenge of youth unemployment has risen up the political agenda in many countries during the last decade, with the 'jobless growth' which has been common, and now with the 'Arab Spring' revolutions as examples of protest. This can bring significant political momentum to bear on interventions assisting the transition to work. Young adults quickly become voters, so in an electoral democracy, where they also constitute a significant cohort of the population as a whole – the dividend of earlier high rates of fertility – the political gains from measures to support this group can be very attractive.

By comparison, little is known about the political motivations for early childhood interventions. Evidence is needed on the conditions under which governments have successfully introduced early childhood development programmes for poor families. This evidence could help proponents of ECD to frame their arguments in ways that resonate with policymakers and politicians and highlight the public good dimensions of such programmes. These include that successful ECD interventions are likely to lower the overall cost of programmes to reach and teach the chronically poor, to increase educational attainments, particularly among disadvantaged children, and provide the foundations for 21st century skills. The political constituency for these interventions are women of child bearing age, and parents more generally. Poor women are generally a neglected political constituency, however, and promoting their interests requires far-sighted political leadership, able to see the wider benefits achieved through early childhood interventions.

Table 1 Strategic action on education and chronic poverty

Intervention areas	Aspect of chronic poverty addressed	Where it works
Early childhood nutritional, care and pre-school programmes	Prevent or reverse under-nutrition in vitro and the first 1,000 days, and compensate for inadequate care and stimulation and lagged cognitive development in early childhood, which set children on a lifelong path of educational, economic and social disadvantage.	Early childhood interventions are particularly relevant for low income countries with significant problems of under-nutrition. Evidence from the US is that early childhood intervention also has large payoffs by reducing inequalities in educational outcomes, and improving attainment among poor and marginalised groups in middle and high income countries.

Education quality improvements through school governance reforms that increase accountability to and power of parents over how schools are run	Demand for poor children's labour means that schooling must be seen to be worthwhile if poor families are going to invest; low quality education has higher opportunity costs for poorer children. Social and economic power inequalities make it harder for poor parents to hold school authorities to account to demand improvements in education provision.	Quality reforms are key in low income countries which have experienced rapid system expansions, and where the overall quality of schooling provided is quite low, e.g. low income sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. Successes with improving teacher quality in poor regions in middle income countries such as Brazil have lessons for other countries. Increasing parental choice has succeeded in raising quality in high income countries those with strong egalitarian traditions, but there is no strong evidence that low cost private schools or voucher schemes improve education outcomes for poor children in low or middle income countries.
Positive action to promote girls' education and tackle social and institutional constraints to girls' learning	Positive action can reduce discrimination against girls in schools and at home. Gender disadvantage is more acute in poorer households, and interlocks and reinforces with other disadvantages common among the long-term poor. Education tends to strengthen women's social, economic and political rights, so that investments in educating poor girls can set in train a virtuous cycle of gains including early childhood development, women's employment prospects and citizenship and participation.	Gender discrimination is most acute in low income countries, but also in the low, middle and high income countries that comprise the 'patriarchal belt' from the Middle East and North African region into South Asia. Gender discrimination and gender-based violence are also significant influences on education uptake among poor girls in conflict and post-conflict settings.
More accessible and affordable schools, including cash transfers and scholarships and inclusive approaches to education	The direct and opportunity costs of school are major deterrents for chronically poor families. Socially excluded and geographically marginalised groups often lack physical access to education. Poor girls' access can depend on school proximity, because of safety and girls' responsibilities for care work. Protection against economic shocks can help to reduce dropout and erratic attendance, which are endemic among vulnerable poor people.	Innovations in education for hard-to-reach groups have been developed in low income countries with significant pastoralist or peripatetic populations, and in remote regions with dispersed populations. Countries with educationally marginalised linguistic minorities can benefit from mother tongue programmes; all places can apply the lessons of inclusive learning for children with disabilities. School expansion programmes have been important in increasing access across low and middle income developing countries, particularly in countries with large gender disparities. Cash transfers have worked well in low and middle income countries, including with chronically poor groups in rich countries e.g., the US.

'Second chance' schemes that reconnect young people to education and training	People from chronically poor backgrounds are at greater risk of early dropout and associated risks of low paid or risky work. Schemes that enable re-entry into education and training, and which offer life-long learning are particularly key.	In low income countries with high dropout rates, second chance schemes can focus on enabling working children to continue basic education, as well as on enabling youth to connect to vocational and life skills learning. In middle income countries, second chance schemes may focus on at-risk groups and on returning to education and training for poor youth and adults.
Skills development linked to employment and entrepreneurship	Chronic poverty often means a lack of access to the broader life and social skills that are increasingly important in 21st century job markets. It can also mean lack of access to the social networks through which jobs and entrepreneurial opportunities may arise.	Low income countries, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, rely heavily on informal apprenticeships for skills training, so there is much room for investment in programmes replicating schemes such as the *Jóvenes* programmes in South America.

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