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Editorial

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The articles in this issue might be grouped into four general categories: (i) inequalities in China, (ii) school choice, (iii) results of specific interventions and (iv) examples of the complexities, failures and frustrations of designing effective policies.

China is the focus of much attention in Comparative and International Education. It is large; its international education research community is active and it has problems of such significance that their resolution may well determine the nation's social cohesion. The two articles in this issue represent this importance. In "The Education of China's Migrant Children: the Missing Link in China's Education System," Fang Lai, Chengfang Liu, Renfu Luo, Linxiu Zhang, Xiaochen Ma Yujie Bai, Brian Sharbono and Scott Rozelle focus their attention on the children of urban migrants forced to maintain their registration in their rural province of birth and as a result are prohibited from attending public schools. The importance of this issue cannot be over-stated. This article compares the academic performance of rural children, children of migrants in non-public schools, and children in urban public schools. Migrant children outperform rural children, but not urban children in public schools. The authors demonstrate, however, that migrant children would significantly improve their performance if they had the opportunity to attend public schools with equal levels of school resources.

In their paper titled: "An Analysis of Educational Inequality in China" authors Jun Yang, Xiao Huang and Xin Lin, analyze the formal mechanisms of maintaining inequality in China. These include the system of household registration and the inequalities associated with inadequately-regulated sources of income. In the end they argue that the household registration (hukou) system, and the unequal distribution of educational resources should be eliminated.

The results of two interventions are discussed in this issue. The first is titled: "Improving Reading Outcomes in Kenya: First Year Effects of the PRIMR Initiative" by Benjamin Piper, Stephanie S. Zuilkowski and Abel Mugenda. The authors report on an effort to 'align' curriculum and pedagogy with the results of research, teacher support, basic instructional materials, and textbooks. They use randomized trials in three countries and find that the interventions made a significant difference in reading fluency in both English and Kiswahili.

In the article titled: "A Bhutanese Tertiary Education Consultancy case Study: Introducing the Zone of Proximal Development, (IZPD)" Tom Maxwell illustrates Vygotsky's theory that there are six processes which help determine successful implementation of the intervention.

Two articles focus attention on school choice. The first is titled: "Continuing to Exercise Choice after School Selection in Nepal:

Insights into parent decision-making in local education markets," by Priyadarshani Joshi. It analyzes how parents continue to engage with schools after they have made their choice. They find that parents who choose smaller private schools continue their engagement more intensely and were more satisfied with their choice. Those parents who chose low-performing public schools were highly dissatisfied with their choice but had no recourse for action. The author asks whether there is a way for parents in public schools to express their points of view and remain engaged with the organizations responsible for educating their children.

In their article titled: Academic Effectiveness of Private, Public and Private-Public Partnership Schools in Pakistan, "Ravish Amjad and Gordon MacLeod analyze the performance of students in affordable non-government schools and find that they outperform students in government schools. They also find that students in PPP schools (private schools with public assistance) out-perform students in government schools, but the difference disappears when tuition effects are taken into account. They also find that students in the lowest-fee private schools outperform students in government schools but not students in high fee private schools; although they conclude that the latter difference is due to factors other than the high tuitions. Their article illustrates the virtues of government education regulation and finance but not necessarily government provision.

Then two articles illustrate the difficulties and frustrations of education. In the first titled: Constructions, Contradictions, and Reconfigurations of 'Manhood' among Youth in Palestinian Camps in Lebanon," Kathleen Fincham points out that traditional sources of masculinity (educational attainment and family practices and political discourse) are not available in the refugee camps in Lebanon and have been replaced by two new ones: out-migration and Islam. The new ones however provide limited gender 'scripts' from which youth may draw and plan their future.

The article titled: "Higher Education Challenges in Yemen: Discourses on English Teacher Education," by Abdulghani Muthanna and A. Cendel Karaman discuss several factors which hinder the success of a program of teacher education. University lecturers were over-optimistic as to the possibility for improving higher education quality, social justice and the flexibility of university administrators. Although the administrators acknowledged the problems identified by the lecturers, they had no specific solutions to offer. The article illustrates that organizational change is a difficult, complex, long term process requiring considerable levels of creativity and patience.

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