



## Editorial



For many years, work on education in low income countries concentrated on the portion of children who could attend school. Today it is understood that gaining entry to a school is the solution to only one of the many problems. This is highlighted by the article authored by Benjamin Alcott and Pauline Rose titled: "Learning in India's Primary Schools: How do Disparities Widen Across Grades?" Out of school background characteristics of family and community create divisions in the tendencies of school performance, but these divisions widen over the course of the primary cycle. According to the authors, this widening performance gap suggests that addressing disadvantages at an early age may be a necessity.

These disadvantages of family and community are also highlighted by Dorrit Posel and Erofil Grapsa in their article titled: "Time to Learn? Time Allocations Among Children in South Africa". They measure how children spend their time out of school and discover that children from privileged backgrounds tend to focus on 'learning-related' activities whereas children from less privileged backgrounds tend to allocate their time to house hold chores and the travel time between school and home.

Does one solution involve 'parent involvement'? If all parents could be involved with their children's schooling might it help to redress the learning gaps between privileged and less privileged families? In the article titled: "Parental Involvement in Developing Countries: A Meta-Synthesis of Qualitative Research" Sung won Kim finds that family-school-community partnerships can make a powerful contribution. However, the author concludes that the concept is U.S.-centric and when investigated outside of the U.S. the definition needs to be made culturally relevant.

Since Philip Foster published his precedent-setting article on vocational education (Foster, 1965; Heyneman and Lykins, 2008), skill training in developing countries has been a center of controversy. Often the problem lies in the politically-driven expectations of its labor market effects. In their article titled: "Reaping Just What is Sown: Low Skills and Low Productivity on Informal Economy Workers and the Skill Acquisition Process in Developing Countries" Mayowa Abiodun Peter-Cookey, and Kanda Janyam investigate how skills are acquired by informal workers. They find that training provided was 'basic' and this negatively affected performance and productivity. They suggest that skill training be 'specific, comprehensive, and ... particular to their challenges'.

It is suggested that the influence of higher education is greater than the knowledge and skills imparted by the curricular experience, that it may include the ways of acting and the persons with whom one comes into contact. This is tested in an article titled: "The Role of Human and Relational Capital of Universities as Underpinnings of a Knowledge Economy: A Structural Modeling Perspective from North Indian Universities" by Niti Chatterji and Ravi Kiran. They find that knowledge and skills (human capital) has a significant influence on a university's performance but that relational capital can mediate this effect. This suggests that both are important, but that the influence of relational capital can be counter-productive.

It is sometimes assumed that local control of schools and the 'participation' of the local community in school administration could be a credible cure to a lack of accountability. This was the subject of the article titled: "Policy Promise and Reality of Community Involvement in School-Based Management in Zambia: Can the Rural Poor Hold School and Teachers to Account" by Taeko Okitsu and D. Brent Edwards. They ask whether it was efficient to ask community leaders to hire and fire teachers. They conclude that it was not without additional resources and experience. Perhaps more importantly, they argue that community participation in school management may dilute the political accountability of the state.

In addition, Volume 56 includes a Corrigendum to an article previously published by Cassandra Birchler and Katharina Michaelowa. They regret the fact that several errors were previously overlooked and they wish to set the record straight. The IJED welcomes their correction.

In the editorial associated with Volume 55, I attributed the article titled: "Democracy or Control? The Participation of Management, Teachers, Students and Parents in School Leadership in Tigray, Ethiopia" to the wrong author. It was authored by Rafael Mitchell at the University of Cambridge. My apologies.

### References:

- Foster, Philip (1965) "The Vocational School Fallacy in Development Planning," in C. Arnold Anderson and Mary Jean Bowman (Eds.) *Education and Economic Development* Chicago: Aldine Press.
- Heyneman, S.P. and Lykins, C. (2008) "The Work of Philip Foster," *UNESCO Prospects* Vol. 39 No. 1 (March), pp. 5-10.

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