

The relationship of child poverty to school education

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Abstract

Child poverty is a global issue that affects around half the children in the world; it is inextricably bound to the poverty experienced by their parents and families and has been identified by the United Nations as a human rights issue. Child poverty can be a barrier to children and young people accessing school education or achieving any form of success through participating in school education. This article examines some of the main issues surrounding child poverty and school education and a number of government interventions designed to enhance the education of disadvantaged children (exemplified in the United Kingdom). The article will argue that some of these interventions have had some success, although they need to be contextualized in the wider educational and political context. The article offers an alternative vision of intervention in schools drawn from research from the United Kingdom, America and Australia.

Keywords

Intervention in schools, poverty and education

Introduction

Poverty, child poverty and the relationship with school education are serious issues for contemporary societies across the world, but they are multidimensional issues and present complex conceptual and methodological challenges that cannot be reduced to simple causes, effects and solutions (McKendrick, 2011b). There is no simple explanation for poverty and how it can be addressed (Spicker, 2007). Distinctions can be drawn in the global context between *absolute*, *relative* and *severe* poverty and *local* and *national* poverty within the context of *developed* and *developing* countries, although all of these distinctions can become problematic under closer examination (Deaton, 2006). There are also substantial debates on key themes such as the definition of poverty, the measurement of poverty (universality and objectification); poverty lines or thresholds; longitudinal effects of poverty; multidimensionality of poverty; intergenerational poverty, the rise of working poverty and the ‘low-pay no-pay’ cycle (Bird, 2007; Shildrick, MacDonald, Webster, & Garthwaite, 2012; Stewart, Ruggeri Laderchi, & Saith, 2007). Poverty is associated with material need – lack of food, fuel, health care, adequate clothing and housing and lack of resource (usually financial) to meet some or all of these needs (The European Anti-Poverty Network, 2013). Poverty

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is often perceived to be closely aligned with unemployment and dependency on state benefits, especially in developed countries, yet there are a considerable number of people who live in working poverty (Fraser, Gutiérrez, & Pena-Casa, 2011).

There are 2.2 billion children in the world, and around a half of this figure (1 billion) live in poverty (Global Issues, 2013). Children are defined by the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (1989) as less than 18 years old, unless otherwise legally specified within a particular context (UNICEF United Kingdom, 2013). Children are dependents, and child poverty is intrinsically linked to the poverty experienced by their mothers, families or households (Lister, 2010). The United Nations (UN) has positioned the eradication of child poverty (and all poverty) and universal free access to primary education and access to secondary education as human rights issues and global goals. The UN has established structures and processes to measure global progress on achieving these goals (United Nations, 2012). In national contexts, strategies to address the challenge of child poverty often include some form of targeted intervention in school education to raise the attainment and achievement of disadvantaged children and young people that would enable them to pursue successful transitions to (initial) positive school leaver destinations (Higher Education, Further Education and employment or training).

This article is a critical introduction to understanding child poverty, the relationship between child poverty and school education and different approaches to intervention in school education, both in a global context and in some national contexts (the United Kingdom, America and Australia). The article begins by discussing poverty, child poverty and access to school education as human rights issues. This section will conclude by examining some of the targets that have been set to alleviate poverty and child poverty and increase access to schooling. The next section will outline three ways to measure the extent of international and national child poverty and will evaluate the usefulness of the information provided by these measures. This will be followed by a short section that highlights three groups of children and young people who have little access to school education or whose school education is disjointed or disrupted: those involved in child labour, invisible children and disabled children. The fourth section focuses on two related themes: first, an overview and brief analysis of the effectiveness of the UK government interventions in schooling in the last 15 years that have targeted disadvantaged children and young people and, second, an insight into two approaches to improve school education for disadvantaged children and young people: *productive schools* and *pedagogies* (Australia) and *culturally responsive* educational environments (America). This section will also include a brief discussion of a recent study in the United Kingdom that researched socially disadvantaged schools that record high levels of initial positive school leaver destinations. The final section provides some concluding remarks.

Poverty, child poverty and access to school education: human rights issues

The philanthropist Joseph Rowntree set up his trust in 1904 to investigate the ‘underlying causes of weakness or evil’ in society in England (Unwin, 2009). The social evils identified included poverty, war, slavery and intemperance. Rowntree, following on from the work of Charles Booth, perceived poverty as a moral issue and addressed the problem with scientific quantification of poverty and use of the *poverty line*. Those who fell below the *poverty line* were considered to be in *primary poverty*, and those who had sufficient income, yet lived in squalor, were considered to be in *secondary poverty* (Ruggeri Laderchi, 2007). Rowntree (and Booth) is perhaps rightly critiqued for anachronistic Victorian values – social evils were often associated with moral weakness – and the nascent distinction between the *deserving* and *undeserving* poor (Mooney, 2011). Nevertheless, the introduction of the quantification of poverty based on monetary factors was to prove hugely influential. Measurement and the concept of a

poverty line or threshold (in various forms) continued to prevail to the contemporary era, although more recent emphasis on qualitative methods has generated an emerging, multidimensional view of poverty (Harris, 2009). This is exemplified in the participatory research initiative, *Voices of Poor*, that broadens the scope of the study of poverty from the material to include the human experience of poverty and the importance of the psychological dimensions of well-being (Narayan, Chambers, Shah, & Petesch, 2000; Narayan, Patel, Schafft, Rademacher, & Koch-Schulte, 2000; World Bank, 2012).

The responsibility to address *social evils* such as poverty was to become a national responsibility in the early 20th century, and a trans-national responsibility in the mid-20th century, formalized by The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) (1948) (Harris, 2009). There has been growing concern about child poverty and access to education since the late 19th century, and this is reflected in sections of the UDHR, but also in The Year of the Child 1979, The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) 1989, the *Education for All* (EFA) goals that were established at the World Education Forum at Dakar in 2000 and the *Millennium Development Goals* (MDGs) 2000 (Bourdillon, 2012; UNESCO, 2012). Let us briefly examine the significance of the UDHR, UNCRC and the MDGs.

The UDHR does not explicitly address poverty and the effects of poverty, but does state, in article 25, that an adequate standard of living (including food, clothing, housing, medical care and necessary social services) and social security are human rights (United Nations, 1948). Furthermore, children (and mothers) are identified as entitled to special care, assistance and social protection. The UNCRC states that every child has 'the inherent right to life' and state parties 'shall ensure to the maximum extent possible the survival and development of the child' (article 6 (1)). This is developed in article 27 (1), which outlines the right of 'every child to a standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development'. The UNCRC recognizes the right of children to health and health care, and state parties shall take 'appropriate measures to diminish infant and child mortality' and 'combat disease and malnutrition' through adequate nutrition and access to 'clean drinking water' (article 24).

In terms of school education, article 28 (1) of the UNCRC recognizes the 'right of the child to education', although it acknowledges that this right will be achieved progressively. The UNCRC advocates that primary education 'be compulsory and available free to all' (article 28 (a)), secondary education and higher education are to be made available and accessible and, where possible, secondary education should be free. Article 28 (e) further states that 'regular attendance at schools' should be encouraged, as should a 'reduction of drop-out rates'. Article 29 (a) describes the education of the child as directed to 'the development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential'. The underlying assumption, then, is that education provides the opportunity to promote the development of a sustainable future and well-being for children, although there remain complex issues about retention, gender parity and equity in the quality of educational provision, especially in the developing countries (Boyden, Hardgrove, & Knowles, 2012; Case, 2006).

UDHR and UNCRC position the issues of child poverty and child education in the context of human rights. The concept of universal human rights has been contested as 'Western' orientated and as contradicting the (historical) cultural relativist view, but, Pemberton, Gordon, and Nandy (2012, p. 21) point out that there is widespread recognition of the 'objectives and values' of the UNCRC. There is also a greater acknowledgement of cultural diversity by the UN (Danish Institute for Human Rights, 2013). Given the importance and emphasis placed on children's rights (within the context of universal human rights), the accountability for the preservation of children's rights lies with 'parents, educators, local, regional and state governments' across the world (Jones & Sumner, 2011, p. 9). One important consequence is that child poverty can be interpreted as a

violation of human rights (Jones & Sumner, 2011). Similarly, extending the point, lack of provision of primary education for all may also be interpreted as a violation of human rights.

The UN, as part of its anti-poverty strategy, convened a Millennium Summit in 2000, and the UN Millennium Declaration was agreed by leaders from 189 countries. They set targets, eight MDGs, to be met by 2015 (Banerjee, Bénabou, & Mookherjee, 2006). These targets included the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger, reducing child mortality and achieving universal primary education (United Nations, 2012, 2013b). The latest annual report of MDGs (United Nations, 2012) records that extreme poverty (those living on less than US\$1.25 a day) has decreased in every developing region and there is improvement in gender parity and overall enrolment figures for primary education. However, there remain significant challenges in improving the quality of drinking water and sanitation and reducing maternal mortality, slum dwelling, child malnutrition and hunger rates (15.5% of the world's population) if the targets are to be met by 2015.

Measuring child poverty and the extent of child poverty

Child poverty is a global problem and is closely linked to women's poverty (Lister, 2010; Nandy & Minujin, 2012). Women continue to be primarily responsible for the care of children, and, as a result of gendered distribution of domestic labour, they often have to manage income and household resources. In situations where this income is inadequate, they are the ones who are effectively managing poverty (Lister, 2004, 2010). Women can also have a major role in trying to protect their children from the effects and stigma of poverty, including the 'othering' of the poor (especially in places like the United Kingdom) (Lister, 2004, 2010). This othering can lead to damaging low self-esteem (McKendrick, 2011a).

There are a number of approaches to measuring child poverty. We will examine (1) UNICEF statistics, (2) European Union Statistics on Income and living Conditions (EU-SILC) and (3) UK Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) Households Below Average Income Statistics to illustrate these different approaches (Adamson, 2012; Department for Work and Pensions, 2013; UNICEF, 2012a).¹

1. UNICEF uses the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) programme (UNICEF, 2012a). MICS collects international data for comparative indicators of the welfare of children (and women) in areas such as education, health, rights and protection: statistical tables are available for the rates of child mortality, undernutrition, access to an adequate water supply, access to education, child labour and child disability (UNICEF, 2011). MICS is one of the largest sources for monitoring progress on the MDGs (UNICEF, 2010).

In examining UNICEF statistics, a contrast emerges between the developed and the developing countries. For example, the global figures for child nutrition and the effects of undernutrition are that one-quarter of children under the age of 5 years are stunted – but the figures are 40 percent for children in Sub-Saharan Africa and 39 percent for children in South Asia (UNICEF, 2013c). A total of 16 percent of children under 5 years globally are underweight, but the figure for South Asia is one in three; additionally, approximately one in six children in South Asia suffers from wasting. UNICEF statistics on education report that globally 90 percent of children of primary school age are enrolled in school, but the figure is 66 percent in West and Central Africa (UNICEF, 2012b). The figures for secondary school are that 60 percent of all eligible children are enrolled in secondary school globally, but only 29 percent in the least developed areas, such as sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. In addition, these figures are also impacted by differential retention rates (e.g. children in Eastern and Southern Africa are less likely to reach the last stage of primary school) and

gender parity (girls are less likely to be enrolled in secondary school in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia). Bourdillon (2012) points out that there is a double risk that low-quality schooling in developing countries can de-skill children in traditional working methods and, at the same time, fail to develop appropriately skilled young people for modern economies.

2. Adamson (2012) draws on EU-SILC 2009 to produce data on relative child poverty and deprivation that draws attention to child poverty in the developed countries. The data are focused on a list of 14 items ranging from nutrition (three meals a day, balanced and healthy diet) to access to leisure, sporting and cultural activities (books, indoor games). Children in an economically advanced nation who lack two or more of these items, because the household cannot afford them, are considered deprived. According to these data, 5.5 percent of children in the United Kingdom are deprived (lowest: Iceland, 0.9%; highest: Romania, 72.6%).
3. The current DWP statistics on the levels of child poverty in the United Kingdom range from 2.3 million children (18%) before housing costs to 3.6 million children (27%) after housing costs, meaning that between one in five and over one in four children live in poverty (Department for Work and Pensions, 2013). Barnardo's report that almost a third of children living in poverty live in severe poverty (choices have to be made between essentials such as heating and eating) (Barnardo's, 2013a; Save the Children, 2013). The Child Poverty Action Group (2012a) warns that current figures for child poverty are projected to rise by 2020, as a result of government policies. The rise in working poverty means that approximately 60 percent of children living in poverty belong to a family where at least one person works (End Child Poverty, 2013; Fraser, 2011).

The UNICEF, DWP and EU-SILC data are used for different purposes. UNICEF data are used to measure the levels of child poverty on a global scale and are focused on the essential elements or basic needs that are required for the child's human existence (some would argue subsistence) (Spicker, 2007). Children who lack any of these basic needs can be described as experiencing absolute poverty (McKendrick, 2011b). EU-SILC and DWP data are focused on child poverty as socially defined – the level of poverty is measured according to the norms, or standards, set in the different national contexts (Spicker, 2007). These data sets demonstrate both the advantages and disadvantages of the different approaches to statistical data and evidence. While it can be helpful to produce universal data sets for a global overview, closer comparisons between developed and developing countries based on a global daily budget for survival become problematic. The rate of US\$1.25 as a daily budget may be an indicator for subsistence in some developing countries, but Barnardo's calculates that families living in poverty in the United Kingdom have £12 (US\$18.38 at time of writing) per day per person for all their needs, and this is barely sufficient to meet these needs (Barnardo's, 2013a; United Nations, 2012). Even in developed countries, the income required to live may vary depending on location (e.g. higher living costs in inner London) (Child Poverty Action Group, 2012b).

The DWP statistics provide a national overview, which, like the UNICEF statistics, can be helpful, but the limitations of the information provided by the use of a poverty line become apparent. Adamson (2012) suggests a 'three-dimensional (3D) approach' be adopted when discussing such measures of child poverty: (1) the number of children who fall below a national poverty line, (2) how far the children fall below the line and (3) how long the children remain below the line. This 3D approach is very useful as it has the potential to provide a more accurate picture of the extent and duration of child poverty, but it still remains solely focused on the material well-being of the child and rooted primarily in quantitative measurement. Jones and Sumner (2011) argue that there

should be a greater focus on the ‘relational and subjective dimension of children’s lives and on the dynamic interaction between the material, relational and subjective’. This would necessitate the use of qualitative and mixed-methods research and would provide a greater opportunity for children to voice their experiences and their perceptions of deprivation.² This ‘multidimensional approach’ to child poverty has the potential to challenge the economically driven ‘human capital’ and investment models that can underpin educational initiatives and developments that perceive child poverty (and poverty) not so much as issues of human rights and well-being but as barriers to national and international economic growth (Waldfoegel, 2010).

Child poverty: child labour, invisible children and disabled children

There are three further global issues to be discussed concerning child poverty and the relation to school education: child labour, invisible children and disabled children. Child labour is a pressing problem (Banerjee et al., 2006). UNICEF reports that, worldwide, 215 million children under the age of 18 years are in child labour, but the figure is 150 million for children between the ages of 5 and 14 years in developing countries (UNICEF, 2013a). Child labour is often synonymized with the extremes of sweatshop labour, mining, soldiering or linked to exploitation in the sex industry. All of these forms of child labour are connected to coercion, abuse and hazardous conditions, and some are actually child slavery (United Nations, 2013a). Most child labour, however, is located in rural and agricultural contexts (60% for children aged 5–17 years): children working on family farms or as hired hands and girls working at home or in domestic service (International Labour Organization, 2013). Any form of child labour that affects attendance at school or performance in schooling will, ultimately, have an effect on the child’s future welfare (Udry, 2006).

It is important to acknowledge the existence of invisible children who may have limited access, or no access, to school education. Invisible children are those children who: live in institutions, children’s homes, temporary accommodation, hostels, hospitals, prisons, or are looked-after children, belong to asylum seeker or refugee families or are unaccompanied refugees, living on the streets, live illegally or are peripatetic (Adamson, 2012; HM Treasury, 2010; Sharma, 2007; Topping, 2010; UNESCO, 2013b). This point can be illustrated by reference to the Roma children in central and eastern Europe. Amnesty International has uncovered widespread discrimination against these Roma children which impacts their school education. Roma children can be segregated into special classes or, as a result of segregation of the Roma community, into separate schooling (Hoelscher & Nelson, 2007). Amnesty has identified low enrolment figures and drop-out figures for primary schools (e.g. Romania, Bulgaria), poor completion rates for primary (e.g. Serbia) and an average of 10 percent enrolment in secondary education (central and eastern Europe) (Amnesty International UK, 2013; UNICEF, 2013b).

There are over 650 million people in the world with some form of disability, including 150 million children (UNESCO, 2013a). Of the 150 million disabled children, four in five live in developing countries (there are high levels of disabled children in Sub-Saharan Africa). Disability, described as ‘poverty within poverty’, was not explicitly addressed in the MDGs (Wazakili, Chataika, Mji, Dube, & MacLachlan, 2011; Yeo & Moore, 2003). It has, however, become incorporated into the monitoring process of the MDGs, within the context of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) (Ingstad & Eide, 2011). The CRPD affirms that disabled children should have equal opportunities in access to free primary school education and secondary education (United Nations, 2006). In developing countries, disabled children can be the last to be sent to school, especially if there are limited resources for school uniform and schools may not be equipped to meet the needs of disabled children (Ingstad & Eide, 2011). Around 4 in 10 disabled children in the United Kingdom live in poverty (Action for Children, 2011). Disabled children

in the United Kingdom (and children with special education needs) can face barriers in mainstream schooling – inadequate facilities, low expectations and lack of inclusion on activities and trips (Every Disabled Child Matters, 2013). It is important to note here that schooling for some children and young people can be affected because they are carers for disabled family members.³

Child poverty and school education

This section will examine the relationship between child poverty and school education in the developed world, drawing from relevant and important examples of developments and research in the United Kingdom, America and Australia. Education, and especially school and preschool education, is perceived by many politicians (and some academics) as one of the routes or, sometimes, as *the* route to solving the challenge of child poverty (Case, 2006). Improving attainment and achievement in school for children from poor families is expected to enhance life chances and well-being and provide an opportunity for social mobility. Planned intervention in the process of school and preschool education, therefore, is perceived to be of strategic and operational importance. This section will, first, examine and analyse a number of publicly funded and high-profile planned interventions by successive UK governments. This will be followed by a discussion of Martin Haberman's outline and response to the pedagogy of poverty and two approaches to ameliorating the impact of poverty on the school education of disadvantaged children and young people and refer to some recent research on improving initial positive school leaver destination for children and young people in disadvantaged schools.

The labour government in the United Kingdom (1997–2010) introduced an anti-poverty campaign, including, in 1999, the target to eradicate child poverty within 20 years. This led to the Child Poverty Act (2010) (United Kingdom Government, 2013). One of the main strategies of the anti-poverty campaign was an increase of investment in children and in aspects of the school education of children and young people (Waldfogel, 2010).⁴ The investment was focused on early years education and universal free preschool education, an increase in maternity leave, introduction of paternity leave and parental rights to switch to part-time or flexible working and the Sure Start programme (that evolved into Children's Centres). Expenditure was increased by 40 percent in real terms for primary and secondary schools from 2000 (Holmlund, McNally, & Viarengo, 2008). Class sizes for primary schools were reduced and a literacy and numeracy hour introduced to improve levels of attainment (Department for Education, Children and Young People, 2012; Waldfogel, 2010). Extra funding was provided to secondary schools in the most disadvantaged areas through the Excellence in Cities programme (EiC) (launched 1999) and Pupil Learning Credits (Machin, McNally, & Meghir, 2007). Disadvantaged young people in secondary schools were encouraged to continue their school education beyond 16 years with the introduction of means-tested educational maintenance allowance (EMA). More controversially, labour also facilitated academies and the expansion of faith schools.

What has been the legacy of these initiatives? Waldfogel (2010) comments that it is difficult to distinguish which particular expenditures had most impact. Holmlund et al. (2008) report that increased expenditure did have an impact on attainment in English, Mathematics and Science, including higher results for children and young people who are economically disadvantaged. They claim that these results indicate that increasing expenditure has been cost-effective. Holmlund et al. present a persuasive argument, but the continuing positive effects are dependent on the level of expenditure in these schools being maintained. Machin et al. (2007) evaluated EiC and reported that the attainment in Mathematics for young people and school attendance improved (although no commensurate improvement in English). The longer the policy was implemented, the more successful the outcomes, although longitudinal effects would have to be monitored. Thomson, Lingard,

and Wrigley (2012) caution that there is a danger that overemphasis on literacy and numeracy can lead to a narrowing, or narrowed understanding, of the curriculum. Machin et al. state that it still remains difficult to assist the 'hard-to-reach' children and young people (described by as 'low-ability children within disadvantaged schools'). They recommend different approaches be taken for these children and young people and that these would probably have to be more intensive.

The more recent Conservative-led coalition government in the United Kingdom (2010–) has opted to focus on *strong* parenting in its recent policy documents and suggest that strong parenting can be expected to provide a secure and stable home background that would be conducive to an effective home learning environment (Department for Work and Pensions and Department for Education, 2011). Strong parenting is expected to reduce the impact of family breakdown. There is also an increased emphasis on empowering local communities to tackle child poverty by drawing on the resource that is already available. This would include schools addressing local improvements 'in standards and increasing opportunities for the most disadvantaged pupils' (p. 55). Critics of the focus on strong parenting argue that this does not adequately address inequality and is, ultimately, a deficit model based on an underlying assumption that poor parenting is one of the causes of intergenerational poverty (Levitas, 2012). The emphasis on local communities may appear to be enhanced by support for initiatives such as Sure Start and early intervention but increases accountability to local communities.

The initiatives under the Labour government attempted to tackle the related challenges of reducing poverty and increasing the effectiveness of school education for disadvantaged children and young people. A number of these initiatives have been successful, if only for the duration of the investment, but all of these initiatives may need to be judged within a culture of increasingly oppressive accountability in school education, emerging deficit models of schools – 'failing schools' – and the threat of punitive measures and, ultimately, closure for 'failing schools' (Thomson et al., 2012). The coalition government initiatives are characterized by apportioning responsibility and accountability (and possibly blame) to parents and local communities within a context of cuts in benefits that are having widespread effect (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2013).

Some contemporary research has argued for another approach: that changes in whole school cultures and orientation may be the best form of intervention for children and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, as it would be for all children. Martin Haberman (Haberman, 1991, 2007, 2012; Haberman & Post, 1998), for example, has argued consistently for the improvement in the quality of teachers and teaching in urban schools in America. He states that a *pedagogy of poverty* has prevailed in schools with high levels of 'disadvantaged' children in America (Haberman, 1991). This is a pedagogy that limits and restricts learning and teaching to directive teacher acts and transmissive knowledge. The pedagogy of poverty is predicated on the vision of a model of teacher competence that becomes synonymous with control of children and young people, but within an insidious context of pupil manipulation of learning activities through selected compliance and resistance. The low expectation of these children and young people is ultimately a consequence of stigmatization and the 'othering' of the 'poor' child. Haberman argues that a new vision of teaching and learning is required. This vision is based on trusting, reciprocal relationships between the teacher and children and young people and the creation of learning environments that support meaningful learning activities where children and young people can engage with intellectual openness and integrity. He identifies the teacher as a key agent in change processes.

There are a number of ways of understanding and creating these learning environments (Wrigley, Thomson, & Lingard, 2012). Let us examine two recent examples from Australia and America. In Australia, the Queensland School Reform Longitudinal Study (QSRLS) sought to identify quality learning experiences within schools (Zyngier, 2007). The research team proposes that schools are productive when they create productive learning environments for all children, including

marginalized and disadvantaged groups (rejecting deficit models of children and young people, teachers and parents and the stigma of special provision for disadvantaged children and young people) (Lingard, Hayes, Mills, & Christie, 2003). Productive schools are characterized by teachers who are leaders, life-long learners and collegial and who promote a combination of productive pedagogies and productive assessment. There are four dimensions to productive pedagogies: *intellectual quality*, *connectedness*, *supportive classroom environment* and *working with and valuing difference* (Hayes, Mills, Christie, & Lingard, 2006). This means children and young people will continue to be taught basic skills and provided with cultural capital but will also be provided with intellectual challenge and stimulation (consolidated by rich assessment practices that are not limited to narrow assessment instruments) and engagement with difference to enable them to make connections between their learning in school and the world outside the classroom. This should help them to engage with the external world and become 'participative and transformative citizens'. The productive school values the emotional well-being of the pupils and acknowledges that teaching is an emotional practice – it involves emotional labour.

If the productive school is to be successful, it requires strong leadership from both official school leaders and teachers. This is a leadership that negotiates the daily demands of school life without devolving into managerialism – a leadership that shares the vision of the productive learning environment with teachers, children and young people and parents and facilitates or co-facilitates the conceptual, curricular and procedural changes to move towards productive pedagogies for the whole school. The leaders are able to share leadership and the responsibility for the operation of these changes with teachers (Hayes et al., 2006; Lingard et al., 2003; Wrigley et al., 2012).

In the American context, Tileston and Darling (2009) share the anxieties of Haberman. They have responded to the challenge of educating children and young people from a wide variety of cultural backgrounds, and especially those who experience poverty and deprivation. They critique some of the planned interventions such as afterschool programmes, tutoring and the (temporary) deployment of highly qualified teachers in disadvantaged schools as not being focused on the learner and, crucially, the learner's culture. They argue that schools and teachers can create *culturally responsive* educational environments, based on collectivist value systems. These are unlike educational environments that are constructed as models of learning and teaching most suited to middle-class children and young people of northern European and Anglo-Saxon background and are based on individualistic value systems. These *culturally responsive* educational environments are founded initially on relationship and can build resilience in the pupils and help these pupils to succeed. They have identified four traits that characterize resilient students: social competence, problem-solving skills, autonomy and sense of purpose and future. They describe the resilient student as one who possesses self-esteem, but also possesses self-efficacy. The role of the school leadership is crucial in the process of creating a *culturally responsive* classroom ensuring a high-quality education for all.

Recent research in the United Kingdom analysed the reasons for high levels of initial positive school leaver destinations in socially disadvantaged schools (McKinney et al., 2013). This occurs in school contexts with strong leadership, delegated responsibility, a vision that has emerged from within the school and is shared with the members of the school community and aims to include all children and young people. This study also identified resilience, determination and self-efficacy as characteristic of students who succeed in such schools, but points out that children and young people need the support of family and/or school. Considerable support is required for some children, especially the disengaged and the disengaging – the 'hard-to-reach' children and young people described by Machin et al. (2007). This can be effective when provided or co-provided by external support workers who have knowledge, experience and contact with the wider community beyond

the confines of the school. These support workers help families and aid and facilitate transitions for young people to employment, training and Further Education.

Concluding remarks

Over a 100 years after Joseph Rowntree set up his Foundation to tackle social evils, child poverty continues to be prevalent. Child poverty can still be described as a moral issue, although in an updated, sophisticated understanding that it is an affront to civilized society – an understanding that eschews a concept of moral *weakness* (Adamson, 2012; Spicker, 2007). Importantly, child poverty and access to school education have been established as international human rights issues and as such are embedded in longitudinal initiatives such as the MDGs and anti-poverty campaigns. Using sets of international statistics, such as MICS, to set targets and monitor progress can be useful, but the processes are inevitably and inextricably bound with standardized measurement and international accountability. Using the UNICEF MICS statistics alone, it would be easy to simply focus on the serious challenges faced by developing countries such as Sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia. These statistics have to be offset by (1) use of trans-national and national statistics and information that have identified serious challenges for the developed countries in the levels of child poverty and school education, including groups of children such as those in child labour, invisible and disabled children; (2) audit of the quantity, quality and distribution of resources and the prevailing infrastructure in each national context both within the developed and developing countries and (3) a move from limited one-dimensional solutions focused on material aspects of child poverty and school education and greater focus on a multidimensional approach to child poverty and the school education of disadvantaged children and young people.

The government interventions in socially disadvantaged schools in the United Kingdom have provided good examples of the range of state interventions into school education: early years, intervention in literacy and numeracy, targeting schools in disadvantaged areas and financial incentives for disadvantaged children and young people. These interventions cannot be abstracted from deficit models (whether of teachers, pupils or parents), wider policies of school accountability and benefit cuts that deplete existing financial resource for many families. The three examples (*productive schools and pedagogies*, Australia; *culturally responsive* learning environments, America and sustaining high levels of initial positive school leaver destination, the United Kingdom) offer alternative ways of viewing intervention. There are some very interesting similarities between these three: (1) the vision is to be shared with all members of the school community (and even beyond the community); (2) the vision is that all children and young people are to be included, not limited to particular groups whether advantaged or disadvantaged; (3) the learning and teaching have to relate to the wider world beyond the confines of the classroom and (4) the school leadership is key, but the leadership is shared or delegated with teachers.

This article had an ambitious aim: a critical introduction to understanding child poverty, the relationship between child poverty and school education and different approaches to intervention in national contexts. The article has introduced some of the key global, transnational and national themes and has positioned these themes as in transition – subject to constant change. Tracking initiatives, developments and interventions, and their effects through concerted and longitudinal research is essential to understanding child poverty and the relationship with school education. There is also ample scope for research into many other issues such as the voices of disadvantaged children and young people and their experience of school, the long-term prospects for disadvantaged children and young people, the effects of rural poverty on children and young people and their education and the poverty experienced by migrant children and their access to education and deeper questions about cultural capital and access to the more

elite courses and universities (ATL, 2013; Brown & Lauder, 2009; Open Society, 2010; Population Reference Bureau, 2013).

Notes

1. Other well-known sources of data include the following: United States Agency for International Development (USAID) demographic and health surveys, the World Bank's Living Standards Measurement Surveys and the World Health's Organization (WHO) World Health Surveys (Nandy & Minujin, 2012).
2. The Young Lives Study is a good example of a quantitative/qualitative approach that is also longitudinal (Boyden & Bourdillon, 2012). The Young Lives Study is based in Ethiopia, India, Peru and Vietnam (20 sites in each country). The sample is for each country: 2000 children born in 2001–2002 and 1000 children born in 1994–1995. The children are surveyed every 3 years (five times: 2002–2016), and in 2007, qualitative research was introduced to consolidate the quantitative work (Bourdillon, 2012).
3. The 2011 census in the United Kingdom identified 178,000 young carers (under 18 years) in England and Wales (Barnardo's, 2013b).
4. The other two aspects were work as the route out of poverty and financial support to families with children.

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