

phenomenon, albeit with variations in countries of different cultures and social histories. It has major implications for social inequalities, the economic burden on households, and the lives of both pupils and teachers. The book brings into question the meaning of policy statements about fee-free education when the hidden practice is fee-charging and highly stratified. The book is a superb example of comparative analysis which calls readers' attention to forces which are emerging worldwide and which threaten to reshape the very nature of education systems and pupils' learning experiences. Many policy-makers and other actors have preferred to ignore the shadow education system. Bray is quite right to say that it should be confronted. This book will be a major stimulus for such a confrontation.

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Donald B. Holsinger and W. James Jacob (eds.): *Inequality in Education. Comparative and International Perspectives*. Springer, Hong Kong, 2008, 584 pp., ISBN 978-90-481-2651-4.

National and international foundations and agencies of educational development have long been striving to achieve equality and equity in all realms of education. This has been a long process whereby agencies and foundations have taken various paths of development and various methods of dealing with inequalities and inequities and various ways of achieving what is equal and equitable in education for our common good. This book is one of those continuous endeavours to tackle equality and equity not only in many methodological and procedural perspectives, but also in many social, political, economic and cultural contexts and many countries.

The book covers the issue of inequality in at least three continents through well constructed case studies. Without a doubt, the book has created a very strong theoretical and conceptual framework related to equality and equity. It also defines the two terms a reader needs in order to contextualise the analysis contained within: equality as "the state of being equal in terms of quantity, rank, status, value, or degree" (p. 4); and equity which "considers the social justice ramifications of education in relation to the fairness, justness, and impartiality of its distribution of all levels of educational subsectors" (p. 4). The chapters and the sections of the book provide the reader with an insightful analysis of equality and equity in relation to history, gender, language, religion, enrolments, economic growth, access, participation, poverty, policies (e.g. centralisation versus decentralisation), distribution of human growth, social justice, distribution of formal education, etc. The use of statistical analysis—and a somewhat qualitative approach, especially in the case of teacher perceptions of educational attainment in Egypt—enriches the substance of this work and provides it with solid evidence on inequality and inequity in education worldwide. Furthermore, empirical evidence from a variety of countries—regardless of their ethnicity, race, linguistic and/religious differences—enables the problems of inequality and inequity in education to be compared.

The book has six parts, as well as an introduction and a conclusion. The first part of the book depicts conceptual issues which are perceived to affect equality and

equity in education. Part two deals with inequality and inequity in Asia, with the emphasis on equity in access and participation as well as educational attainment, and the urgency of formulating reform policies to narrow existing gaps. Part three discusses two issues related to education inequality and inequity: higher education issues related to policies of access and participation (and many ideological/political implications of those policies on open access versus selective access higher education institutions in France and many other Western European countries); and religious education in Europe (as one of the fundamentals of globalisation and its implications on traditional European education). Part four deals with Middle East and North Africa case studies, using a mixed methodology of quantitative and qualitative analysis, e.g. in an Egyptian study, and looking at the perceptions of teachers with regard to educational attainment inequalities, e.g. in Iran. Part five looks at wage inequalities in the Mexico context, as well as US issues that include, but are not limited to, disparities in education attainment and access. A particularly interesting chapter provides a lively comparison between South Africa and Peru based on the shared theme of apartheid; another examines Nicaragua and Brazil to highlight the importance of governance and institutionalised designs in enhancing equality and equity in education. The final part of this book tackles sub-Saharan Africa, with two chapters on the devolution of education and education in Commonwealth countries offering grounded recommendations for future educational reforms.

Inequality in Education: Comparative and International Perspectives is a strong contribution to the field of comparative education because it offers conclusions and recommendations to the problems of inequality and inequity while at the same time strongly maintaining the importance of the fundamentals and cultures of each country studied. Indeed, its strengths are manifold and include the variety of issues and problems raised. The analytical and empirical information gathered allows this book to generate a real sense of urgency—and a shared one at that. In many ways, the nuanced concept of educational inequality put forward in *Inequality in Education: Comparative and International Perspectives* is globally applicable. This adds weight to its call for a marriage between state and international policy as a means of effectively resolving problems of inequality and inequity.

A further strength lies in the book's ability to address a number of key issues in a thoughtful and well-justified manner. One of these is gender. It does not claim that gender is a cause of inequality and inequity in education; instead, it points the finger of blame at the state policies and governance that have led to educational gender inequalities in many countries. Even though gender disparities and debates have spawned international policies to deal explicitly with the problem, this work makes clear that there is still a lack of state policies that succeed in encouraging women and girls to participate in education and in increasing graduation rates among female students. A further issue raised is that of cost and expenditure in education and higher education: the book assesses the steeply increasing costs of education and tertiary education, weighs these against education budget cuts carried out by countries struggling to deal with demographic change and then addresses the financial sustainability and affordability of higher education as a matter of equity that many countries are proving unable to overcome.

The methodological and conceptual frameworks in *Inequality in Education: Comparative and International Perspectives* represent a welcome addition to the repertoire of comparative education scholars. The work is not entirely comprehensive; however, it is an exciting and creative attempt to reflect upon current policies that lie at the heart of building up our understanding of equity and equality in education.

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Jackie Kirk (ed.): *Certification Counts. Recognizing the Learning Attainments of Displaced and Refugee Children*. UNESCO-IIEP, Paris, 2009, 236 pp., ISBN 978-92-803-1324-6.

This work, edited by Jackie Kirk, centres on the crucial theme of the recognition, validation and certification of learning attainments of children and youth displaced by conflict and natural disasters. It is the fruit of an innovative research collaboration between IIEP-UNESCO, the Amsterdam Institute for Metropolitan and International Development Studies and IRC, supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands.

The critical importance for education authorities and service providers to develop mechanisms and procedures for learners to have acceptable proof of their achievements is seen as central to the work of humanitarian and development actors. The aim of this work is to develop knowledge about interventions, strategies and methodologies which will improve access to quality education for all in areas of conflict, emergency and reconstruction.

The book is divided into two main sections. The first introduces the project and the research framework and draws out overarching themes from the case studies contributed by student researchers at the University of Amsterdam and by individual and partner organisations. Section 2 (Chaps. 7–14) contains case studies, offering perspectives and insights into certification issues in specific locations and in the work of UN and non-UN organisations.

In Chap. 1, Jackie Kirk introduces the research framework. She outlines the situations faced by the children of refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), and the terminologies used. Certification and accreditation are defined as a stamp of quality that publicly attests the value of a learning programme. Validation is the process by which the authenticity of the accreditation is ascertained. Recognition is the acceptance by an outside party of a certificate's worth and validation (Talbot 2006). The framework reflects the various possible certification scenarios or validation moments. Instead of uninterrupted opportunities for cognitive, social, emotional and economic protection and development, refugee students are faced with many obstacles at each transition point in a trajectory of forced migration. The framework points to the special situation of IDPs.

Chapter 2 makes a strong case for certification. Kirk argues that despite the right of refugee children to a public education and to certification of learning achievement upheld in the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees,