

Thematic Review

Understanding and Addressing Educational Marginalisation

March 2018

*Part 1: A new Conceptual Framework for
educational marginalisation*

GEC Thematic Reviews

This paper is one of a series of thematic reviews produced by the Fund Manager of the Girls' Education Challenge, an alliance led by PwC, working with organisations including FHI 360, Nathan Associates and Social Development Direct.

The full series of papers is listed below:

- Understanding and Addressing Educational Marginalisation
Part 1: A new conceptual framework for educational marginalisation
- Understanding and Addressing Educational Marginalisation
Part 2: Educational marginalisation in the GEC
- Economic Empowerment Interventions
- Community based Awareness, Attitudes and Behaviour
- Addressing School Violence
- Girls' Self-Esteem
- Extra and Co-Curricular Interventions
- Educational Technology
- Teaching, Learning and Assessment
- School Governance

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1. Introduction

“Education is a fundamental human right...It should never be an accident of circumstance, nor is it a privilege to be distributed based on wealth, gender, race, ethnicity or language.”
Ban Ki Moon¹

Based on lessons learned during the GEC’s first phase, and building on the work of key contributors to the education and the disability sectors, this paper proposes a new definition and conceptual framework for educational marginalisation. These contribute a new perspective to the sector by recognising educational marginalisation as 1) both an *outcome* and a *process*; 2) part of the wider marginalisation context and inequities that exist at social and policy level; 3) situated within a rights framework and 4) considering both access, retention and learning. This definition also provides a useful contribution towards a shared definition of educational marginalisation. Building on this definition, a conceptual framework to support a more contextualised diagnosis of educational marginalisation is proposed. The aim of this is to support programming that is focused on specific barriers for different sub-groups of girls.

The subsequent paper in this series focuses on *educational marginalisation* and how GEC projects have interpreted and applied their thinking on this in relation to targeting and programming. Other papers in this series explore further how different types of interventions might have enabled or excluded girls in achieving learning and attendance outcomes.

Education is a universal right, bound by the principles of non-discrimination and equality, and recognised in many international and regional legal instruments including the Universal Declaration on Human Rights (1948) and the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960). This right is being denied to around 263 million children and adolescents¹ who have never started school or have dropped out. Data suggests that despite gains in primary school enrolment, many children are not developing basic literacy and numeracy skills even when they spend several years enrolled in school (Pritchett & Sandefer, 2017). The fact that women and girls form two thirds of the world’s illiterate² and a significant proportion of those who are out of school, highlights gender as a major dimension of this marginalisation. Of these, girls living in the poorest families in rural areas are the least likely to complete school, the least likely to learn, and the most likely to be out of school. When we are able to disaggregate this further, girls from linguistic and ethnic minorities and those whose mother tongue is different from the language taught at school are even more likely to be over-represented in those out of school and not learning (Sperling, G., Winthrop, R. & Kwauk, C., 2016).

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) are a timely impetus to go beyond current, mainstream education solutions to better understand and reach those who remain

¹ UNESCO Institute of Statistics (2016) This estimate includes 61 million children of primary school age, 60 million of lower secondary school age and the first ever estimate of those of upper secondary school age at 142 million.

² See <http://www.educategirls.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Girls-Education-Fact-Sheet.pdf>

marginalised. However, in most developing countries, the most marginalised groups remain hidden from large data sets that shape policy and funding strategies. Thus, SDG Goal 4 presents an unprecedented opportunity to collect and analyse higher quality, disaggregated data that focuses our attention on the needs and realities of these girls. In line with this, the Girls' Education Challenge (GEC) was launched to support up to a million marginalised girls to learn, and employed a rigorous measurement of attendance, learning and retention. While the results show that over 800,000 girls have benefited from the GEC with improved learning outcomes, they also provide useful insight into what did and didn't work when supporting these girls to enrol and learn. Using a new definition and conceptual framework based on lessons learned during the GEC's first phase, this paper provides an analysis of how educational marginalisation was understood and addressed across the GEC project portfolio. It draws out key lessons and implications for the design and implementation of projects seeking to support educationally marginalised girls. For a systematic analysis of outcome-level results for marginalised girls across endline reports, please see the GEC Evaluation Manager's endline reports³. Additionally, the other learning papers in this series analyse the effectiveness of different interventions within the GEC in addressing determinants and dimensions of educational marginalisation.

2. Redefining and diagnosing educational marginalisation

The UNESCO 'Education for All, Global Monitoring Report 2010'⁴ defined educational marginalisation as 'a form of acute and persistent disadvantage rooted in underlying social inequalities' and dedicated the report to exploring it. Despite this, educational marginalisation remains a relatively unexplored concept and there has been little practical focus on defining or conceptualising it in contexts in which GEC projects operate. Related literature can be found on several topics, including gender, inequality, inclusive education and single marginalised groups. These build a broad picture of where and when educational marginalisation as an outcome exists, by focusing on the global out-of-school population, or the inequities between different groups across the characteristics of age and gender. However, gaps in the diagnosis of educational marginalisation remain evident, and stretch beyond age, gender, or the process of exclusion from education.

Lewin's (2007) seminal model of 'zones of exclusion from education' across the education lifecycle has been a key contribution to the sector's understanding of educational marginalisation as an outcome. It conceptualises six zones of exclusion, from children who never attend school, to those who dropout at secondary level. Groups are defined by their frequency of participation in education at different grades and their risk of dropout, with the aim of identifying patterns of access and retention. UNICEF's Global Out-of-School Children Initiative built upon this to develop the Five Dimensions of Exclusion (5DE) model and

³ Coffey (2017) GEC Endline Evaluation Reports: Strategic Partnerships Window; Innovations Window; Step Change Window

⁴ A related term more commonly used is 'educational inequality', although there is also a lack of consensus in how this term should be defined and measured (Aikman, S. & Unterhalter, E. 2007)

process⁵, to support identification and targeting of educationally marginalised children. Critical to this is the identification of children who may be invisible within different data sets, and the drawing together of different data sources to develop key profiles of educationally marginalised children, disaggregated by their characteristics. Both models, whilst providing a basis for examining learning outcomes, focus largely on access and retention. Whilst these are a useful standard in drawing together data sets for large scale planning and design of educational systems for an analysis of approaches by the portfolio of GEC projects, a further focus on the concept of intersectionality is proposed, together with an understanding of the process of educational marginalization.

Literature on the conceptualisation of different approaches to disability inclusion – the medical, charity and social/human rights models – provide a useful framework through which to understand barriers to inclusion. The social/human rights model conceives that an individual's characteristics (or impairment) are not a disadvantage in themselves, rather disability results as a social consequence when institutions and infrastructure do not adequately respond to impairments (Wapling, L., 2017).

Building on the work of Lewin, UNICEF OOSI and the disability sector, this paper proposes a new definition that recognises educational marginalisation as 1) both an outcome and a process; 2) needing to be understood in the context of wider marginalisation and the inequities that exist at social and policy level; 3) situated within a rights framework and 4) considering both access, retention and learning. This definition provides a useful contribution towards a shared taxonomy of educational marginalisation.

Educational marginalisation is both an outcome and a process through which individuals or groups are systematically denied their right to acquire academic or social capabilities through education, that results in their exclusion from social institutions, civic processes and economies. This can be temporary, long term or even intergenerationally entrenched.

3. A new conceptual framework for educational marginalisation

Based on the GEC's learning on educational marginalisation, the following conceptual framework is proposed which marries an understanding of **who, where and how** a child might be marginalised, whilst also considering the role of the individual in their own outcomes.

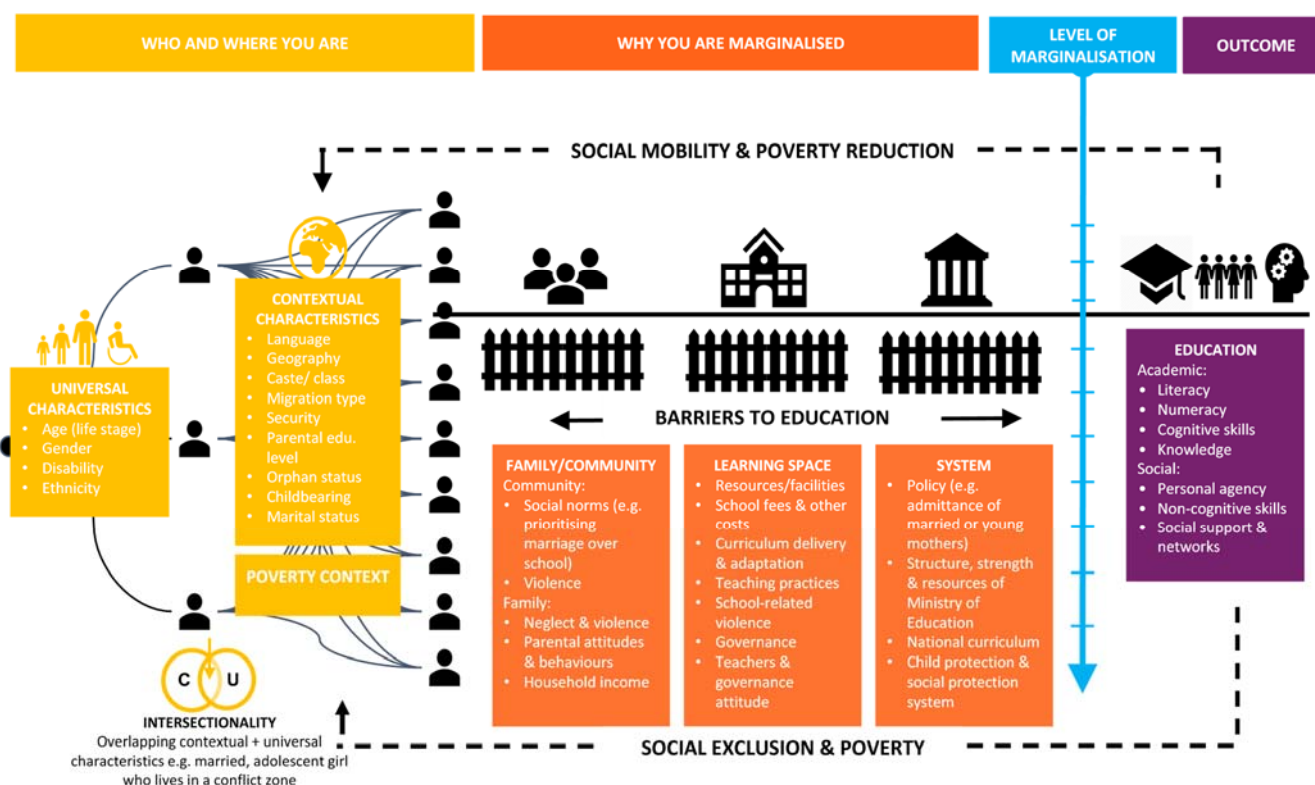
A major challenge in developing this framework was the conflation of barriers and characteristics, which we often saw in the first phase of the GEC being referred to interchangeably. The framework reflects a shift from a need to a **rights-based** perspective

⁵ Available from: http://allinschool.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/F_UNICEF1017_OOSCI_manual-web.pdf [Accessed 8 March 2018]

of educational marginalisation and proposes that education systems and local provision should fulfil children's right to a quality education by **responding** to the barriers faced by different groups of children⁶. An earlier form of this conceptual framework did not make this distinction, instead focusing on the three dimensions of access, experience and outcome. The framework below proposes deeper analyses of how barriers interact with the various social identities of children who are educationally marginalised. For example, it is relatively common to see disability framed as a barrier to education. Using the framework, projects would be prompted to understand what community, school and system barriers prevent children with disabilities from successfully completing their education cycle. Disability per se is not the barrier (neither is being a girl, being an orphan etc.) but having a disability (or being a girl etc.) may lead to educational marginalisation because of the barriers that exist at a home, school or system level.

⁶ This is as opposed to a view that existing education provision should have to 'add on' interventions to a 'one size fits most' approach– instead education should be planned to be 'one size *includes* all' from the start.

4. Educational Marginalisation Framework



The key components of the GEC’s framework for educational marginalisation are briefly described below:

Who and where you are (social identity characteristics): In this evolved concept, we propose the framework as an analytical process tool, making a clear distinction between social identities (which can be universal and contextual), and the barriers which may seek to marginalise them (which in education can exist at community, school and system level). This tool creates a framework through which to analyse and, therefore, seek to address the complex process of educational marginalisation.

It is possible for projects to identify all the above social identities using widely available quantitative data in the first instance, e.g. UNICEF Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS), Demographic and Health Surveys or other census data.

The **characteristics** can be understood as:

- **Universal characteristics** describe social identities that are common to all societies (e.g. gender, age, disability)
- **Contextual characteristics** describe social identities which are relevant to a time or place, and which may change (e.g. geography, language and poverty)

- **Intersectional characteristics** describe social identities which overlap and compound multiple social identities simultaneously e.g. adolescent girls who live in a conflict zone, a disabled boy or girl living in a refugee camp
- **Target groups:** The next step in the process involves the segmentation of data to identify appropriate target groups. The purpose of this exercise is to recognise the diversity that exists within any single characteristic group e.g. defining a target group as 'girls' is insufficient. The characteristic 'girls' needs to be segmented into girls with difficulty hearing, girls who are married, girls who are poor, and so on. Segmentation can be done through more formal statistical analysis with large data sets. For example, this might involve cluster analysis which looks at the most relevant or closely aligned groupings of different characteristics, or factor analysis which might look at common root causes (and therefore links) between different characteristics to allow meaningful grouping. This segmentation needs to be sense checked against (or could be substituted with) a more 'manual' methodology, reviewing common barriers according to different characteristics and creating logical groupings. Some groups may already be self-evident within the data, for example young mothers have clearly identifiable barriers to inclusion, such as a lack of childcare support. The focus should not be on limiting groupings, but rather identifying the widest variations in barriers.

Why you are marginalised (barriers/enablers): The next step involves defining target groups by identifying barriers at three levels for each grouping. These levels represent a need to consider how barriers are to be addressed holistically in order for educational marginalisation to be mitigated or overcome. The diagram above identifies a non-exhaustive list of barrier categories that should be considered in the first instance. A subsequent step involves the further clustering of groups according to common responses to barriers.

Education outcomes: This dimension seeks to illustrate the outcomes for individuals or groups acquiring relevant skills and capacities that facilitate their agency, employment and participation in civic processes. It also acknowledges non-academic, non-cognitive and social skills, and networks acquired through participation in education; see the GEC thematic paper *Understanding and addressing Educational Marginalisation Part 2*.

5. The conceptual model as a planning tool

Based on the GEC's learning on educational marginalisation, this framework can be used as a planning tool which enables practitioners to define their target groups and analyse the various barriers to education which they experience. It does this by making a clear distinction between social identities (which can be universal and contextual) – *who is marginalised* - and the barriers that interact with these identities (which in education can exist at community, school and system level) – *how they are marginalised*. The process through which the identities and barriers interact is what determines an individual's social and academic outcomes, and therefore whether they are educationally marginalised. This tool creates a framework through which to analyse (and therefore seek to address) the complex process of educational marginalisation.

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The Girls' Education Challenge is a project funded by the UK's Department for International Development and is led and administered by PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, working with organisations including FHI 360, Nathan Associates London Ltd. and Social Development Direct Ltd.

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