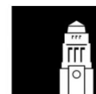

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Evolving approaches to educating children from nomadic communities

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Abstract

Evolving policies have increasingly aimed to include nomadic groups in EFA, but an overemphasis on mobility has distracted policy makers from going beyond access logistics to consider learning needs within nomads' contemporary livelihoods and cultural values. Notable global trends are the growth and institutionalization of forms of Alternative Basic Education (provided by state and nonstate actors for "disadvantaged" learners) and advocacy of Open and Distance Learning.

Case studies of mobile pastoralists in Kenya, India, and Afghanistan, and of sea nomads in Indonesia, illustrate policy and practices on the ground. They highlight a need to address equality, equivalence, and learner progression more closely, rather than adopting strategies for education inclusion that reinforce nomadic groups' sociopolitical marginalization. This requires an extended post-2015 engagement with the larger political question of education's role in undermining, or sustaining and validating, mobile livelihoods.

In keeping with development narratives of education as a public and individual good (Sen 1999; UNHDR 1990), there have been repeated calls for Education for All (EFA) to make an "active commitment" to removing the educational disparities faced by nomadic groups (WDEFA 1990; WEF 2000).

During the EFA decades, global and national policy discourses have increasingly recognized the need to make services more flexible and diverse in order to include "nomadic" populations. These comprise millions of people, living on both land and water, who use mobility strategically and skillfully to support their livelihoods. Some of these (known in the literature as "peripatetics", cf. Rao [1987]) offer specialized services to others. Others are hunter-gatherers, sea nomads, fisher folk, and mobile pastoralists—all of whom deploy diverse mobility strategies to secure fleeting and dispersed natural resources, and rely significantly on resources of the commons. Many of these are among the "missing learners" of EFA discourses.

While the policy visibility of nomadic groups has grown during EFA, attention has largely focused on broadening delivery modalities—a focus that is consistent with framing "learner mobility" as the key barrier to access. While access is important, concerns about it have eclipsed attention to learning needs and to the pressing issue of how formal education intersects with and supports livelihood security. At the same time, the view that nomadic groups suffer from extreme "education deprivation" (cf. UNESCO 2010) is contentious. It negates the value of livelihood-specific endogenous education and, in so doing, fails to engage with how formal education can and should interface with and complement, rather than replace, such education.

As we move into the Sustainable Development Goals era, it is timely to reflect on why it has proved difficult to accommodate nomadic groups within the EFA movement. It is more urgent now than perhaps ever before to give attention to how education should respond

to political marginalization and growing pressures on mobile livelihoods. Although compelling evidence now shows that nomadic groups have remarkable expertise in productively managing uncertainty (cf. IIED 2009; Niamir-Fuller 1999), indigenous knowledge alone is insufficient to live well in the contemporary world. Formal education should play a role in helping indigenous peoples successfully integrate into market economies, defend rights to resources, tackle political marginalization, and challenge policies that encourage sedentarization (cf. Danaher, Kenny, and Leder 2009; Gilbert 2014). But this "meeting learning needs" aspect of EFA has been neglected—and this is a particularly significant omission for nomadic learners because their livelihoods are liable to be seen as inimical to state projects of development, modernity, and "progress" (Bangsbo 2008; Dyer 2014; IIED 2009; Niamir-Fuller 1999).

Policymakers, in effect, need to look in two directions at once: at developing flexible, exogenous education that complements indigenous knowledge and is relevant within nomadic livelihoods; and at the learning needs of those who have sedentarized (Dyer 2014; Greany 2012). This article begins with a discussion of policy during EFA, focusing first on who these "missing learners" are, and on learning for and in nomadic livelihoods; and then on how their education "inclusion" is framed in policy and delivered on the ground. It illustrates key trends with four case studies: mobile pastoralists in India, Afghanistan, and Kenya, and sea nomads in Indonesia. The conclusion discusses post-2015 priorities, and ensuring that increasing reliance on Alternative Basic Education does not reinforce existing inequalities.

Missing learners: Misrecognized as out-of-school children and educationally deprived

Post-Dakar national legislation and policies signal growing engagement with the right to education of all children (UNICEF 2014); but using sometimes nascent Education Management Information Systems (EMIS) to identify missing learners is both technically and politically challenging (Carr-Hill 2012; Watkins 2012). In the zones where pastoralists live, for example, generally low trends of enrolment, retention, and achievement in formal schooling are broadly evidenced (UNESCO 2010), but it is difficult to go beyond a general profile to disaggregate specific groups in order to focus action. Further, recognizing missing learners as out-of-school children (UNICEF 2014) frames being in school as the desired position. It is important to avoid inadvertently conflating formal education with the dominant model of provision—i.e. "school" as a geospatially fixed institution. For mobile learners, the "terms of inclusion" (Dyer 2013) of such a school typically require changes to patterns of work, mobility, and the situated learning on which their nomadic livelihoods depend (see Dyer 2014 for detail). These risks and opportunity costs are invisible in policy discourses of their "education deprivation"—an assertion that fails spectacularly to recognize situated livelihood learning as a legitimate form of education, essential to sustaining livelihoods. Such tensions over "education" are written large in struggles over formal education's relevance to nomadic groups (Krätli 2001; Rao 2006; Ruto, Ongwengyi, and Mugo 2009). In this regard, it is important to recall that the basic human right is to education, not to schooling (Convention of the Rights of the Child 1990; UN-HDR 1948).

Some pre-EFA policy discourses label "nomads" pejoratively as "backward" (e.g., GoI 1987) in the context of the idea of "development" as modernity (Gomes 2007) and formal education as a means of achieving it (e.g., MHRD 1992). Framing education in this way shapes a negative governmentality (Foucault 1994) toward nomadic groups

(Morton 2010), which interprets unwillingness to be "included" through education (Unterhalter, Yates, Makinda, and North 2012) in wider society and to embrace "modern" values as irrationality and backwardness rather than its converse: valid resistance to the potential risks and costs to nomadic livelihoods of doing so. To posit schooling's lack of attraction as a problem of demand deflects from engaging with its relevance, quality, and/or cultural fit (and its gendered dimensions, e.g., Raymond 2014; Sanou and Aikman 2005). Yet, the lands on which mobile livelihoods depend have typically received limited state investment in infrastructure (Carr-Hill 2006; Krätli and Dyer 2009) and so, often, the availability of a good quality school cannot be taken for granted. Harsh physical conditions, insecurity, low population density, difficulties in attracting and retaining learners and teachers, and teacher quality are common operational difficulties (Bangsbo 2008; McCaffery, Sanni, Ezeomah, and Pennells 2006; VerEcke 1989). Across Africa, such zones are now often also conflict-prone, which, from providers' perspectives, enforces a focus on education inclusion as a strategy expected to improve national security (ADEA 2013), rather than as a basic right for all and/or a means of enhancing human capability.

Adapting provision to facilitate access

Well before the EFA movement began, countries with nomadic populations had made efforts to include them in formal education by using specific measures rather than relying on enrolment in fixed-place day schools. Mongolia and Iran saw state-sponsored initiatives; and in 1989, just before Jomtien, Nigeria had established a National Commission on Nomadic Education (NCNE) (Tahir, Muhammad, and Mohammed 2005) in a conscious attempt to diversify provision and implement its 1987 Nomadic Education Policy. Since 2000, policy documentation has increasingly identified the need for strategies focusing specifically on nomadic groups, often building on stakeholder

discussions of policy priorities and programming strategies, and supported by agencies such as UNICEF, USAID, and the Commonwealth Secretariat (CommSec/Dyer 2009; de Souza 2006), and civil society organizations. By the EFA midterm, an emerging literature on past experience (e.g. Dyer 2006; USAID 2008) could inform such activities and future strategies for educating nomadic groups. Research reviews were also specifically commissioned (e.g., Krätli's 2001 World Bank review), particularly for East Africa (cf. Anis 2008; Carr-Hill 2006; Oxfam 2005; Sifuna 2005), with other publications becoming available (e.g., Danaher et al. 2009; Kratli and Dyer 2009). What emerged from these reviews was more discussion of the poor suitability of formal, fixed-place schools, issues with residential schooling, some experience of mobile provision of education, and, in keeping with the Dakar emphasis on flexibility (WEF 2000), a stress on alternative modalities, including distance education.

Residential schooling is largely an extension of the day-school model, with access helped by boarding. On a large scale, Mongolia's state-provided residential schooling was successful during the socialist regime (Demberel and Penn 2006), when the pastoral production system was an integral part of the economy, but it declined in both availability and quality when pastoralism's fortunes changed in the post-1990 market economy (Yembuu 2006). The best contemporary models of practice are from individual residential schools established with state support and run by community members in close consultation with users, and with teachers from nomadic communities (e.g., in Oman, cf. Chatty 2006; and Gujarat in India, cf. Dyer 2014). Such measures enable formal education to be embedded within communities' social mores and oversight, which helps to make it accessible and acceptable.

Making schools mobile so they can reach mobile learners is another well-established delivery adaptation. The iconic mobile schools are Iran's white tent schools, first mooted in 1924, then established in 1955 within Persia's Tribal Education

Programme (Gharakhlou 2006; Shahbazi 2002). They have brought education to mobile pastoralists, enabling children to combine formal and livelihood-orientated learning; and they have claimed an acceptable integration, rather than assimilation, of nomadic groups into formal education (Shahbazi 2006). Smaller scale, pre-Jomtien experiments with mobile schools (e.g., in Algeria, Siberia, Niger [cf. Krätli 2001]) became a favoured post-Jomtien strategy. In the mid-1990s, UNICEF sponsored 200 mobile schools in Sudan (Krätli and Dyer 2009, p. 57), and Oxfam also used this model in Sudan (Aikman and El Haj 2006) and Mali (Sanou and Aikman 2005).

Mobile schools are a promising but not perfect option. Recruiting teachers is difficult and, although schools move, learners tend to be temporary: amongst pastoralists, the demands of animal welfare—which always take precedence—may require them to scatter suddenly. Enrolment and progression are liable to be unstable (IIRR n.d.); and overseeing the quality of mobile education is extremely challenging (USAID 2012).

As EFA progressed, Open and Distance Learning (ODL) also attracted attention as a means of reaching highly mobile learners, reflecting its intrinsic flexibility as a mode of delivery that removes learning barriers linked to time, place, pace, methods of study. A notable example of an apparently successful radio-based distance learning project was the Mongolia Gobi women's literacy project (Robinson 1999). While ODL can enable access for otherwise "missing" learners, how their learning needs should be identified and met in a large-scale programme remains contested, as the Kenya case study will show (see also Aderinoye et al. 2007; Muhammad et al. 2010).

Nomadic groups' education inclusion in Kenya, India, Afghanistan, and Indonesia

In this section, I present brief case studies of policy evolution and practices implemented in Kenya, India, and Afghanistan (mobile pastoralists) and in Indonesia (sea nomads).

They highlight progress toward conceiving provision more flexibly but show that grasping the political nettle of how education can and should relate to nomadic livelihoods remains largely unaddressed.

Kenya

Kenya has long experience of formal and nonformal education delivery modalities in the context of high policy visibility of "missing learners" from pastoralist groups. These groups total about 7 million people, largely concentrated in the Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASALs) that comprise 70% of Kenya (MDNKOAL 2010b). In 2007, public primary school enrolments in the ASALs showed net ratios there of below 30% for boys and 20% for girls (Ruto, Ongwengyi, and Mugo 2009; UNESCO 2010). Abolition of school fees in 2003 had largely failed to catalyze enrolment in the ASALs, leaving an "inexcusable gap" between those children and the rest of Kenyan children (MDNKOAL 2010a, p. 24). While costs are not the only issue, allocating resources and staffing equitably and appropriately for fluctuating learner populations is difficult. The capitation grant, for example, follows a formula that disadvantages the 12 counties in the ASALs that are home to 46% of the country's out-of-school population, because it is distributed on the basis of number of students enrolled (Ruto, Ongwengyi, and Mugo 2009; UNESCO 2010).

Remarking on challenges of access, equity, quality, and relevance, a 2004 sessional paper on the national education policy framework (MoEST 2004) recognized the need to "develop strategies to enhance participation of children in special circumstances including […] the ASALs" and provide "additional support to low cost boarding schools" there (ibid., pp. 35, 34). The latter refers to a cost-sharing approach, originating in aid conditionalities, that burdened parents with boarding fees (Abdi 2010). However, poor pastoralist attendance and retention in schools also reflect discomfort

with poorly equipped facilities, antipastoralist values in the curriculum (Krätli 2001), and an unaccustomed diet (Abdi 2010, p. 68)—all problems that also demand attention. Since the 2006 and subsequent droughts, such schools have served as food aid centres. While an increase in enrolments has accompanied this (de Souza 2006), this increase is at least partly driven by the negative impact on pastoralism of frequent droughts; in changing circumstances, schooling can be a means to exit, rather than to support, pastoralism.

Kenya has long experimented with mobile schools run by a wide range of donor/state/NGO partnerships, all intending to provide, initially at least, basic formalized education that complements learning to be a pastoralist. Oxfam's ABET, introduced in Turkana in 2004, ran about 30 mobile schools within the larger programme; UNICEF has sponsored over 50 mobile schools (de Souza 2006); and local civil society organizations have begun many smaller initiatives. Such mobile schools have tended to wax and then wane, however, and leave behind little documentation concerning their practices or insights. There are, though, reports of difficulties in recruiting and retaining teachers. In contrast, the mobile Somali Quranic School (dugsi) has consistently sustained provision; policy-level discussions have noted the intent to look more closely to the successful features of this model (pers comm NACONEK 2015), which raises very interesting issues about demand for secular and religious knowledge. Another important mobile initiative, in recognition of the lack of a "literate environment" (UNESCO 2006) in pastoralist areas, has been library provision. Kenya's National Library Service launched camel libraries in 1985 as an alternative to motorized mobile libraries; three of those, now supported by BookAid International, each make about 200 books available in pastoralist zones (http://www.knls.ac.ke/index.php/public-library/camel-library).

Despite pastoralists' comparatively high visibility to policy communities, political commitment to ensuring their right to education has been inconsistent. In an innovative

move in April 2008, the government formed a regional Ministry of State for the Development of Northern Kenya and other Arid Lands (MDNKOAL) to offer technical expertise to support line ministries (Elmi and Birch 2013)—but with a meagre budget (UNESCO 2010, p. 193) that was no match for the scale of its remit (MDNKOAL 2010b, p. 25). MDNKOAL, however, picked up on the 2005 SACMEQ II remark that meaningful intervention should be guided by studies on the fit between schooling and pastoralism (Onsomu, Nzomo, and Obiero 2005, p. 157) and in 2009 commissioned a literature review of strategic options for educating pastoralists (Krätli and Dyer 2009) alongside participatory consultations (Cavanna and Abkula 2009). The review recommended that ODL be the foundation of a flexible system that allows learners to remain engaged in mobile pastoral production while accessing education that is formal and mainstream but not school-based. In January 2010, a joint ministerial workshop (MDNKOAL 2010a, 2010b) endorsed the recommendation; and the Ministry of Education insisted that, to ensure parity, the curriculum be an adaptation of the formal curriculum. This standpoint raised issues that the workshop did not fully resolve over how best to accommodate nomadic groups' specific learning needs within the national curriculum, particularly in the absence, in a distance model, of a teacher to mediate the materials.

Policy Guidelines on Nomadic Education, following in 2010, recommended establishing a National Commission on Nomadic Education in Kenya (NACONEK) and endorsed the ODL-based strategy (MDNKOAL 2010a). Although NACONEK was approved in December 2012, MDNKOAL itself was disbanded after the 2013 election and implementation stalled. In March 2015, NACONEK was announced—but as a council rather than a commission, which conferred on it less power and financial resources than anticipated to engage specifically with nomadic education and those particular missing learners. Despite this dilution, NACONEK has a clear policy

mandate; it is now actively seeking (1) to provide coordination for the disparate activities of the state and its development partners working to educate mobile pastoralists; and (2) to develop an institutional memory and evidence base to inform strategic policy decisions (pers comm NACONEK 2015).

India

By 2015, India claimed to have reduced its 2001 total of 32 million out-of-school children to 1 million (UNESCO 2015). Difficulties of registering births and getting an accurate population census cast doubt on whether either figure includes all children; further, rapid progress in enrolment has seen very little change in state primary schools' high attrition rates over the EFA period—and very poor learning outcomes in those schools (ASER 2014). The 2008 EFA mid-term report pointed to a "long struggle ahead" in "meeting the educational needs of the traditionally marginalised and excluded groups" (NUEPA 2008, p. 4), who were a prominent focus of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) universal elementary education framework (SSA 2005a) launched in 2001. SSA called for "specific strategies for special groups like [...] children of migrating families, etc." (SSA 2005b, sect. 5.1.1.iii), but subsequent legislation has undermined this promise. The long-awaited Right to Education (RTE) Act of 2009 has been singularly unhelpful in enforcing the right of every child—mobile or sedentary—to eight years of free, compulsory, quality education by requiring this education to occur in a place-based "neighbourhood school" (RTE 2009, p. 3). In general, policy and research have give inadequate attention to the impact of migration on participation in education (Govinda and Bandyopadhyay 2008).

SSA accommodates "marginal" learners under its Alternative and Innovative Education (AIE) strand. District-level projects have given rise to an array of alternative, nonformal provision (MHRD 2007), including seasonal site-based schools, camps, and bridge courses (Hati and Majumder 2009), though documentation is sparse. For mobile

pastoralists, Jammu and Kashmir established Seasonal Educational Schools in high summer pastures to provide continuity for children attending low pasture schools during winter. However, Suri (2014, p. 31) describes their condition as "pathetic", lacking any semblance of government commitment to meeting basic operating standards (see also, Rao 2006). In Andhra Pradesh, an SSA School on Boat initiative in East Godavari district initially enabled access for children of some 189 fisher families, but SSA then expanded provision to fixed temporary accommodation on the riverbank (MHRD 2007). Gujarat, in western India, developed an innovative e-based tracking model for mobile primary-school learners; but although this state is home to an estimated 600,000 mobile pastoralists, seasonal labour migration is far more established in its policy gaze. In Kachchh district, for example—a key pastoralist area—some innovative provision is made for seasonal labourers but none for mobile pastoralists. When pressed, in 2012, about these "missing learners", state-level officials projected (what they saw as) the constant movement of pastoralists as less rational than seasonal labour migration. In so doing, and notwithstanding the Right to Education for all children, they constructed seasonal mobility as worthy of immediate attention in SSA's target-orientated timeframe—and the need to devote resources and attention to pastoralist learners as of lower priority and justifiability (Dyer 2014).

These vignettes suggest that AIE provision is biased toward accommodating the "easier" patterns of mobility typically associated with seasonal labour or relatively simple pastoralist movement for which semi-permanent on-site nonformal provision is feasible. SSA as a policy framework has the capacity to respond flexibly with local projects for specific learners, once they have been identified. There are constraints, however, arising both from SSA's funding formula -- which fixes specific components, and, further, from the framing of "quality" articulated in the RTE Act.

The larger issue, however, is that pastoralists are fighting an intense battle,

particularly in Gujarat, against the “great Indian land grab” (Sud 2008) that underpins India’s emergence as a global economy. Erosion of access to resources and decline in the social status of their livelihood have intensified mobile pastorists’ demand for formal education as a path toward livelihood diversification, income security, and a respected social identity as “educated” (Dyer 2014; Rao 2006; Rao and Casimir 2003). State inattention to meeting mobile pastoralists’ learning needs with appropriate, non-sedentary provision that contributes to sustaining their traditional livelihoods has lent credence to pastoralists’ perceptions that sedentarizing is a prerequisite for accessing the only formalized education that is available.

Households often respond by reducing herd sizes to free up labour so that children can go to school, and by splitting up to enable some children to attend school in “home” villages. Such strategies are widely used among pastoralists around the world. This adaptation tends to disadvantage girls assigned to domestic work in the split household, to favour some boys and routinely to exclude from accessing existing sedentary provision other boys who remain in pastoralism (Krätli and Dyer 2006). Further, unschooled pastoralists often lack the knowledge and power to challenge the informal policy practices that perpetuate poor-quality public provision on which they and others comment (ASER 2014; Dyer 2014; Rogers and Vegas 2009).

India, now designated a “middle-income” country, has considerably less donor-supported activity in education than countries in Africa and far fewer donor/state/civil society education partnerships. In general, state programmes have focused only very sporadically on nomadic groups. Addressing their needs now requires closer attention on the ground to differentiation among “children of migrating families” (SSA 2005b). Further, while ODL has been included as a national strategy for teacher education, its potential for mobile learners has not been tapped, despite the possibility of drawing in the National Institute of Open Schooling (CommSec/Dyer 2009) and of exploiting a

comprehensive mobile phone network.

Afghanistan

Across a wide range of policy instruments, Afghanistan highlights education's intended role as a "critical national capacity" (PRSP[A] 2008, p. 1). In these instruments, the need to include nomadic groups (alongside females, members of minority groups, and persons with disabilities [ANDS 2008, p. 114]) finds consistent mention; and Article 44 of the 2004 Constitution explicitly commits to improving nomads' education (IRoA 2004). Policies use the generic term "Kuchis" for all Afghan nomadic communities (numbering some two to three million, cf. ANDS 2008; de Weijer 2007), although Kuchis do not share a single ethnicity, language, or religion (Tapper 2008). This leads to imprecision about whether they are sedentary, mobile, animal husbandry practitioners, or exited pastoralists. The average Kuchi literacy rate of 8% (male, around 14%; female, 3%) is substantially lower than the 26.2% national rate (MoEDL 2013), and rates of primary school enrolment are single-digit for both boys and girls (ANDS 2008, p. 114). Pastoralists' livelihood security has considerably worsened since the 2001 invasion, leaving them among the poorest groups in the country (ANDS 2008) identified in policy discourse as "vulnerable" (ANDS 2008, p. 9).

The 2005 Conference on Afghan Pastoralists (Kuchi) (de Weijer 2006) stressed the need for an intersectoral approach to pastoralist development and recommended education be a priority follow-up action. It is difficult, however, to coordinate sufficiently between donors and/or government sectors with responsibility for different aspects of pastoralist affairs (cf. de Weijer 2006; MoE 2013). The National Development Strategy (ANDS 2008) names Kuchis among the priority groups for policy attention—remarking, "Schools […] for Kuchi children are inadequate" (ibid., p. 115)—but conflates the right to education with providing schools: "Access to education for all is enshrined in the

Constitution which makes it illegal to deny or refuse access to schools for any reason" (ANDS 2008, p. 116). The strategy's discussion of education quality improvement also relates to conventional schools (ibid., p. 36).

Policy documentation intends education inclusion to be "national in scope but local in focus and delivery" (ANDS 2008, 117). However, policy documents on equitable inclusion only briefly articulate a need to "assess […] the potential for distance learning strategies" (ibid.) and the intention of establishing further community-based education and outreach classes in remote rural and insecure areas (MoE 2013, p. 16). MoE and aid agencies alike recognize community-based education as a strategy for meeting the vast need for education (Carlsson, Engblom, and Myhrman 2008, p. 20); further, official guidelines regulate community-based education (MoEA 2012), making it something of a formalized nonformal hybrid. These guidelines, however, reproduce sedentary norms in their reference to village-based provision, a walking distance of no more than 3 kilometres, and a preferred minimum of 20 children (MoEA 2012, p. 11–12).

In July 2012, the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan (SCA) convened the first national conference on nomadic education (Dyer 2014; SCA 2012) to discuss international experiences of delivery models. SCA had shown some possibilities via its own community schools: in 2010, 1,430 of the nearly 120,000 children enrolled in these schools were from nomadic groups (of those, 47% were girls). SCA's 2014 work plan promised continued support to 238 nomadic classes for 6,440 students (55% girls) (SCA 2014). While numbers and proportions are small, they suggest that when provision is both proximate and culturally appropriate, pastoralist groups want at least basic education for both boys and girls. But, although SCA schools are often in tents, they are not mobile; and a particular challenge is to identify and train Kuchi girls as teachers.

Viewing Kuchis as a homogenous population group—as some policy documents do—hampers development of differentiated strategies for providing services. As

Foschini (2013) points out, this homogenization "has somewhat artificially 'fixed' the common political identity of an internally diverse group at the very moment that its livelihoods are differentiating and diverging" (p. 1). Despite the availability of more accurate information (e.g., de Weijer 2007; Tapper 2008), documents show limited cognizance of pastoralist mobility, tending to view it as a simple, unified pattern of seasonal migration between high summer pastures and low winter ones. Provision of community-based education, such as SCA's classes, can improve access for pastoralist children who no longer live in fully mobile households—these are evidently rapidly growing in number—but will not do so for those whose livelihood requires more extensive mobility. Conditions for considering ODL remain far distant.

Afghanistan's policy documentation also links education and security: "failure to make substantial progress towards transforming Afghanistan into a literate society will pose a serious threat to security and political stability in the country" (MoEDL 2013, p. 6). The threat from insurgents who often coexist with nomadic communities gives urgency to the familiar state project of educating nomadic groups for "domestication" (Dyer 1999). Afghanistan is not the only nation discussing the need for education to address nomadic livelihoods that pose risks to national security (Danaher et al. 2009; IIED 2009): this concern is mirrored in Nigeria and Kenya and was voiced in a 2013 regional conference on pastoralism and education inclusion across the Francophone Sahel (Dyer 2014).

Indonesia

Sea nomads across maritime Southeast Asia are primarily subsistence fishers and traders of primary produce who ply their trades along the region's extensive coastlines and islands (Chou 2010). They traditionally live on boats, learning to swim, fish, and command their boats, and gaining spatial mapping skills and livelihood-specific

knowledge (Chou 2010; Hodal and Taraschi 2012). Large-scale commercialization of coastal and marine resources, climate change, "blue grabbing" (the maritime equivalent of land grabbing), and expansion of coastal populations all contribute to the rapid destruction of natural resources and ecosystems on which sea nomads depend (Clifton and Majors 2012). Contemporary development programmes aim to settle them (Chou 2010) (often in floating villages), but most sea nomads continue to pursue subsistence-oriented, marine-based mobile livelihoods.

Indonesia comprises an archipelago of 18,307 islands, some 6,000 inhabited, and a population estimated in 2013 at 242.3 million (WPS 2013) distributed across 300 ethnic groupings with diverse languages, religions, and social customs (MoNe 2007a). National ownership of EFA has been strong: in 2002, the Coordinating Ministry of Peoples' Welfare set out mandates and responsibilities for effective EFA coordination (MoNE 2007b). This was supported by the 2003 National Education Law (Law 20/2003), which recognized that "learners in the remote and less developed [and] isolated areas and those who are economically disadvantaged" need focused attention. The law set out a system that included formal, nonformal and distance provision as strategies to ensure "equitable treatment" for all (ARINES 2003, pp. 19–29). These flexible modes for the "previously unreachable" (MoNE 2007a) discredit an earlier view that providing government services to nomadic peoples is "impossible"—as expressed in a memorandum to Indonesia's 1979–1984 Five-Year Plan (Colchester 1986, cit. Chou 2010).

The 2005–2009 Renstra (national strategic plan) set out the vision, mission, and goals of education in the context of national development. A national EFA Action Plan was drawn up in 2003 (NCF 2003); and there was a presidential decree on EFA in 2006. The Renstra and EFA Action Plan are harmonized through three main strategic pillars: (1) ensuring expanded access and equity; (2) improving quality and relevance; and (3) strengthening governance, accountability, and public image (MoNe 2007a, p. 18). They

see education as a means of “enabling balanced development, economic growth and broader poverty reduction” and “creat[ing] a well trained and motivated workforce that ensures growing economic competitiveness of Indonesia” (MoNe 2007a, pp. 5, 4), within a long term vision of “no barriers to accessing education opportunities” (ibid., p. 11). By 2013, 96% of children were enrolled in primary school, gender parity was at nearly 96%, and the adult literacy rate was projected to be 94% as of 2015 (ibid.). The country decentralized public service provision in 1999; aggregated figures mask significant regional variations and variations in district performance within provinces, where the “poorest performing districts” were “mainly the more rural and remote ones” (MoNE 2007b, p. xi).

The case of the Malay Orang Laut (sea people) (Lenhart 2001) is illustrative. The area they have occupied for centuries falls within what is now the Singapore-Indonesia-Malaysia Growth Triangle. Disregard of Orang Laut’s territorial and resource rights, which affects access to resources and seasonal routes, is accompanied by water pollution and deforestation of foraging grounds (Chou 2006). Estimates of their population vary considerably—from 3,000 to 12,000—and their participation rates in formal education are low. Chou (2010) reports that most have no more than one year of schooling and that state education programmes typically fail to ensure their inclusion. That there is uptake of schooling anyway reflects falling prosperity and settlement in coastal areas, which draws the Orang Laut into competition with local residents for depleting marine resources. They have difficulties in making use of services, for reasons that are livelihood-related (unpredictable fishing hours, low education-livelihood relevance [Kortschak 2010]); poverty-related (inability to meet costs associated with schooling [MNDP 2010]; children going hungry during school [UNESCO 2007]); and identity-related (bullying, use of non-native language in the classroom [Chou 2010; Hoogervorst 2012; Kortschak 2010]).

Sea nomads have low policy visibility, and their fit within education policy narratives is questionable. The 2003 EFA Action Plan (NPA 2003) does not specifically mention them, although one EFA mid-decade assessment—acknowledging failures to include marginalized groups in formal education—cites the Bajau Laut sea nomads in Sulawesi as an example of one "un-reached" group (MoNE 2007b), and discusses nonformal approaches. Indonesia developed a three-tiered ABE "paket" (ARINES 2003) for state delivery, but documentation is contradictory: another EFA progress assessment (in 2007) argues that "getting the last 5% of primary school aged children and 30% of junior secondary school aged children into schools will require creative approaches" (MoNe 2007a, p. xi, emphasis added)—reflecting the view that it is demand that is problematic rather than the offer and relevance of formal schools.

Challenges and key priorities for policies related to a post-2015 agenda

UNICEF (2014a, p. xi) rightly makes the case for integrated development planning, pointing out that problems in the education sector cannot be solved from within that sector alone. This a highly pertinent observation for nomadic groups. Those who develop education policy have paid disastrously little attention to what forms and content of education will best support these mobile livelihoods. Under supportive conditions that promote effective redistribution of resources and recognize the economic contribution of mobile populations, maintaining nomadic livelihoods could be part of a global development strategy that enables more people to meet their daily needs and minimizes environmental degradation.

Reconfiguring the provision of education to address this goal is urgently indicated in the welcome focus of post-2015 debates on a sustainable development agenda; but it goes against prevailing trends.

The EFA period has seen significant policy-level recognition of the need to

develop more flexible provision. As the case studies illustrate, policy strategies now generally endorse a version of provision falling under the general ABE banner. Widespread concern over the generally poor performance of "mainstream" provision appears to overshadow critical scrutiny of this emerging response, however; for example, UNESCO's 2015 EFA Global Monitoring Report chapters briefly allude to ABE but there is no systematic review of it. Strategies of mobile provision, curricula that respond to learner demand, and flexible timings are characteristics of the more flexible and responsive models of ABE. Usually led by a non-state organization, these have focused on making basic formal education available without compromising livelihoods. This progressive, although fragmented, field of educational innovation offers patchwork provision that, while evident, is not very well evidenced. Children may be recorded as "out of school" even when enrolled in ABE, unless it is officially recognized—which makes it generally difficult to assess ABE's scale and impact (Rose 2009; UNICEF 2014). The evidence base about enrolment, retention, and learning in such provision is itself slim, but nevertheless suggests that programmes of ABE also struggle to retain children and rarely offer demonstrable evidence of learning outcomes (Anis 2007).

Non-state ABE provision, which appears the most responsive to mobile livelihoods, is an unequally distributed opportunity; and, as its name suggests, provision is only basic. While many understand ABE as offering those "unable to use the formal schooling system" the chance to "benefit from alternative educational opportunities designed to meet their basic learning needs such as literacy, numeracy, oral expressions and problem-solving" (Redd Barna 2007, p. 20), significant differences exist about whether ABE should be a separate, parallel system—or a complementary one that enables learners to transition into the formal system at a later stage.

Their policies also show that states are increasingly formalizing ABE. Alongside India, Indonesia, and Afghanistan, Ethiopia is another prominent example of a country

that is institutionalizing an “ABE package” (MoEE 2005), deliberately focusing on pastoralist populations; but the process of institutionalization itself raises questions over how “alternative” a state-run programme at scale can be.

To build on progress made and address questions of equity, equivalence, learner progression, and the role of the state, resources need now to be directed towards gaining better insights into, for example: learning within ABE provision (who is enrolled and retained, what prompts failures of either, curricular content, what prompts curricular choices, assessment procedures, etc.); teachers (how they are educated, recruited, trained, retained); and to consider resourcing, sustainability, and quality of provider partnerships. To support strategic policymaking, we need far more rigorous attention to generating reliable documentation and evidence about missing learners and innovative practices.

But a larger issue remains. When only alternative provision develops capacity for reaching nomadic groups—and then only offers basic education—the underlying marginalization and social status deprivation of these groups goes unchallenged. Certainly, EFA requires their inclusion—but not via arrangements that lack status equivalence and reinforce the unequal workings of society. These trends in policy lend support to prevailing assumptions about which learners can legitimately be “unincluded” in mainstream education.

ODL has evident capacity to close the gap between a mobile livelihood and formal education provision; yet, unlike ABE, ODL does not find ubiquitous mention in post-Dakar policy discussions. ODL can overcome some of the most obvious delivery constraints in challenging physical conditions, and its capacity to do so will increase as mobile telephone coverage improves. But programming using this delivery format also needs to meet nomadic groups’ needs in language, learning, and curricula—the Kenyan approach has not resolved these critical matters. ODL has not yet been tested for nomadic children and at scale; and officials have highlighted the risks they associate with

departing from the familiar on-the-ground school model—rather than underlining the cost of systems that cannot deliver the EFA promise (see also Aderinoye et al. 2007).

For learners with mobile livelihoods, the most promising ways to build on gains of the 2000–2015 EFA period are to focus on ODL and ABE with the intention of developing education systems that are differentiated in considerably more egalitarian ways than at present.

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