The EFA Goals are clear: free education of good quality should be available to all. Yet, we know that some children will still be less likely to attend available schools and that many working children will be among them. This report goes beyond pointing out what is needed to be able to offer free quality education, a task that has been done better by others, notably in the EFA Global Monitoring Report. This report adds to the existing EFA literature by outlining some thoughts on core policy challenges and possible solutions within other sectors than the education sector, particularly social protection and labor. The aim is not to identify a silver bullet that could solve the EFA challenge in any setting; locally relevant solutions must be worked out locally. The report will, however, give an indication of how this can be done through some examples of knowledge-based ideas and successes for inspiration.

The ideas presented are based on the framework for, and some of the statements made at the workshop “Child Labor and the EFA initiative: The challenge of including the hard-to-reach children”. The workshop participants included both education and social protection specialists; academics, bureaucrats, practitioners and advocacy groups. It should be noted that the selection of issues treated and the framework for this issue paper are solely the responsibility of the authors and will not necessarily be a selection of material fully agreed upon by all workshop participants.
Broadening the approach to Education for All
Including working and other hard-to-reach children

Issues from the workshop Child labor and the EFA initiative: The challenge of including the “hard-to-reach” children.
Oslo 20–21 October 2008
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Abraham Maslow pointed out that if the only tool you have is a hammer, all problems will appear as nails. EFA’s hammer is education policy. But even when affordable schools of reasonable quality are accessible, some children will not attend, and many of these children will be working children. To include them, other instruments than traditional education policy tools will be required. Just as the carpenter will sometimes need the help of a plumber and a mason, Education Ministries will need the support of social protection and labor market specialists, and, sometimes, of other policy craftsmen to also achieve education for “the last ten percent.”
Executive summary

As the EFA process is progressing, two main groups of children are still left out. First, children who have yet to gain access to a good primary school. Second, those who do not get to attend even when an adequate, affordable school is accessible: we will refer to them as “the hard-to-reach children”, also called “the last ten percent”. As the EFA will move forward, an increasing number of these out-of-school children will be working and an increasing number of school children will be combining work and school. Therefore, addressing the reasons why they work will be a key factor in tackling the last challenge of EFA inclusion.

Children will work instead of going to school for a complex set of reasons:

- **Poor performance.** They performed badly in school, sometimes because of too much labor.

- **Poverty.** Their family need the child labor income or use child labor as part of a risk mitigation strategy (e.g. child marriage, child relocations, skills diversification)

- **Traditional social practices.** There are special expectations related to the professional careers or roles of certain children (e.g. girls, children living with a disability, indigenous children). Many such assigned roles require non-formal skills training/learning by doing.

- **Other.** High local labor demand, crime/vandalism/violence in and around schools etc.

Because the causes are diverse, strategies must be cross-sectoral and could include:

- **Education sector.** (i) Adjusting schooling offered to the work realities of local children, (ii) pay special attention to school children who work a lot, e.g. follow up individually when performing poorly or dropping out, (iii) remedial schooling to (re)integrate drop-outs and late enrollers.

- **Social protection.** If the main cause is (i) chronic poverty: predictable cash transfers, also consider transfers to support vulnerable families’ needs beyond education, since children utterly depend on a well functioning family unit, (ii) income variability: micro-finance (iii) fear of shocks: micro-finance, insurance and safety nets.
• **Traditional social practices.** Dialogue – not “information”, involve children (they are often their own agents), conditional transfers can work as an incentive for changed practices.

• **Legal reforms.** Changed laws may change the norms for practices when imposed by legitimate bodies. Customary law must similarly be addressed. Law enforcement in cases of the worst forms of child labor.

• **Other.** In some places, technological inventions and water provision are immensely labor-saving and could be integrated in schooling projects.

The composition of the “last ten percent” and their reasons for working differ from place to place so an effective local policy mix and interventions must be locally defined:

• Take stock of existing studies and knowledge (often neglected).

• Prioritize quality studies, conducted by unbiased researchers.

• Develop new policies and programs based on (i) these studies, (ii) political realities (costs, legitimacy), (iii) inspiration from successes elsewhere, and (iv) a spirit of innovation.

Core outcome: A comprehensive approach is needed.

To some children, the main obstacles to school participation are not school availability, cost or quality, but rather poverty, economic insecurity, discrimination and cultural practices. Many of these children work, not only out of necessity, but also because child labor is perceived as the best way to prepare them for the life they are expected to lead, in accordance with cultural norms and practices. Because lack of school access is not the main cause of exclusion for these children, traditional education policy tools alone will not be sufficient to include these hard-to-reach children. Other core ministries must step up and share EFA responsibilities with the ministry of education. Comprehensive policy including e.g. social protection, labor market and legal policy responses will be needed to succeed. Commitment must be shown by finance ministries, and in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), national plan and budget debates.

Policy recommendations: Reward cross-sectoral initiatives and solutions.

• Fill knowledge gaps related to: (i) the impact of service delivery within other sectors on bringing child laborers and other hard-to-reach into school (e.g. social protection, water provision and health services), (ii) non-economic activities particularly keeping girls out of school, (iii) identify what school quality features work best to
attract working children, (iv) links between labor market activities, drop-out and irregular school attendance.

- Strengthen GMR indicators to reflect not only how many new children are in school, but also who these children are (former or potential child workers, other hard-to-reach).

- Reward inter-ministerial dialogue at the country level, dialogue between international agencies with different sector focus, and dialogue between sector divisions within international agencies.

- Establish a multi-donor, multi-agency trust fund to encourage the development and piloting of knowledge-based, cross-sectoral, politically realistic local strategies and program models for including the last ten percent: working and other hard-to-reach children. Collaboration between academia, government and NGO/CBOs should be a requirement.
1 Introduction

As the Education for All process is progressing, two main groups of children are still left out of primary school. First, there are children who have yet to gain access to a good primary school. Second, there are those who do not get to attend even when an adequate, affordable primary school is accessible. The children in this last group are referred to as the hard-to-reach children. And, as the EFA will move forward, an increasing number of those who remain unreached will be working children.

1.1 Background

To some children, the main obstacles to school participation are not school availability, cost or quality, but rather binding poverty, economic insecurity, discrimination and cultural practices. Many of these children work, not only out of necessity, but also because child labor is perceived to be the best way to prepare them for the life they are expected to lead. Because lack of school access is not the main cause of exclusion for these children, traditional education policy tools alone will not be sufficient to include these hard-to-reach children, also referred to as the “last ten percent”.

Over the past decade, the Norwegian Government has initiated and supported the development of a large, high quality, international research portfolio on child labor. The experiences that can be drawn from child labor research and programming represent crucial pieces of the EFA puzzle that have not yet been put in their right places.

1.2 Why the EFA should focus on working children

Children in fragile states, minority children, orphans, children living with a disability and girls have been given special attention in the inclusion efforts of the EFA process, and the Dakar Goals makes references to children “in difficult circumstances”. Many of the children in difficult circumstances work. Little systematic attention has been given so far to the challenge of child labor to EFA, although understanding the reasons why many excluded children work may also be the key to understanding how they can be helped to enter school instead.
Child labor and schooling is in many ways a nexus that is not easy to sort out. Contrary to what is often assumed, not all out-of-school children are working, and many school children also work. When school improvements are made, it is primarily inactive children or children who don't work too much who become enrolled. For children who combine work and schooling, a causality related to drop-out is hard to establish: are children forced to leave school because they have to work, or do they drop out because they are not interested in school? 

Figure 1 School attendance disadvantage of working children, 7-14 years age group, selected countries (School attendance disadvantage index refers to the school attendance rate of economically-active children expressed as a ratio of the school attendance rate of non-economically active children. The smaller is the index value, the higher is the disadvantage faced by economically-active children compared to children not involved in economic activity.)

Source: UCW calculations based on household survey datasets
quit school to work because schools are bad, because they are discriminated against or don’t perform well?

Some of the child labor problem will be solved by offering better schools, since many children work because it is, by and large, the best alternative given the quality and price of schooling options offered – or not offered at all. Education policy and programming is therefore the answer to solving an important part of the child labor problem in many countries.

But what about those who still work or are out of school for other reasons? Because the needs of these children are not easily met by school improvements alone, the social protection sector and also other technical sectors (like labor, health, water and sanitation) will have to step up and share the responsibility for EFA with the education sector. If they do not, Education for All will not be achievable.

The EFA Goals are clear: free education of good quality should be available to all. Yet we know that some children are less likely to benefit from that offer, and that many working children will be among them. This report goes beyond pointing out what is needed to be able to offer free quality education, a task done well by others: Instead it outlines some thoughts on core policy challenges and possible solutions relevant for this remaining group. The ideas presented here are based on the framework for and some of the statements made in a workshop that included both education and social protection specialists; academics, bureaucrats, practitioners and advocacy groups. The selection of issues is the responsibility of the authors alone, and will not necessarily be a selection that all workshop participants would fully agree on. The report does not aim to identify a silver bullet that could solve the EFA challenge in any given setting. Locally relevant solutions must be worked out locally. The report will however give an indication of how this can be done, and some examples of knowledge-based ideas and successes for inspiration.

For the full list of workshop presentations, see www.ucw-project.org

Dakar EFA Goal 2:
“ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete, free and compulsory primary education of good quality.”
1.3 Child labor and the hard-to-reach

Hard-to-reach children face one or a combination of obstacles to education, regardless of whether or not good schools are available. Economic factors are often thought to be important. Many poor families may indeed face problems covering even the smallest, informal fees, or simply cannot make it without the labor input or meager earnings of the child. But the notion that observed household poverty is the main obstacle to schooling may have been exaggerated (see e.g. Bhalotra and Heady, 2001). The effect of fearing to fall into poverty is far less explored, and may be an even more important factor in assessing if a child is sent to school or has to play a different role in the household risk mitigation strategy. Cultural norms and expectations may in many places turn out to explain more of the labor/schooling choices than anything else. When poverty and cultural norms interact, they may become effective obstacles to the inclusion and education of many vulnerable children.

In some cultures, gender roles play a decisive part in explaining the labor and non-enrollment of girls. In combination to poverty, girls are given lower priority when a family must decide which children are to be sent to school. Girls are also more vulnerable to be taken out of school to work during hardships. Learning to work hard is, in many cultures, the ethos of womanliness (Reynolds, 1991). It therefore also serves as a preparation for early marriage, a practice that most often leads to more drop-out and long work days (see references to the presentation by Professor Beverly Grier in section 4).

*The ethos of womanliness is “the dull compulsion” of daily work. Girls are reluctant apprentices. A woman’s duty is to bind her daughter into service in order to secure her future as a farmer and a useful servant in the kinship network.”*  

Pamela Reynolds, 1991

Minority children are in many cultures seen as children who don’t “have to” go to school the same way as others. It is not seen as normal, and neither expected from them nor their families. The children and their families may not even think they have the same abilities or rights as the majority child. What may be expected is that they work together with their parents. Minorities can be ethnical, religious, racial, cast defined or related to special features like albinism or living with certain types of disabilities.

Orphans can also be defined as a special minority, and face similar challenges of educational exclusion in addition to suffering the loss of primary caregivers. They often live in households that already have scarce means for their own children, and end up being given a low priority when resources – e.g. for schooling – are distributed.
Surprisingly, perhaps, orphans are less discriminated with regards to the schooling/child labor choice than what one may intuitively expect (Case, Paxson and Ableidinger, 2002, UCW, 2004). One explanation may be the low quality of schooling and the relative attractiveness of work, also among children, in many poor areas where unemployment is rampant. Orphans simply cannot compete for available jobs, and when few costs are related to a low quality school offer, they might as well be in school.

Figure 2 illustrates how working children can be seen in relationship to other groups of out-of-school children currently given special attention by the EFA process. The figure places out-of-school children within a context of cultural norms and poverty (large circles), factors that alone cause both child labor and lack of schooling for many children not belonging to a particular vulnerability category. Within this context, many (i) girls, (ii) children associated with minority groups (e.g. indigenous children, children living with a disability and orphans) and (iii) children in fragile states have received special attention (ovals). Working children are represented across all the highlighted groups (shown by the triangle).

The layers of the figure can be interpreted as sets of causes for their non-schooling status. Wherever you point your finger in the model, a child with a different set of causes is found. At the very center of the figure there will e.g. be a girl child associated with one or more minority categories, living and working in a fragile state as well as in poverty within a culture that is not favorable to girls' schooling. The combined factors

Figure 2 Working children seen in relationship to other priority categories of hard-to-reach out-of-school children.
(layers) represent the merging of reasons explaining why she is not in school. At the top of the triangle you find a boy who works instead of going to school, simply as a response to cultural expectations. For example, even a non-poor Senegalese family may choose to send a boy to beg for a Koranic school teacher instead of going to formal school, perceiving this to give blessings and strengthen the boy’s character and spirituality.

Categorizing children for policy purposes can be ethically questionable and stigmatizing. Instead, identifying the factors that keep the non-enrolled children out of school in a particular country is practically more useful to policy design, since understanding these factors will make it easier to deal more directly with the causes. Only when causes are well understood can good and relevant solutions be created. Each cause points to possible policy tools. The combination of reasons documented in a country will give indications of the right policy mix that can prove successful in solving the challenge of how to help the last ten percent out of labor and into school.

This report describes some of the policies that could be part of that mix in a given country. It will not dwell with the requirements for putting free quality education in place. This task has been well accomplished by others, notably in the EFA Global Monitoring Report. Policy suggestions to be included here will therefore focus on additional requirements for getting the remaining working children to complete school. In part 2, non-mainstream education policy options are considered. In part 3, social protection will be discussed as a means to address poverty-related and socially based challenges. Part 4 explains how traditional social practices lead certain groups of children into labor situations that effectively make schooling impossible. Part 5 takes a look at other sectors that could provide parts of the solution to the EFA challenge. Part 6 outlines briefly the requirements of an enabling environment, and explains why this is important for the successful inclusion of working children. Part 7 presents a simple guide on how to identify an effective local policy mix while, lastly, part 8 summarizes the comprehensive model resulting from this exercise.
2 Access and quality: education sector interventions

Poverty causes child labor and child labor causes poverty. Education can break the vicious circle.

Yoshie Nguchi
ILO/IPEC

“Nothing is as unfair as offering the same services to different children”, says a well-known kindergarten slogan. Inequalities in educational opportunities persist even when the same schooling offer is made available to all children equally. It would become possible for many working children to attend or remain in school if what they were offered was better adjusted to their social and economic reality.

In his opening presentation, Daniel Ximenes, from the Brazilian Ministry of Education, emphasized the importance of addressing inequalities in opportunities. He stated that the Brazilian education strategy is a commitment based on directives and materialized into a plan with effective goals, aimed at improving the quality of education and a reduction in inequalities of educational opportunities.

2.1 Challenges

Child labor research has solidly documented the relationship between child labor and schooling:

  Enrollment facts:
  • The rates of children’s work and school attendance are negatively correlated
  • Children’s work is associated with both lower school intake and late school entry

Performance facts:
  • Children’s work is associated with lower academic test scores, and other direct indicators of school performance.
  • There is also indirect evidence of a negative link between child labor and school performance.
Repetition and drop-out facts:

- Children's work is associated with higher drop-out
- Children's work is associated with higher grade repetition

The size of the impact from children’s work, however, is smaller than what could perhaps be expected. While child labor is doomed to affect schooling, it would not be correct to argue that quality learning is incompatible with the performance of all types of work activities.

ILO: Not all child work is child labor

Not all work done by children should be classified as child labour that is to be targeted for elimination. Children’s or adolescents’ participation in work that does not affect their health and personal development or interfere with their schooling, is generally regarded as being something positive. This includes activities such as helping their parents around the home, assisting in a family business or earning pocket money outside school hours and during school holidays. These kinds of activities contribute to children’s development and to the welfare of their families; they provide them with skills and experience, and help to prepare them to be productive members of society during their adult life.

The term “child labour” is often defined as work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that is harmful to physical and mental development.

It refers to work that:

- is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children; and
- interferes with their schooling by:
  - depriving them of the opportunity to attend school;
  - obliging them to leave school prematurely; or
  - requiring them to attempt to combine school attendance with excessively long and heavy work.

In its most extreme forms, child labour involves children being enslaved, separated from their families, exposed to serious hazards and illnesses and/or left to fend for themselves on the streets of large cities – often at a very early age. Whether or not particular forms of “work” can be called “child labour” depends on the child’s age, the type and hours of work performed, the conditions under which it is performed and the objectives pursued by individual countries. The answer varies from country to country, as well as among sectors within countries.

According to the ILO definition, not all work activities constitute child labor, and some may even be positive for the child. However, even presumably harmless work may come into conflict with schooling. There are two ways to deal with that. Children can either abandon the type of labor that “contributes to children’s development and to the welfare of their families” or, school access, school hours and school year can be adapted in a way that allows for both (Bøås and Hatløy, 2008).

### 2.2 Possible solutions

Education policy represents a part of the solution to the child labor challenge. Its contribution is threefold:

1. **Offering a good and affordable school where there previously was none** will make many working children and their families start viewing formal education as a better choice.

2. **Adapting the schooling offered to the realities of many working children and their families’** will make it possible to combine schooling with light work.

3. **Giving special attention to working children in school** and intervening when their labor starts to affect their performance and quality of life.

As the first point is well covered in EFA documents so far, types of interventions relevant to the two latter points will be discussed in the following paragraph.

### Adapting schools to the realities of working children

Marco Manacorda, who presented at the workshop, found in his study from Tanzania that school access, indicated by reducing the distance to school, would increase enrollment rates, but would also increase the share of enrolled children who combine school and work. As long as the work activities conducted by these children would not qualify as child labor in accordance to the ILO definition, this should not be a major concern. It is however imperative that efforts aimed at helping children combine work and school (as suggested e.g. by the Global Monitoring Report for the EFA) first do not allow for child labor to become an accepted institution and, second, that they lead to a social division of school children in one way or the other. Adaptation opportunities that could be considered in order to help working children attend school are:
1. **Access**: makes it easier to combine school with light work. When relocation time is reduced, the time saved allows for helping out at home without harming school performance.

2. **Harvest breaks**: School vacations could be introduced during seasons where children are traditionally expected to help out in family businesses or farms. This will prevent irregular school attendance, leading to children falling behind, and possibly dropping out or having to repeat grades.

3. **Two-shift schools**: If schools run the same program twice a day, children can be flexible with regards to the time they are expected to help out at home or e.g. in a market, and still get regular attendance. Two shift schools is also an efficient use of buildings and equipment.

4. **Schools in work places**: Localizing (flexible) schools to places where many children work could allow for a combination of school and work. For instance, many smaller places have one or two market days a week, and children help out porting and selling in the markets. Rather than missing one or two days a week, schools could be localized in markets, and children can help out porting and during the busiest trading hours and still go to school.

Reaching even children who work too hard and too much should be an objective to education policy. When enlisted, the schooling system can function as a vehicle to help these children and their families.

**Special attention to child labor in schools**

Reaching working children creates great logistical challenges in many poor countries. Therefore, getting working children to enlist in the schooling system provides opportunities to reach them and to offer assistance. Convincing families and children with a heavy work load to enroll provides an opportunity to change their attitudes towards schooling and labor. But how? Teachers and schools will require more resources before realistically taking on additional responsibilities of social monitoring and service institutions, beyond the mandate of providing education.

1. **Teachers need training in child labor issues**: when is work harmful to children? How can teachers detect that a child is harmed by labor activities and how can they respond vis-à-vis the families?

2. **Teachers can train parents**: when is work harmful to children’s development and health, and when does it starts interfering with schooling? Also, local modules explaining the value of education relative to work can be developed, based on dialogue with the parents and working children.
3. *Early childhood education programs*: can be targeted to children vulnerable to child labor before they become productive. An early socialization into the education system promotes stay-on rates and prevents a similar socialization into labor.

Dakar EFA Goal 1: expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children;

4. *Teachers can train children to recognize harmful labor situations*: children in many cultures have a say in their labor situations beyond what is commonly understood.

5. *Teachers can follow up with children and families*: when working children fall behind, supplementary classes should be considered to prevent drop-out and repetition.

6. *Drop-out cases should be followed up individually*: school staff should be trained to help convince parents and children to reduce work burden when child labor situations cause drop-out. Where performance is an issue, they can point out opportunities for catching up. Where poverty is an issue, trained personnel could bring them up to date by informing them about available assistance programs.

7. *Transition programs could be developed*: to help smoothen the process of re-entering school or, as in Brazil, fight grade failure with “recovering studies”. However, transition programs should not work as “special schools”.

2.3 Knowledge gaps

Most studies of education initiatives and their impact on enrollment do not specify exactly which children benefit when increased enrollment follows a particular policy adjustment. E.g., the impact of ECD programs on schooling is well proven, but whether former or potential child laborers are among those who benefit is less documented. In other words, do such interventions policies primarily contribute to include the “easy-to-reach” or do they work for the “hard-to-reach” as well?

- To find out, good indicators, effective monitoring and information management systems would prove a good investment, allowing for continuous improvement and tailoring of strategies and interventions.

- *Indicators are also needed for global monitoring*. It was proposed at the workshop to include child labor indicators among the monitoring indicators used by the GMR:
these indicators should document progress on the inclusion of working children in school, and on reducing the work burden of school children.

- Technically solid, *evaluations based research* should also help identify the best practices that can be shared for inspiration and guidance.  

3 Poverty and fear of poverty: social protection policy
3 Poverty and fear of poverty: social protection policy

Sometimes poverty is the main reason for children to work instead of attending an available, low cost and fairly good school. At other times, poverty is contributing factor to this decision. The complexities of poverty and its often counter-intuitive relationship to labor and schooling must be better understood in order to understand how different aspects of poverty affect the work/schooling choice, and to be able to deduct lessons of relevant solutions.

3.1 Challenges

Poverty among the poorest in developing countries is normally assessed based on what is observable in a household or on what can be documented with regards to income or possessions. Does the family own a radio or a bicycle? How much land does it possess or cultivate and how much livestock? Similarly, many social protection programs use means testing based on observables as a way to decide whether a household is eligible for program support or not.

A wealth paradox

While this type of poverty measurements seems important to explain why many children are sent to school, in-depth research shows that they do not help explain very much of why some children are sent to work and others not in poor areas. While this may sound counterintuitive, it is important to realize that comparing wealth levels in areas where EFA is a particular challenge rarely means comparing the rich and the poor. Instead we tend to be looking at variations among relatively poor people, and even compare the poor to the destitute. We are, in other words, not comparing apples and oranges: we compare some apples to - some other apples.

In Figure 3, the first box suggests that the relationship between child labor rates and poverty is represented by a curved line, rather than a straight one. On the global level, child labor rates remain high until a certain level of wealth is reached, and then start
falling more and more rapidly. However, in many areas where EFA remains a particular challenge, there are very few rich or even modestly wealthy people. The small purple square at the top left of the curve indicates the very limited part of the wealth specter represented by EFA challenged communities. The box to the right suggests what the small purple box could look like when magnified. Among the poor and the destitute the relationship between child labor and poverty may be unpredictable, unsystematic and, at times, even perverse.

Extremely poor people are often exhausted by their situation. They therefore have poor organization and planning capacity and are generally disorganized. Acquiring useful information and developing good strategies on how to get out of poverty is many times beyond their capacity.

The general situation of unemployment that dominates in most poor areas contributes to explain this situation which is common among poor people in general. Jobs become attractive in a context of widespread poverty and unemployment. However, to get a job you need good social networks, something that the very poorest often lack. Child labor is therefore only one of two likely outcomes among the very poorest: child unemployment and underemployment being the other. Where a low-cost school is available, many poor children may be in school simply by default.

Mauritania: School participation increased during the drought. There was no work available in agriculture, and children went to school in spite of rising poverty.
When children are unemployed and actively looking for work, social support programs for the very poorest could easily get undesirable side-effects. In poor areas, capital is normally tied up in productive assets like land and livestock. Such assets are labor demanding, and may attract “unemployed” school children preferring work. Similarly, income-generating projects for mothers may have the same impact. By creating labor opportunities, previously “unemployed” school children may be taken out of school to work in the new family business, or to replace their mothers doing housework. In other words, as very poor families get slightly wealthier, child labor demand could increase. Some of this is referred to as the wealth paradox of (in particular rural) child labor.

**Different aspects of poverty**

Poverty has many faces. In research, poverty is often based on counting assets and registering verifiable income. In assessing program eligibility, the same poverty criteria are often used. But poverty has many more facets that may decide whether a certain program approach will be effective or not. Amongst such aspects of operational relevance, we can identify:

1. **Chronic poverty**: Chronic poverty prevents many families from even considering sending one or all of their children to school. When all realistic prospects indicate that you will remain poor, different strategies will be developed for household children. Labor constitutes a central part of most of them, since learning to survive without formal education is seen as the only option.

2. **Sudden poverty**: Families may drop into poverty overnight, for instance following unemployment, loss of a breadwinner or due to drought or violence. A common response is to take children out of school and also often to send them to work to help out the situation.

3. **Income fluctuations**: When families dive in and out of poverty on a regular basis they may or may not consider sending their children to school, but they will take them out on a regular basis to save costs or to help out. This creates an important part of the group referred to as “irregular school attendees”.

4. **Poverty with unemployment**: In poor communities with high unemployment and low schooling costs, children may attend school, but will drop out temporarily every time there is a work opportunity. They thereby add to the group of “irregulars”.

5. **Poverty with high labor demand**: While poverty with unemployment is likely to be the norm, there are also situations where high child labor demand is caused by a general labor shortage. If children do not pitch in, families will face problems
covering their basic needs. Time constraint will then be the main obstacle to children’s schooling.

6. *Fear of poverty:* Some families are not poor by observable criteria, but have few available responses to a possible blow. Being aware of their state of vulnerability, children form part of the families’ crisis mitigation strategies. For instance, children may be married off into solid families, or their labor provided to wealthy acquaintances that may later constitute strategic alliances useful for informal insurance purposes. Similarly, children may be sent off to work in different areas, providing the families with a foothold elsewhere if disaster should collectively strike the home community. To spread risk, families may also choose to send only some children to school, while the others learn different trades outside the formal sector.

7. *Destitution:* Finally, extreme poverty is often characterized by destitution meaning that people get fatigued and apathetic, lose their ability to strategic planning and to organize their survival efforts in an effective way. Their state is often influenced by poor mental and somatic health. Children of such families tend to depend on their own agency to get by, and also often take on the burden of securing their family’s survival.

When some aspect of poverty is the main reason why children work instead of going to school, social protection interventions, rather than education or judicial policy, would often be the best approach.

### 3.2 Possible solutions

The priorities of poor households are not always the same as the priorities of EFA. That is, providing direct support to poor households will, in some cases, mean that working children are sent to school, while it sometimes means that other allocations are made instead as all or some children continue working. The wealth paradox has demonstrated how child labor may in fact increase and schooling decrease as a result of direct support.

Before considering program approaches that in one way or the other aim to promote schooling through direct support to poor families (e.g. social transfers, micro-credits, public works), two things become important to sort out:

1. *What rank does schooling have among the uncovered needs of poor households in the program area?* If schooling has a high rank, direct support programs are a clear and uncomplicated option.
2. *Is a program aiming to transfer working children into school willing and able to accept and also pay for the priorities poor families rank above schooling?* If priorities ranking higher than schooling are crucial to the survival and functioning of the family unit, even a program aiming for educational inclusion may be more effective if it allows for such extra costs. If, however, schooling has a very low priority and ranking priorities seem non-essential to child welfare, direct transfers should be reconsidered or alternatively tied or made conditional.

Tied or conditional support aimed at helping poor families take children out of work and send them to school can be either household-based or school-based.

1. **Household-based support:** households can receive support in kind or in cash, conditioned by certain use. Schooling related in-kind transfers could include targeted distributions of school uniforms or training materials, or relate to transportation costs. Even the provision of shoes and soap for the children could in some settings greatly encourage school attendance.

   Conditional transfers typically require households to send children to school in order to continue receiving benefits. To the extent that transfers like public works, credits or support for income generating activities can cause school drop-out and create a child labor demand, it is also possible to imagine that such transfers are made conditional of children’s schooling.

   It should also be mentioned that many conditional cash transfer programs have birth registration as a program entry requirement. Birth registration is a requirement for enrolment in the first place in many places and also helps authorities identify school-aged children who do not enroll.

   Conditioning cash transfers on a prescribed behavior remains controversial in the development debate and is often perceived as both paternalistic and ineffective. It should be acknowledged that the poor, for perfectly rational and legitimate reasons, sometimes have priorities that differ from the priorities of society. Taking these differences into account, the conditional cash transfer can be interpreted as a compensation given to those who send their children to school notwithstanding the fact that this choice does not serve their own primary interests, but rather the primary interest of society.

2. **School-based support:** Delivering transfers to families is costly to administer, particularly in poor areas with low capacity and weak infrastructure. Programs having school participation as a core objective therefore often choose some form of school-based transfer model. School-based incentive programs are often easier to operate since schooling infrastructure is already in place. These programs however
do not have the same ability to identify and address the more complex household situations that may cause child labor and lack of schooling.

3. There is a wide range of different approaches to school-based incentives, and a great room for variations and adjustments of solutions to local priorities and needs. The most well known school-based incentive is the provision of school meals, while other options range from school-based de-worming (e.g. in Western Kenya) to full-service schools (piloted in South Africa).

Brazil: Provision of 700,000 scholarships for students from lower-income classes in private universities; 26 million students assisted by healthcare teams in public schools. Roughly translated as “Family Stipend” or “Family Grant” in English.
- The program is a centerpiece of President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva’s social policy.
- Bolsa Familia is currently the largest conditional cash transfer program in the world, 11.1 million families.
- Provides financial aid to poor and extremely poor Brazilian families on condition that the children must attend school and be vaccinated.
Table 1 Some examples of possible household-based programming options that could be relevant to the different aspects of poverty dominating in a given program area.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of poverty</th>
<th>Main challenge</th>
<th>Policy concern</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chronic poverty</strong></td>
<td>Non-enrollment</td>
<td>• Policies promoting equitable growth, and</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Decent work</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Predictable cash transfers (social support, unemployment benefits, pensions)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• School-based incentives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• NB! Micro-credit is not suitable in situations of chronic poverty!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sudden poverty</strong></td>
<td>Drop-out</td>
<td>• Social protection policies</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Emergency plans</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Micro finance (credit, savings and insurance)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Public works</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Income fluctuations</strong></td>
<td>Irregular attendance (poor performance, drop-out and repetition)</td>
<td>• Labor market policy</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Climate policy</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Policy to promote income diversification</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Micro finance (credit, savings and insurance)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Public works</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Poverty with unemployment</strong></td>
<td>Irregular attendance (poor performance, drop-out and repetition)</td>
<td>• Labor market regulation, e.g. related to child labor in informal support functions of public works</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Dialogue and information campaigns</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Targeted public works (to caretakers of vulnerable children) monitoring participant’s children’s school attendance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Poverty with high labor demand</strong></td>
<td>Time constraint</td>
<td>• Water and sanitation</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Technological improvements</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Labor saving technologies targeted to typical children’s tasks e.g. in agriculture.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Reducing distance to water, or placing pumps next to schools.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Fear of poverty</strong></td>
<td>Children become social protection tools</td>
<td>• Social protection policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Predictable cash transfers (social support, unemployment benefits, pensions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Micro finance (credit, savings and insurance)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Destitution</strong></td>
<td>Parents too disorganized to motivate or register children, high element of child agency</td>
<td>• Child protection policies</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Birth certificate and assisted birth registration to allow for children of the destitute to be enlisted and sought out upon enrollment age.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• School based incentives, like school meals, to offer children acting as own agents an alternative to working for survival.</td>
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</table>
3.3 Knowledge gaps

There is an overwhelming amount of studies showing the impact of observable poverty on child labor and school participation. The studies generally conclude that household poverty affects schooling negatively but that the impact of moderate wealth increase on child labor reduction is, surprisingly, limited.

Other aspects of poverty are less studied but could turn out to be far more important to the schooling choices, in particular when schooling is challenged by poverty induced child labor. Some of these gaps are:

- The impact of income shocks.
- The impact of income instability.
- The impact of vulnerability to risks.
- The impact of destitution: in particular when characterized by caregiver apathy and child agency.
4 Traditional social practices: dialogue and conditionality

“In some places, people think it’s normal that certain children work instead of going to school. That it is our culture, and cannot be changed. We need to challenge what people think is normal.”

Consuelo Contreras Largo
OPICON

That we are somehow to “normalize” hard-to-reach groups of children in the education system is not a good way to think. Diversity is what’s normal, and should be so, also within schools.

Miriam Skjørtен
Department of Special Needs Education (DSNE), UiO

Regardless of whether education is in place, regardless of whether families can afford it, many children are still not able to access school. Features like gender, ethnicity, social status, sibling rank and other abilities contribute to predetermine what expectations family and society hold towards a certain child. The intended future role of the child defines what is seen as his or her most relevant learning and socialization environments, and children’s schooling and labor prospects are largely decided by long-established practices. Traditional expectations regarding certain children’s future role and profession therefore represent one of the challenges where a more complex understanding of child labor choices becomes important to EFA efforts.

4.1 Challenges

Traditional social practices and expectations are important to the schooling prospects of many hard-to-reach children. Girls may primarily be expected to be good wives and mothers: formal schooling thus appears as less relevant than housework and caring for
younger siblings. The youngest daughter may be expected to be her parents’ caretaker when they get old and, therefore, be raised as a housekeeper while her older sisters may attend school. Traditional social expectations to future livelihoods may assign a blind child to weaving mats and a deaf child to learning embroidery. An orphan may be expected to compensate for staying in a household through his or her work, and an indigenous child to continue a family tradition of crafts or trade. To some of the children who are presumably not hard to reach, cultural expectations may still be an obstacle to schooling: the oldest boy may be expected to take over the family business, and be raised as a herder, trader or farmer, while his younger brothers are expected to find their own ways in life and may therefore go to school.

Explanations related to local social practices represent the weakest link in existing empirical research on child labor. In statistical work, factors closely associated with cultural specificities (like ethnicity, religious affiliation and demographic belonging) tend to come out as (much) more influential to the child labor and schooling choices than both school access indicators and proxies of poverty. The field of economics and statistics have not yet been able to fully incorporate the complex knowledge already existing in the anthropological and sociological literature, and have thus not been able to operationalize proper proxy indicators that could help improve such studies overall.

When the traditional social practices pertaining to a child labor situation are not well understood, policy responses may turn out to be disastrous. Efforts to alleviate poverty may be irrelevant or even empower people to reinforce the very same cultural practices creating the labor/non-schooling situation. Legal interventions may worsen labor conditions where traditional practices are forced underground.

Professor Beverly Grier illustrated the challenge of traditional practices by describing in depth the cases of child marriage and debt bondage, two practices that place children in exploitative labor situations and deprive them of schooling. They both challenge education policy-makers beyond poverty as they are woven around deeply-entrenched social and cultural roots. Rather than being fading traditions, these practices are highly relevant in the current situation of a global financial crisis since they are often reinforced in times of economic turmoil.

Challenges related to child marriage: In many local contexts, child marriage is only a disguise or pretense for child labor and even child bondage. Most child brides drop out of school upon marrying, live with their in-laws and become little more than servants - farming, cleaning, cooking, fetching water and firewood for their in-laws without any compensation other than their upkeep. Child brides are pressured by their husbands and in-laws to bear children as quickly as possible and motherhood usually closes the door permanently to any further schooling.

Child marriage is correlated with chronic poverty: where there is a brideprice, marrying off a daughter can be a coping strategy for families in crisis. In addi-
tion, brideprices may be higher the younger the bride, as age is associated with child-bearing potential. Marriage is also part of families’ mitigation strategies. Offering a young girl for marriage is a mean of strengthening social, economic and political ties with a family that can be or become of strategic importance in case of a crisis.

Clearly, poverty alleviation and alternative safety nets will ease the burden on young girls to function as crisis and mitigation tools in the risk management strategies of their families. Also, as the girls’ social and economic alternatives to marriage decrease, the earlier they will marry. Labor market prospects for girls would therefore matter in how this practice continues to develop.

Challenges related to debt bondage: Putting up a child’s unpaid labor as collateral for a loan is a practice regulated by customary law in some poor countries. Debt bondage, pawning and pledging of children is a phenomenon historically associated with economic crisis, and should therefore be of particular concern in the context of the current financial crisis.

A concrete suggestion made at the workshop was to install “national dialogues” or “national conversations” about customary law as it relates to the social protection of children. The dialogue should address: (i) how children are protected, under customary law, (ii) how they are left vulnerable by this law to abuse and exploitation by parents, employers, creditors, agents, husbands, and in-laws, and (iii) what would an inventory of customary law look like, as far as children’s rights and responsibilities are concerned. Participants in such a national conversation and inventory should include: local elders, parents, children, civil society, and legal scholars.

Another example resides in how the search for a good dowry some places makes girls migrate for work, rather than completing school. The practice has more than one function, another being that alongside earning her dowry, she also proves her ability for independence, hard work and, thus, for being a good wife.

4.2 Possible solutions

In his presentation, Senator Cristovam Buarque called for “a mental revolution” as a requirement for including the hard-to-reach. His fellow countryman Daniel Ximenes underscored the need for a social mobilization around EFA, and calls for “an EFA commitment” at all levels in society. And, indeed, since traditional social practices seem so
important in explaining why children remain in labor and out of school, a process of internalizing the EFA objectives in people’s minds seems to be needed.

Dialogue. Informing, educating and communicating to leaders and populations are not enough when cultural norms and practices lead to child labor in a manner preventing schooling. A real and sustained dialogue is needed. A dialogue serves to increase policy makers’ understanding of the challenges faced while, simultaneously, it opens up a space where populations can assess their own practices. Dialogue and involvement are the first steps towards commitment, changed laws and changed practices.

Child involvement. Many children take part in decision-making related to their own labor and schooling situation, or have ways to influence the decision. Involving children in dialogues is, therefore, not only an obligation vis-à-vis the Convention for the Rights of the Child, but also a way to improve understanding while, at the same time, empowering a core stakeholder group. Involving children improves the relevance and therefore the quality of interventions.

I think children in developing countries would like for someone to listen to them, we constantly try to figure out what we will do to improve their everyday life, but what about asking them first?

Adelina Trolle Andersen, junior advisor to Plan Norway, 13 years old

Law as normative standard. When enacted by respected and legitimate rulers, laws promoting norms that support schooling and restrict those leading to child labor can help change negative practices. In many traditional societies, customary law is more binding than national laws, and there is therefore a need for dialogue at both levels. Changing laws from the outside rarely produces sustainable and effective results, so change must be based on an understanding developed among significant parts of the citizenry ruled by the law.

Conditionality. In addition to enabling poor families to send their children to school and compensate them for the loss of a child labor income, a conditional transfer can serve as a carrot to promote a change in traditional behavior. In the previous section, the use of conditional cash transfers was discussed as a means to compensate people for making choices that may not be their preferred ones, but that serve society at large. An economic reward may encourage a substantial number of people to break old habits and pave the way for others to follow suit. Through sustained behavioral changes, new practices are installed.
In the new Unicef-supported conditional cash transfer program in Ghana, child labor is taken in among the conditionalities in addition to health and school attendance. The support is over a limited period of time only and intended to help break old practices to install new ones.

Early childhood education programs may help change practices. Children are often socialized into child labor at an early age within their own households. In early childhood education programs, children get socialized into education instead, before reaching a productive age. Professor Marco Manacorda suggested that pre-schools would help reduce repetition and drop-out rates, partly due to this early socialization into formal learning. Pre-school is also financially sustainable since it allows mothers to work outside the households.

### 4.3 Knowledge gaps

- Learning more about the overall impact of girls’ work outside the economic sector on their schooling outcome would help to provide understanding of a crucial challenge to EFA. Such an understanding would increase the policy profile of these girls and also help to provide answers to the question of how they can best be supported.

- Similarly, there is a need to look further into the impact of girls’ social and economic opportunities on school attendance and early marriage intertwined.

- The role of customary law and practice in the protection and exposure of children should be systematically mapped with regards to its importance to children’s schooling.

- Evaluation based research into the potential role of conditionalities in transfers regarding breaking and changing practices that prevent children's schooling: when are they efficient in promoting positive and sustainable change in social practices that keep children in labor and prevent them from going to school?
5 Thinking outside the boxes

“If you want to to look at education you also have to look beyond education.”
Maurizia Tovo
The World Bank

The previous sections suggest that educational exclusion of working children can relate to either (i) characteristics of the education offered, (ii) some aspect(s) of poverty or (iii) traditional social practices. Some combination of factors concerning these three categories would often largely explain why children work instead of going to school but, in many places, the core problem – and consequently the effective solution – is found elsewhere.

5.1 Challenges

In this section, two examples of issues preventing school participation will be briefly analyzed: first, excessive labor demands associated to covering basic household needs and, second, violence and vandalism.

Access to water is the most basic challenge in large parts of rural Africa, as it is in parts of other continents, and even some urban areas face the same predicament. Providing the household with necessary water for drinking, agriculture, livestock, washing clothes and dishes leads to an urgent labor demand on all able household members. Traditionally, water fetching is a task assigned to women, and younger children especially will tend work for and alongside their mothers within her sphere.

Along with providing water, collecting firewood for cooking is one of the most basic needs for poor households. The time consumed on fulfilling these basic demands for firewood and water may be enough by itself to effectively prevent children from going to school.
In rural Benin, primary-school-aged girls who are not in school spend, on average, 9 hours per week fetching water, women and school-girls, 6. If water was provided to the villages, the total time saved fetching water for all community members would be plenty to allow for all out-of-school children in the community to go to school.

A second concern that only partly falls under the education policy umbrella is the high incidence of violence and vandalism in many schools in poor areas. When households compare the attractiveness and risks related to schooling vs. working options, it is normally taken for granted that labor is more risky than formal schooling. When this is no longer the case, it becomes difficult to convince parents and children that schooling is indeed their best choice.

The African representatives at the workshop specially pointed out how this could be a problem. Gugu Ndebele from South Africa shared the experiences of many South African students seeing school as a place where they were exposed to violence and threats, while school buildings and campuses were de-motivating, depressing environments because of vandalism and destruction. Andrews Tagoe from Ghana added that the corporal punishment and sexual harassment committed even by teachers and staff demoralized and deterred families and children from using the available schooling offered.

### 5.2 Possible solutions

Sometimes, we need to think outside our professional “silos” to find solutions to challenges within that sphere. Where indeed critical labor demand explains low enrollment, then time and labor saving interventions could also be part of the efficient solution.

In order to confront the challenges of labor demand associated with covering basic household needs, policy sectors involved with infrastructure could come to play an important role in supporting the EFA initiative. Not only could water and sanitation specialists contribute to reduce or even eliminate the child labor demand for water provision, fuel and energy experts could also help come up with solutions in reducing child labor demand for fetching firewood.

Lately, a variety of conditional cash transfer program designs have been tested in poor areas and one main challenge to these programs is related to the targeting costs and administration of many small transfers. In areas where children are indeed prevented from going to school due to a labor demand which could be solved by infrastructural interventions, conditionality could be attached to the provision of such infrastructure.
It is, for instance, not obvious that children would be sent to school as an automatic consequence of water being provided to a village. By applying a “soft condition”, community members could commit to sending children to school in return for getting a village pump or a labor-saving energy project.

School security issues could to some extent be addressed through education programs. It is however easy to see how collaboration between the education sector and law enforcement would make sense in this serious case. Involving law enforcement is perhaps obvious in cases where drugs and gangs destroy the safe school environment. However, the legal sector also needs to step up to take responsibility where public officials and education staff conduct corporal punishment and sexual harassment or abuse in schools.

### 5.3 Knowledge gaps

There is a general need to analyze how policy efforts in other sectors affect school participation and labor. To learn more about how EFA efforts could benefit from efforts in sectors other than education, a further and more systematic documentation on the impact of access to especially *basic services* is required.
6 Legal and political frameworks needed

“Successful interventions require an enabling environment”

Joanne Dunn
Unicef

A law can be an imposed rule that can be enforced by the use of power. But, beyond that, a legal framework is, alongside national plans and strategies, a declaration of what we want – of how we think things should be. Without the normative standards set by our laws, we will be working without direction and, without direction; we are forever doomed to run soup kitchens instead of working systematically towards clear and defined development objectives.

The economic and cultural changes needed to include the last ten percent of out-of-school children are not likely to take place without a policy environment that largely agrees on, and has committed to, the EFA goal. A way to show commitment is through ratification of core international conventions and the creation and enforcement of a legal framework that promotes children’s schooling, reduces their work burden and provides children with general protection. The normative standards set by law should be reflected by political strategies, priorities and in budgeting debates.

Education in the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138):
• No one should be admitted to employment or work until age of 15, or end of compulsory schooling, whichever is higher (age 14 for developing countries).
• Light work 2 years earlier (13 or 12) if it is not such as to prejudice their attendance at school, their participation in vocational orientation or training programmes approved by the competent authority or their capacity to benefit from the instruction received.
6.1 Challenges

Behind good laws and good policy strategies lies quality information about national challenges and their causes. However, resources to develop quality information are mostly scarce, efforts carried out are unsystematic often prove irrelevant to policy development. In addition, the territorialism of organizations and international agencies limits collaboration and the pooling of research resources. It also restricts sharing of results and the use of studies carried out by others.

In his presentation, Brazilian senator Cristovam Buarque stressed that political un-commitment is a major cause of child labor alongside family tradition and social division. He suggested that we should view child labor as an ideological failure beyond being a crime to be met by law enforcement or an economic necessity to be met by social support. In his terms, child labor is both illogical and a waste of human resources. The solution requires a mental revolution: what the senator referred to as an ideological change among policy makers. In what he has labeled the “educationist” framework, progress is redefined as a product of knowledge, that is, of education (Buarque, 2008). Since child labor hinders education, it is also against progress. Poverty is therefore defined by a lack of knowledge.

Internalizing the commitment needed is still faint in most countries. Some have not yet ratified the core conventions relevant to child labor eradication and many have not harmonized local laws with the ratified conventions. Education and child labor eradication are keys to progress. Yet, neither child labor nor education are given the space that would logically make sense when national budgets and strategies are developed.

6.2 Possible solutions

*International conventions:* ratifying relevant international conventions helps to provide some of the normative standards required for effective national law development. Yoshie Nguchi from the ILO/IPPEC stressed that Convention 182 is *action-oriented:* it requires ratifying States not only to legally prohibit the worst forms of child labor, but also to design and implement *action programs* to eliminate these forms as a priority. They must also establish or designate appropriate mechanisms for monitoring the implementation of the Convention. Ratifying States should, in addition, take *effective and time-bound* measures for prevention; provide support for the removal of children from the worst forms of child labor and their rehabilitation; ensure access to free basic education or vocational training for all children removed from the worst forms of child labor; identify children at special risk; and take into account the special situation of girls.
Good national laws: Good national laws should relate to international conventions and also create a normative framework which is practically relevant and culturally acceptable within the country’s context. Where customary law is predominant, dialogue on norms and standards should be initiated with the traditional leaderships of the communities at stake (see section on cultural issues). For laws intended to be enforced, it is important to keep the practical aspects of enforcement in mind. Where enforcement is indeed considered necessary, an unenforced law can easily lead to discouragement and de-motivation of the stakeholders.

Rather than prohibiting child labor, schooling could be made compulsory. School attendance is easier to monitor than child labor participation, and compulsory schooling would therefore be easier to enforce.

Kaushik Basu, 1999

Sensitive application of enforcement: Within poor communities, child labor laws should primarily be considered for enforcement when well documented cases of organized and/or deliberate exploitation of children are occurring. However, where laws are installed because they are intended to serve as general normative standards, they often precede public support and realities on the ground. Laws should therefore be enforced only where reasonable: when indeed children work due to acute poverty or household labor constraint, legal intervention will do little to help the situation. Similarly, the quality of the local schooling offered should be carefully revised before compulsory attendance is enforced. Deeply entrenched traditional practices should particularly be considered before force is used to try change local behavior.

Sarah Castle, 2003, describes how legal interventions to stop alleged child trafficking from Mali to Cote d’Ivoire resulted in travelling children increasingly having to pay bribes, and good helpers being deterred and replaced by bad ones along the way. The children’s local safety nets provided by ex-pats in the destination countries also unraveled, because people providing such safety nets feared being accused of intermediation. But the children continued to travel because, Castle argues, the main purpose of the journey was one concerning a rite of passage – a practice that had not been properly understood and addressed.

Policy processes: Commitment and responsibility were two key-words often stressed by Daniel Ximenes during his presentation. When commitment is present, norms and standards set by the law should be reflected in PRSPs, national plans and budgeting processes. Agencies and donors should require that all national policies and strategies
of relevance to EFA are knowledge-based and take the child labor and education questions properly into account. This also goes for support to legal reform processes.

6.3 Knowledge gaps

Statistical analysis on the impact of legislation, legal policy and enforcement is largely missing in child labor literature. This would complement existing and ongoing legal research and help identify the efficiency of legal options available.
7 How to find relevant local strategies

The “face of exclusion” is context specific.

Olav Seim
Unesco

“Innovate, innovate, innovate!”

Gugu Ndebele
South African Government

Examples of successful or promising interventions elsewhere can help inspire the creation of local solutions but they should not be uncritically replicated. Each place has its own set of issues, and even a small local twist may significantly change program outcomes from one place to another. Beyond mapping vulnerable child populations, the reasons why these populations are vulnerable need be sought out. The right policy mix can be formulated when the blend of local causes is well understood.

In Cambodia, the share of female teachers has proven to greatly encourage school attendance. In other countries, a high number of female teachers could be an indication of a profession that is under-paid and under-prioritized. This is only one example of how one country’s silver bullet may be everything but that in another.

7.1 Challenges

Identification or discovery of a critical situation often requires rapid action. Without time to collect solid documentation, many initial interventions and policies are therefore defined based on an intuitive perception of the issues at stake. In some cases, preparatory studies are then carried out by stakeholders, who have already advocated for these initial solutions, reconfirming initial assumptions in a tautological manner. New documentation pointing out factors not initially thought of is often met with
reluctance, as established interests overshadow the demand for improved knowledge. Consequently, sub-optimal or even irrelevant programs have been allowed to continue over long periods of time, and are even replicated, in spite of new information.

In one country the association of women lawyers was commissioned to study the phenomenon of child labor and come up with policy solutions. Not surprisingly, they suggested to support women and to strengthen the law.

A general concern is the lack of priority given to the exploration of a problem's local variations and the investigation of its causes in details. First, existing research is often not considered when policy and programming are initiated. Second, new studies are sometimes of poor quality and do not involve the proper resource groups in their proper roles. NGOs are often asked to do work which requires specialized academic skills and experience while academics are sometimes developing research tools and (mis)interpreting their findings without proper consultation with the experts on the ground – like local stakeholders, NGOs and CBOs. In their recommendations, both groups often fail to acknowledge the political realities faced by the politicians who are, in their turn, expected to develop appropriate policies and finance program interventions. Solutions suggested therefore easily become politically unacceptable or realistically unaffordable in a poor country with a large number of hard-to-reach children.

It is by no means simple to create a simple, implementable program design that takes into account the full set of issues mapped in a given local setting. In some settings, it makes sense to adopt a program model that has turned out to work in a setting that is reasonably similar. This model is then adjusted to fit the local context. But, sometimes, replications of pre-designed models turn out to face unexpected local challenges and may even target parts of the problem with a relatively limited impact in the local context.

7.2 Possible solutions

To get a good picture of the causes preventing the last ten percent of children from going to school in a given place, local quality research is indispensable. Here are some recommendations on how to go about finding an effective local strategy:
• **Find out what is already known**

It may sound fundamental but, unfortunately, going through existing quality studies is a crucial exercise often neglected before new data gathering is initiated as well as the design of new policies and interventions. The UCW’s web site provides access to many useful resources that can facilitate this process.

a) To find out what large scale surveys, including child labor and education related indicators in a given country, have been implemented, go to: http://www.ucw-project.org/cgi-bin/ucw/Search/Main.sql

b) If gathering your own data analysis is not an option, readymade cross tabulations of core issues are found at: http://www.ucw-project.org/cgi-bin/ucw/Survey/Main.sql?come=Ucw_Tables.sql

c) To get an overview of quality research carried out in a given country, go to UCW’s child labor bibliography at: http://www.ucw-project.org/resources/child_labor_bibliography.html

• **Prioritize quality studies**

Good information can be elusive and studies carried out prior to an intervention are often of low quality. Adequate and policy-relevant baseline research can help make a program much more efficient and is, therefore, worthy of the investment. Here are some advices on how to reach this goal:

a) *Identify gaps.* Relevant gaps in existing information should be identified and the preparatory studies should be scaled based on the size and nature of these gaps.

b) *Triangulate.* Both qualitative and quantitative information is needed to get a satisfactory picture of the causes explaining why different groups of children keep working and stay out of school. Quantitative work is required to provide numbers as well as the identification of geographical areas of special concerns. It also helps in the assessment of local causes. Qualitative work is especially needed to enlighten policies aiming at addressing traditional practices and norms that hold certain children back.

c) *Assigning proper roles.* Good information is often difficult to obtain, and could be politically sensitive. It is therefore important to use professional researchers with good methodological skills and few affiliations to government, special interest groups or agencies operating in the field. Local researchers are preferable when their technical skills are sufficiently adequate and relevant to the specific challenge but, to ensure quality, international specialists should often be brought in to supervise.
NGOs and CBOs normally know the situation on the ground better than most people. NGOs could therefore play an important role in both research preparation and quality assurance of the information collected.

d) **Content.** The preparatory studies should, in conclusion, be able to explain the relative importance of the most common explanatory factors for child labor and school absenteeism: school related issues, poverty related issues, cultural issues and other possible factors. Indicators and results should bear clear links to possible policy implications in the way they have been outlined in this report. This means that the possible impact of alternative policy tools should be kept in mind during research design and analysis. If you'd for instance would like to know whether a transfer program could be relevant to increase school attendance, if it should be conditional or not, and the likely efficiency of the program given different transfer amounts, you should for instance remember to include a question about how households rank schooling among their other spending priorities. If you'd like to consider if transfer programs or micro credits are the most relevant approaches in a give setting, you should try to get a picture of whether local poverty is chronic or based on frequent income fluctuations.

Good and applied research may provide the answers: Academics are creators of two of the most replicated development program models in the world: professors Muhammad Yunus (Bangladesh) and Cristovam Buarque (Brazil) respectively designed the Micro-credit and the Conditional Cash Transfer models.

• **Finding local solutions**

There is often a striking gap between the findings and the policy recommendations made in pre-project studies. Alternatively, the recommendations correspond to the findings, but subsequent policy design and interventions appear to be disconnected from the study recommendations.

a) **Consider political realities.** Sometimes, study recommendations are not considering the political realities within which they propose to implement policies and programs. Effective solutions are by and large a compromise between what is technically desirable and what is politically doable. Costs and sustainability concerns need to be given more space in preparatory studies for their conclusions to become practically relevant.
b) *Get inspired by others.* Studying the successes from other countries helps inspire local solutions. Yet, there is a tendency to apply models that worked elsewhere without taking cultural, demographic, social and economic differences properly into consideration. “Properly” may imply more than slight adjustments (like, what is the best vehicle for transferring cash in this setting as compared to in the original?). It may mean a total revamping of the initial model or even switching to another model altogether.

c) *Innovate, innovate, innovate.* Innovation seems to be a challenge. Standard project models are often replicated in spite of being poorly evaluated, or their relevance assessed in a particular local setting. Establishing a multi-donor, multi-agency trust fund to encourage the development and piloting of knowledge-based, cross-sectoral, politically realistic local program models for including working and other hard-to-reach children could help prepare for this last challenge. Collaboration between academia, government and NGO/CBOs should be encouraged in these explorations.

School-based de-worming turned out to work as an efficient intervention to increase enrollment in Western Kenya because, i) worm infestation was a considerable problem, ii) de-worming was not the top priority of the households, and would therefore not have been provided if the families had simply been given a cash transfer, iii) it was still attractive enough for families to reconsider their decision of not sending children to school, and iv) the overall reduction in worm infestation in and around the program communities was so large that the program benefits by far exceeded the program costs.

A premise for success is the involvement and commitment of all relevant national stakeholders, including the Ministry of finance and the President’s office. Much can still be done to fairly reflect EFA’s priority within national development agendas and plans, PRSPs and discussions concerning budgetary allocations.
The previous section concluded that there is a need to stimulate local innovation which is knowledge based, cross-sectoral and jointly developed by academia, policy makers and NGOs/CBOs. A standard model with flexible tools for such explorations should be tested and developed.

Many program models commonly used to get hard-to-reach children to go to school were originally developed for other purposes and are not sufficiently evaluated with regards to this particular target group. In addition, many of the evaluations that have been conducted were unsystematic and lacked good baseline data, and failed to make a distinction between the types of children it worked for. (E.g. did they primarily work for inactive or working children, and what was their effect on, for instance, children living with a disability?)

Standard models that have been widely applied are not systematically evaluated across different local settings. Such evaluations would help identify program features requiring alterations in different contexts and suggest in which contexts a certain model is not likely to be effective at all.
8 Main conclusions and recommendations

UCW summarizes the main outcome of the workshop in the following recommendations:

The international community’s efforts to achieve Education For All (EFA) and the progressive elimination of child labor are closely linked.

1. Education – and, in particular, education of good quality up to the minimum age for entering into employment – is a key element in the prevention of child labor. With no access to quality education, millions of children are left to work, often in dangerous and exploitative conditions. There is broad agreement that the single most effective way to prevent children from entering work is through extending and improving schooling so that families have the opportunity to invest in their children’s education: the returns of such an investment are greater than those associated with involving children in work.

2. At the same time, child labor is one of the main obstacles to EFA, as involvement in child labor is generally at a cost to children’s ability to attend and perform in school. According to UNESCO, there were 72 million children of primary-school going age not enrolled in school in 2005. Research by the inter-agency Understanding Children’s Work project and other sources indicates that many, if not most, of these out-of-school children are involved in some form of work. Child labor also adversely affects the academic achievement of the considerable number of children who combine work and school, often resulting in these children leaving school prematurely and entering into work, or in them graduating without the human capital needed for gainful employment. Addressing child labor is then essential to achieve the EFA objectives.

Factors contributing to school exclusion and child labor are multiple and overlapping.

3. Parents may involve their children in work rather than schooling because the school is inaccessible, or is of poor quality and therefore not seen as being worth the invest-
ment of their children’s time. There are numerous specific school-related barriers to households sending their children to school. These include “quality” barriers such as inexperienced or poorly-trained teachers, overcrowded classrooms, inadequate school facilities and curricula ill-suited to the realities outside the classroom. They also include “access” barriers such as long travel distances to school and high out-of-pocket school costs.

4. Classroom practices that exclude children with special learning needs, or that violate the dignity and rights of children, can also act as barriers. The incompatibility of academic calendars and daily school schedules with the exigencies of family agricultural work can be an important barrier to schooling for rural children. A disconnection between schools and the families/communities that they ostensibly serve is another common schooling barrier in many contexts.

5. But the causes of school exclusion and child labor extend well beyond the confines of the education system. Poverty can play a crucial role – children are often forced to work rather than attend school because their survival and that of their families depends on it. Child labor may form part of a household’s strategy for dealing with risk, making them less vulnerable to losses of income arising from shocks. The role of child labor as a household safety mechanism during shocks is particularly relevant in light of the recent unprecedented hike in world food prices and of the unfolding global financial crisis.

6. Other, less tangible, contributing factors include ethnic- and religious-based discrimination; traditional gender roles and gender attitudes; harmful cultural practices enforced by customary law; cultural acceptance of child labor as “normal”; (lack of) societal awareness of the importance of education; and (lack of) societal mobilization against child labor.

The complexity of the twin challenges of child labor and school exclusion necessitates a policy response that is comprehensive and cross-sectoral in nature.

7. School exclusion and child labor are phenomena that cut across policy boundaries – education, health, labor markets, social security, basic services, income distribution, household wealth, social attitudes, formal and customary law, cultural practices and values, inter alia, all can play a role. Following from this, a strategy to reach the inclusion objectives of the EFA process focused on the education system alone is unlikely to be effective.

8. Rather, there is a need to “mainstream” child labor concerns, within the EFA process, into overall national development agendas and plans, including PRSP
processes, and into decisions concerning budgetary resource allocations. There is also a need to extend efforts against school exclusion and child labor to include a wide variety of social partners outside government. Mobilizing civil society, labor unions, employers’ associations and industry groups is particularly important in this context. Mobilizing and empowering children themselves as agents of change is also critical.

9. A comprehensive response to child labor and school exclusion should address the full range of school-related, socio-cultural, economic and institutional barriers keeping children from school and in work in an integrated fashion. While the precise nature of such a response will necessarily be context-specific, research evidence and past policy experience point to a number of possible measures and approaches.

10. Within the education sector, policy measures that have proved relevant to overcoming barriers to schooling in different contexts include (but are not limited to): (a) recruitment of female teachers; (b) school calendars harmonized with the agricultural calendar; (c) locally-adapted curricula; (d) school fee abolition; (e) mother-tongue instruction for indigenous children; (f) community schools to extend schooling to remote areas unreached by the formal system; (g) non-formal “bridging” education for former child laborers to smooth their transition into the formal schooling system; (h) remedial education for working children and children with special learning needs; (i) community and parental school governance committees; (j) expanded early childhood development services; and (k) “second chance” education and vocational training for older, out-of-school children.

11. Beyond the school system, general policy approaches include strengthening and extending social safety nets, in response to evidence suggesting the child labor is frequently used to mitigate social risk. Extending access to water networks and to other basic services helps reduce the value of children’s time outside the classroom. Transfers (conditional or not) and other school attendance incentive schemes have also proved effective in a variety of contexts in reducing the opportunity costs of schooling.

12. Public awareness campaigns using traditional and non-traditional communication channels are important in addressing entrenched social norms and cultural attitudes underlying child labor and school exclusion. Adult literacy and lifelong learning is also important in this context, as evidence suggests educated parents are more likely to send their children to school.

13. Coordination and information-exchange mechanisms are needed to ensure that the array of concerned actors work together effectively and avoid duplicating each others’ efforts.
Efforts towards EFA and progressive child labor elimination must place particular emphasis on remaining hard-to-reach children.

14. Some of the worst-off categories of hard-to-reach children include: trafficked children; child victims of early marriage and other forms of slavery or bondage; child soldiers; refugee and internally-displaced children; street children; indigenous children; children working outside their own country; children affected by HIV/AIDS; child (urban) migrants; and children living in conflict-affected or “fragile states”. These groups require urgent measures to ensure their rights to schooling and to protection from exploitation. The “face of exclusion” is context-specific, and priority groups of hard-to-reach children must therefore be identified locally. Many groups of hard-to-reach children are not captured by standard household surveys, meaning that other, specialized research methods are needed.

There remain a number of important knowledge gaps impeding policy formulation and effective targeting of interventions against school exclusion and child labor.

15. There is an urgent need for better quantitative and qualitative information on hard-to-reach groups of children and the factors underlying their exclusion. Further research is needed to fill knowledge gaps relating to, inter alia: (a) the link between school quality and child labor, and, in particular, the elements of school quality most relevant to getting children into school and out of work; (b) the impact of policies promoting school attendance on child labor; (c) the impact of delivery of services within other sectors on bringing child laborers and other hard-to-reach children into school (e.g. social protection, water provision and health services); and (d) how school drop-out and child labor impact upon the labor market outcomes of youth. Generating evidence on the socio-cultural “un-observables” that appear to play a central role in school exclusion and child labor is also important in this context.
Bibliography


Workshop agenda

Rapporteur: Scott Lyon, UCW-Project
Facilitator: Maurizia Tovo, The World Bank

October 20, 2008:

9.00 Welcome: Anne Lene Dale Sandsten, Director of Fafo, AIS
   Opening: Håkon Arald Guldbrandsen, Deputy Minister for International Development
   The urgency of including the hard-to-reach children: Kailash Satyarthi, Director, Global March
   How research can help find solutions: Furio Rosati, Director, the UCW-Project

10.00 Coffee break

Session 1. Education policy: Schooling incentives
Chair: Ragnhild Dybdahl, Education Director, NORAD

10.15 How they did it: Brazil
   Daniel Ximenes, Director of the Department of Studies and Observation of Educational Vulnerabilities, Ministry of Education, Brazil

10.55 Access to school and child labor
   Marco Manacorda, Associate Professor; Queen Mary University of London and CEP – London School of Economics

11.20 Does school quality matter to working children?
   Furio Rosati, Director, the Understanding Children’s Work-Project

11.45 Panelists:
   Redd Barna: Gro Brækken, Secretary General
   WAO Afrique: Cléophas Mally, Director
   Unesco: Olav Seim, Director EFA, Donor relations

13.00  Lunch

Session 2. Social protection policy: Poverty and vulnerability

Chair: Senator Cristovam Buarque

14.00  How they did it: South Africa
       Gugu Ndebele, Deputy Director General, Department of Education, Gov. of South Africa

14.40  Poverty, risks and shocks, child labor and schooling
       Anne Kielland, researcher, Fafo Institute for Applied International Studies

15.05  Child labor within a broader social policy agenda
       Beverly Grier, North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University. chair of the interdisciplinary department of Liberal Studies

15.30  Coffee break

15.45  Panelists:  OPCION: Consuelo Contreras Largo, Director
             World Bank: Maurizia Tovo, Senior Social Protection Specialist
             Plan Norway: Helen Bjørnøy, Secretary General

16.25  Plenary brain storm: Key messages on how to reduce child labor and improve enrollment of hard-to-reach children through social protection programs.

17.00  Adjourn

October 21, 2008:

Session 3. Policy Processes and Legal frameworks

Chair Unicef: Joanne Dunn, Senior Protection Advisor, Child Labor

9.00   How they did it: India
       Dir. SR. Joshi, Director, Ministry of Labor and Employment

9.40   Child labor and schooling in the broader policy context
       Cristovam Buarque, Brazilian senator

10.05  International standards and national legal frameworks on child labor: How they relate to the education debate
       Yoshie Noguchi, Senior Legal Officer, ILO/IPEC

10.30  Coffee break

10.45  Panelists:  The Global March: Kailash Satyarthi, President
              CARE Norway: Marte Gerhardsen, Secretary General
              Unicef: Joanne Dunn, Senior Protection Advisor, Child Labor
              ILO: Frank Hagemann, Chief - Policy and Research, ILO/IPEC

12.00  Lunch

Session 4: Group work

13.00  Group work: Key messages from the workshop to the EFA process

14.45  Coffee break

15.00  Presentation of group recommendations in plenary

16.00  Concluding remarks: What research and experiences can and cannot (yet) tell us.

Anne Kielland, researcher, Fafo

All presentations made at the workshop are available at the www.ucw-project.org
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Broadening the approach to Education for All

The EFA Goals are clear: free education of good quality should be available to all. Yet, we know that some children will still be less likely to attend available schools and that many working children will be among them. This report goes beyond pointing out what is needed to be able to offer free quality education, a task that has been done better by others, notably in the EFA Global Monitoring Report. This report adds to the existing EFA literature by outlining some thoughts on core policy challenges and possible solutions within other sectors than the education sector, particularly social protection and labor. The aim is not to identify a silver bullet that could solve the EFA challenge in any setting; locally relevant solutions must be worked out locally. The report will, however, give an indication of how this can be done through some examples of knowledge-based ideas and successes for inspiration.

The ideas presented are based on the framework for, and some of the statements made at the workshop “Child Labor and the EFA initiative: The challenge of including the hard-to-reach children”. The workshop participants included both education and social protection specialists; academics, bureaucrats, practitioners and advocacy groups. It should be noted that the selection of issues treated and the framework for this issue paper are solely the responsibility of the authors and will not necessarily be a selection of material fully agreed upon by all workshop participants.