What has worked for Bringing Out-of-school Children with Disabilities into Regular Schools? A Literature Review

Umesh Sharma[1]*, Olivia Ng[1]

1. Monash University, Australia

ABSTRACT

Purpose: *A literature review was undertaken to determine (a) what is currently being done to bring out-of-school children into schools and retain them there; (b) what has succeeded in bringing out-of-school children into schools and retaining them;and (c) what is being done to bring out-of-school children with disabilities into schools?*

Methods: *Various databases were searched to identify relevant articles for the review. Only articles published after the year 2000 were included in the analysis.*

Results: *A total of 23 articles were reviewed. The review identified economical, socio-cultural and school-related variables that contribute to children being excluded from schooling. Various strategies that have worked to bring out-of-school children into schools include alternative education, rebates and incentives, and community awareness programmes.*

Conclusions and Implications: *The review found that there is insufficient research on out-of-school children with disabilities. However, research on the population of children without disabilities has implications that can be relevant to children with disabilities.*

Key words: *children with disability, education*

INTRODUCTION

Children with disabilities face significant barriers to attend and complete schooling, particularly in developing countries (Filmer, 2005). According to the United Nations, school enrolment rates of children with disabilities are estimatedto fall between 1%-3%, although children who are included in formal education are more likely to finish school (World Vision, 2007). Astudy on

---

* **Corresponding Author:** Umesh Sharma,Monash University, Australia. Email:umesh.sharma@monash.edu

disability and schooling conducted by Filmer (2008), suggested that disability is associated with long-term poverty, particularly in developing countries, and a schooling gap between children with and without disabilities begins as early as Grade 1. Although there is significant emphasis on bringing out-of-school children with disabilities into the education system (e.g. World Bank, 2003), how this can be achieved remains unclear.

OBJECTIVES

This paper reviews research on out-of-school children (OOSC), more specifically those with disabilities, with the aim of identifying possible strategies that can increase their inclusion in the education sector. Three key questions guided the review:

1) What is currently being done to bring out-of-school children into schools and retain them there?

2) What has succeeded in bringing out-of-school children into schools and retaining them there?

3) What is being done to bring out-of-school children with disabilities into schools?

Who are out-of-school children?

Global Partnership for Education (2013) defines out-of-school children as those who do not have access to a school in their community, do not enrol despite the availability of a school, are enrolled but do not attend school or have dropped out of the education system. Street children and child labourers also fall under the category of out-of-school children (Porteus et al, 2000; UNICEF, 2012a; UNICEF, 2012b).

According to Datta and Banik (2012), street children fall under the following 3 categories: children on the street, children of the street, and abandoned and orphaned children. Children on the street are those who have homes and return to their families at the end of each day; children of the street are those who chose the street as their home and have occasional contact with family; while abandoned and orphaned children have no ties with families. Child labourers often work on their own as well as a part of family labour. Work outside the family unit often includes domestic labour, agricultural activity and production of goods for home

consumption (Caseley-Hayford&Ghartey, 2007; Datta&Banik, 2012; World Bank &UNICEF, 2009). Child labourers are less likely to attend schoolthan children who do not work (UNICEF, 2012a; World Bank and UNICEF, 2009).

In 2010, UNICEF and the UNESCO Institute for Statistics launched the global initiative on out-of-school children (UNICEF, 2012a; UNICEF, 2012b) in order to reduce the number of out-of-school children and increase efforts towards universal primary education by 2015. Part of the initiative was to analyse barriers to education and existing interventions related to education while developing context appropriate policies and strategies to decrease the number of out-of-school children from 26 countries across 7 regions. The Out-Of-School Children initiativeidentified 5 dimensions of exclusion from education (UNICEF, 2012a; UNICEF, 2012b):

- Dimension 1 - Children of pre-primary school age not in pre-primary or primary school.

- Dimension 2 - Children of primary school age not in primary or secondary school.

- Dimension 3 - Children of lower secondary school age not in primary or secondary school.

- Dimension 4 - Children in primary school at risk of dropping out.

- Dimension 5 - Children in lower secondary school at risk of dropping out.

Children in dimensions 1-3 were the primary focus of this review.

METHOD

A literature search was conducted using the following databases and search engines: PADDLE, ERIC, A+, PSYCINFO, PROQUEST, UNESCO, UNICEF and Google Scholar. A combination of the following search terms was used across all databases: "out-of-school children"+ "disability" + "programmes" + "disabled". Search was restricted to articles published after the year 2000. Articles were limited to those reported in English, and both journal articles and reports were included. The authors reviewed abstracts to select articles for inclusion in the review. At this stage, bibliography of all relevant articles was also screened. Articles were included if they addressed the implementation and outcome of programmes or policies used to reintegrate out-of-school children into formal schools. A total of

23 articles were reviewed to understand current strategies and previous attempts to bring out-of-school children into formal schools. The documents included for the review consisted of reports from agencies like UNICEF, World Bank and UNESCO and research reports on out-of-school children and out-of-school children with disability. Table 1 presents a brief description of all the studies that were included in the review. An asterisk identifies the studies that are particularly relevant to out-of-school children with disabilities (OOSCD).

Table 1: Description of Studies included in the Review

Author (year)	Key aims	Key findings	Implications for out-of-school children (OOSC) and out-of-school children with disabilities (OOSCD)
Ashley LD (2005)	To examine the processes involved in mainstreaming OOSC from non-formal education programmes into formal schools.	In order to promote inclusion of OOSC from outreach programmes, the structure and ethos of the formal school should meet the basic needs common to all students.	Additional support structures or changing structures within the formal school may help increase retention rates of OOSC by generating an atmosphere of an inclusive school.
Associates for Change (2011)	To review current inclusive methodologiesl and practices that would help achieve systemic change in education across rural communities.	Flexible schooling models appear to be more effective at increasing retention rates of OOSC.	Use of child-centred teaching methods improves literacy and numeracy skills. It can also improve retention of OOSC.
Caseley-Hayford L& Ghartey A (2007)	To examine the impact of the School for Life programme in Northern Ghana.	The School for Life programme improved school access, retention rates and lowered dropout rates in children across the 12 districts.	Integration of the School for Life approach into the formal education system can provide means to offer quality education to OOSC.
*Croft A (2010)	To explore pedagogical challenges for developing countries to enhance inclusion of children with disabilities, and young people.	Common pedagogy does not meet the individual needs of many children, particularly CWD, leading to many CWD dropping out of schools.	An inclusive pedagogy that caters to different learning needs of children could reduce the dropout rates of OOSCWD.

Datta D & Banik D (2012)	To investigate the effectiveness of the Railway Station Platform Schools in providing OOSC with bridging courses to encourage access to formal education.	Over half of the students who graduated from their courses were enrolled in government schools to continue their education.	Collaboration between NGOs and the government sector is necessary to provide OOSC with meaningful education.
*Filmer D (2005)	To investigate relationship between disability, poverty status and school participation in nine developing countries.	Youth with disabilities always less likely to start school and have lower transition rates resulting in lower schooling attainment.	Incentives to address poverty may enhance participation of OOSCD.
Global Partnership for Education (2013)	To summarise the challenges OOSC face and approaches to address their needs.	OOSC lack access to education due to financial disadvantages and inadequate schooling systems.	Identification and monitoring of OOSC to help understand reasons behind their exclusion from education systems, and strengthening schooling systems to focus on reaching OOSC may help reduce the number of OOSC.
Kanamugire C& Rutakamize J (2008)	To analyse a remedial programme which aims to bring OOSC back into the formal education system in Rwanda.	The programme has helped address the issue of providing OOSC access to education, and around one-third of children enrolled in the programme eventually returned to the formal system.	Elements that have made the remedial programme successful can be replicated in the formal system to improve the education system and increase OOSC's access to education.
Korboe D, Dogbe T & Marshall C (2011)	To assess the dynamics of poverty in Northern Ghana.	Barriers to effective participation in schools occur at a household/ community level and school level. Poverty and hunger are leading causes for being out of school.	Strategies that address poverty and hunger, such as scholarships and food programmes, may help reduce dropout rates of OOSC.
Porteus K et al (2000)	To analyse the factors that cause school non-attendance in three poor, marginalised communities in South Africa.	Poverty, with its interrelated social issues, has the greatest influence on children being out of school.	Strategies that address poverty could help promote school attendance in OOSC.

Reddy AN & Sinha S (2010)	To review the research to find out reasons for school dropouts in India.	Evidence suggests that poverty and lack of systemic support leads to children being "pushed out" of school.	Strategies to reduce poverty, promote school culture and increase school support may enhance progression and retention.
Sud P (2010)	To analyse the effectiveness of non-formal schools to help mainstream child labourers into the formal education system in Jalandhar, Punjab, India.	Children who attend non-formal schools are significantly more likely to continue studying after transitioning to mainstream schools.	Techniques used to encourage engagement and attendance in non-formal schools may also help to retain OOSC in schools if applied to the formal education system.
Tuladhar, S.K. (2004)	To review the Nepalese Government's efforts to develop a non-formal education system for OOSC.	Major benefits of non-formal education include increasing OOSC's literacy skills and increased motivation to attend school.	Strategies introduced in non-formal education to meet the needs of OOSC could also improve the formal education system.
UIS (2013)	To demonstrate the stalled progress in reducing the number of OOSC.	While access to education has improved globally, little progress has been achieved in reducing dropout rates. This is most notable in Sub-Sahara Africa.	New interventions are required to reduce the dropout rate and ensure every child acquires basic literary and numeracy skills.
UNESCO (2010)	To report the progress of the Education for All (EFA) and Millennium Development Goals.	Many of the world's poorest countries are not on track in meeting the EFA 2015 targets due to failure to address inequalities, stigmatisation and discrimination linked to wealth, gender, ethnicity, disability and language.	Inclusive approaches that target stigmatisation and discrimination, and incentives to address poverty, may help provide education for excluded groups.
UNESCO (2012)	To report the progress of the Education for All (EFA) and Millennium Development Goals.	Children in low income countries enrol in schools late and are more likely to drop out of school.	Incentives addressing financial constraints may help increase school participation of OOSC.

UNESCO (2013)	To highlight the crisis of education in conflict-affected countries.	Children in conflict-affected areas are more likely to face disruption in their education due to factors such as school closure, absent teachers, targeted attacks on schools and decline in humanitarian aid for education.	Policies addressing human rights violation, global aid priorities and strengthened rights for displaced people in conflict-affected countries may provide OOSC children with access to education.
*UNICEF (2010).	To analyse the situation of children with disabilities (CWD) in Pacific Island Countries.	CWD suffer stigma and discrimination and are usually not sent to school by over-protective parents or not allowed entry by school managements.	Strategies addressing cultural barriers and attitudes to disability, and inclusive education policies may enhance school participation of OOSCD.
*UNICEF (2012a)	To analyse the situation of OOSC in Kyrgyzstan through the Global Initiative on OOSC.	CWD are excluded from the education system due to negative perceptions of disability, inaccessible school infrastructure and poor identification of disabilities.	Strategies and policies addressing attitudes towards disability, and an improved monitoring and evaluation system could enhance participation of OOSCD.
*UNICEF (2012b)	To analyse the situation of OOSC in Romania through the Global Initiative on OOSC.	The majority of OOSC previously dropped out of formal education due to barriers that include poverty, geographical access and insufficient parental involvement.	Positive attitude toward education, incentives addressing financial barriers and improving school infrastructure may help retain OOSC and OOSCD in schools.
World Bank and UNICEF (2009)	To review the experience of 6 countries in Africa which have abolished school fees.	Fee abolition negatively impacted the quality of education due to resources being shared amongst more pupils and less revenue to provide for learning materials.	Strategies that address the education system and school structure may help improve the quality of education and retention rates.
*World Vision (2007)	To examine how the Education for All Fast Track Initiative (FTI) partnership is tackling the challenges of CWD regarding participation in education.	Many FTI-endorsed countries do not address the inclusion of CWD via lack of monitoring of CWD, lack of provision to address learning needs and funding.	Policies addressing teacher training and funding may help promote the inclusion of OOSCD in the education system.

NB: CWD - Children with disabilities

RESULTS

A review of the literature revealed thematically similar barriers that occur across different countries, with some occurring more frequently than others. Some of these barriers are likely to be encountered by children with disabilities and have direct relevance to this review. A number of strategies, albeit not all of them deemed successful, have been implemented to address such barriers. This paper will first discuss common barriers to education, followed by successful strategies implemented to target such barriers for out-of-school children.

Barriers to Education

A number of common barriers have been identified which prevent universal access to education, either by limiting access to education or by excluding children from formal schooling. They can be summarised under the following categories: economic, socio-cultural and school-related (Porteus et al, 2000; Tuladhar, 2004; Datta& Banik, 2012; UNICEF, 2012a; UNICEF, 2012b).

Economic barriers

Research suggests that poverty is considered to be the primary reason for many children being out of school in developing countries (Porteus et al, 2000; Reddy &Sinha, 2010; Korboe et al, 2011; UNICEF, 2012a; UNICEF, 2012b) as many families are unable to meet the costs of schooling due to insufficient family income (Tuladhar, 2004; Ashley, 2005; World Bank & UNICEF, 2009). Direct costs, such as school fees, are a particular deterrent for many families, thus increasing the likelihood of a child being excluded from education or dropping out of school.

In addition to the direct costs of schooling, there is also the issue of opportunity costs, as sending a child to school would include the cost of food and transport. Additionally, since many out-of-school children need to work and earn their livelihood, if they attend school they cannot contribute to the family unit through child labour,thereby forfeiting income and employment prospects for the family (Tuladhar, 2004; Ashley, 2005; Kanamugire & Rutakamize, 2008; UNICEF, 2012a). It has been suggested that the indirect costs of education are of more concern than direct costs for poor households (World Bank, 2009) and this is possibly one of the major factors that contribute to children being excluded from school.

Poverty also continues to be one of the most significant barriers to providing education to children with disabilities. In a comprehensive study of disability,

poverty and schooling, Filmer (2005, p. 15) concluded that "children with disabilities are less likely to start school, and in some countries have lower transition rates resulting in lower schooling attainment." He also stated that, "in developing countries disability is associated with long-run poverty, in the sense that children with disabilities are less likely to acquire the human capital that will allow them to earn higher incomes."

Socio-cultural barriers

Socio-cultural barriers also play a significant role in preventing out-of-school children from school enrolment, along with retention and completion of school (UNESCO, 2010). In particular, the negative perceptions of education within the community, cultural practices and disabilities appear to prevent children from participating in school (UNICEF, 2010; Korboe et al, 2011; UNICEF, 2012b).

Out-of-school children tend to have parents who are not concerned with their children's education (Tuladhar, 2004) or who may view schools as representing cultures or values that they do not identify with themselves (Ashley, 2005). Furthermore, some parents may have experiences with poor quality education and therefore do not see the immediate and long-term benefits of sending their children to school (Reddy & Sinha, 2010). In addition, low educational attainment of families is considered a key barrier (UNICEF, 2012b) as parents without much education often cannot offer support in terms of preparing for school, and can potentially act as negative role models. Reddy and Sinha (2010) suggest that if parents are educated themselves, and can recognise the potential benefits of education, they are more likely to encourage and assist their children to enrol and stay in school. To further highlight the importance of parental attitudes towards education, Tuladhar (2004) suggests that there are 3 categories of parents: those who are very enthusiastic about children's education and encourage them in all educational opportunities, those who send their children to either out-of-school programme classes or formal schools but do not follow up on their children's education, and those who are not concerned with their children's education. Of the 3 categories, the latter 2 appear to have the most negative impact, as the lack of family support would indicate that out-of-school childrenare less likely to be interested in schooling themselves (UNICEF, 2012b).

It has also been noted that certain cultural practices deter families from sending their children to school, particularly if they are girls in countries that practise early marriages. For example, "bride kidnapping" is a traditional practice in Romania.

Young girls, often as young as 12 years of age, are kidnapped and married to teenage boys. The kidnapped girls either start schooling late or never enrol in schools (UNICEF, 2012b). Additionally, for boys in Romania, there is a problem with continuing school after completing the period of compulsory education, as it is the custom to work and be financially independent during adolescence.

Exclusion of children with disabilities from the education sector due to societal attitudes is well known. According to UNESCO (2013), in developing countriesaround 90% of children with disabilities do not attend school for a number of reasons. These include an inadequate inclusive culture in schools and discriminatory attitudes. Within some African countries and Kyrgyzstan, there exist negative societal attitudestowards the education of children with disabilities, as a low value is placed on their potential and capacity (Croft, 2010; UNICEF, 2012a). This can lead to children being hidden away at home or being prevented from attending school.Across the Pacific Islands, there are some common beliefs about children with disabilities and their families. Pacific Island countries are traditionally communal and children are loved and valued; however, children with disabilities tend to be over-protected and are not encouraged to attend school or learn skills that would lead to their independence (UNICEF, 2010). Conversely, there also exists the perception that children with disabilities are linked to sorcery or a punishment. Some parental reports indicate that there is stigma and prejudice associated with having a child with disability. Hence, children with disability rarely attend schools because some parents want to protect them from possible bullying and teasing, while others do not believe that their children can learn (UNICEF, 2010).

School-related barriers

School-related barriers revolve around the quality of education, school infrastructures and poor teacher training. For many countries, there are issues with insufficient training for teachers and challenges with inclusive education, along with a lack of quality textbooks and study materials (World Vision, 2007; UNICEF, 2012a; UNICEF, 2012b). Furthermore, most teaching methods employed in schools do not embrace a child-centred pedagogy, thereby leading to problems with retention (Croft, 2010; Associates for Change, 2011; UNICEF, 2012b). In addition to barriers concerning quality of education, there is also the problem of geographical constraints. Most out-of-school children lack access to formal education due to inappropriate locations of schools (Tuladhar, 2004;

Datta&Banik, 2012; UNICEF, 2012b) and insufficient school transport (Sud, 2010). This often leads tohigher levels of non-attendance, as there are parental concerns regarding the safety of travelling long distances to school and, in consequence, children do not enrol in schools until they are mature enough to travel the distance (UNICEF, 2012b). Additionally, the long distance to be travelled has a bearing on punctuality and attendance, as children are often absent from school for fear of being punished if they are late (Associates for Change, 2011). In terms of infrastructure, school buildings and classrooms are often inaccessible to children with disabilities. For example, almost all schools in Kyrgyzstan have no specialised elevators or bathrooms for children with disabilities. Transportation of children with disabilities to and from schools is also a costly affair for parents (UNICEF, 2012a).

In Kyrgyzstan, an assessment of the situation of children with disabilities (UNICEF, 2012a) revealed that many were not admitted to schools because some teachers were not competent enough to teach and include children with disabilities in their classrooms. Similarly in Ethiopia, children with disabilities tend to notgo to school because of a lack of understanding of their difficulties by their peers and lack of patience in the teaching community (World Vision, 2007). In the Pacific Islands, mainstream schools reject children with disabilities because teachers lack the confidence to teach them (UNICEF, 2010).

Based on the review, it appears that there are 3 common barriers that contribute to children not receiving either formal or informal education. These barriers relate to economic status of families (it is hard to bear the cost of schooling), socio-cultural (families do not value education highly) and school-related (poor pedagogy and lack of commitment) factors. For children with disabilities, socio-cultural factors seem to be the key issue that leads to their exclusion from schooling.

Successful Strategies

There are currently a number of strategies and policies that target thebarriers identified above. This section discusses the strategies that have been successful in providing education to out-of-school children.

Alternative Education

A number of studies have employed bridging courses or reintegration programmes in an attempt to incorporate out-of-school children back into school. In Punjab state, India, a non-formal education initiative, also known as the Child Labour

Project Schools, was implemented with the intention of providing an alternative to formal primary education and to mainstream child labourers into the formal education system via informal schooling (Sud, 2010). Classes were held after school hours in the afternoon, to enable children to work in the mornings and evenings and attend educational activities as well. Educators embraced hands-on approaches to make learning activities interesting. In order to provide easier access so that children could attend classes regularly, schools were located in close proximity to homes. An evaluation of the project revealed that approximately half of the students who were enrolled in the non-formal education initiative later enrolled in regular schools. It suggests that non-formal education is reasonably successful in bringing out-of-school children into mainstream schools.

Ashley (2005) conducted a study that analysed the private school outreach programmes in India, which aims to provide out-of-school children with basic non-formal education equivalent to Grades 1–5 and to focus more on the children's circumstances. The study focussed on 3 case studies. For Cases 1 and 2, the outreach programme served as a bridging programme while in Case 3 the outreach programme replaced government schooling at lower primary levels and then attempted to mainstream children at Grade 6. Roughly 40% of children, in Cases 1 and 2 were successfully reintegrated into government schools. To accommodate their first generation learner status and to retain them in school,they also received study support services outside of school hours, from the outreach programmes. On the other hand, the Case 3 outreach programme did not provide support for children who were mainstreamed. Instead, support was provided at an institutional level to government schools, and it acted as a resource centre to develop different methods of education, thus encouraging changes within the school.Data on the effectiveness of the Case 3 outreach programme are not available.

The Railway Platform School Initiative (Datta & Banik, 2012) was implemented by civil society organisations, in an attempt to bridge the gap by educating children who live in high-risk settingsin India. The schools were scheduled in a flexible manner to suit the working schedules of the children. More importantly, the programme employed more relevant curricula and teaching methods to engage children. In addition, the curriculum emphasisedfunctional literacy, where children were taught about things in relation to their work. As a result of such approaches, roughly 58% of students transitioned to government schools to continue their education. Ina follow-up study conducted 3 years after the

implementation of the programme, it was found that only around 5% of students dropped out from government schools after transitioning. It suggested that the Platform Schools programme was effective.

The Rwanda remedial programme is another example of a reintegration programme that provided a crash course in basic education for children, in the 9-16 age group, who had never been to school or had dropped out of schools (Kanamugire&Rutakamize, 2008). The remedial programme accommodatedthe needs of out-of-school children by operating a flexible curriculum, which allowed children to work while getting an education. The programme consisted of 3 structured levels, upon completion of which children could either enrol in a formal school or continue to a higher level if they did not wish to start formal education. To ensure continuity in learning and smooth integration into the formal system, schools with reintegration programmes were located near formal schools so that children did not feel singled out in a separate programme. An assessment of the pilot phase of the programme showed that more pupils enrolled every year, and just over a third of the total number enrolled to return to formal education.This indicated that the programme was successful in improving access to education for out-of-school children, although improvements were still necessary.

Tuladhar (2004) analysedthe Nepal out-of-school children's programme, which aims to provide an alternative basic education programme for school-aged children who have no access to formal education, cannot afford to attend school full-time, or have dropped out of formal education.As opposed to functioning as a bridging course or reintegration programme, this programme is the Nepalese government's attempt to develop a non-formal education system that operates parallel to the formal education system. The out-of-school children's programme (OSP) is offered at 2 levels. At level 1, the focus of the programme is to build literacy, numeracy and basic skills of 8 – 14-year-old dropouts. Once the course is over, these children can rejoin Grade 3 of primary education. Level 2 targets dropout students from Grades 3, 4 or 5 who can rejoin Grade 5 of formal schooling upon graduation. A tracerstudy found that just over half of the children from level 1 joined level 2, while a quarter joined level 2 and then transitioned into formal schools, suggesting it was somewhat successful. A tracer study takes place 1-8 years after an intervention. It analyses a sample of former beneficiaries of a child labour intervention and investigates the changes that transpired in the lives of these children and their families. The purpose is to explore whether the intervention influenced these changes.

In Ghana, a School for Life programme has been set up for children between the ages of 8 and 15 years. It aims to achieve basic literacy in 9 months. The programme adheres to a flexible school model by having flexible school hours, a curriculum that reflects on the local environment and an emphasis on child-centred participatory teaching and learning strategies (Caseley-Hayford&Ghartey, 2007; UNICEF, 2012c). A 10-year review of Ghana's School for Life Programme (Caseley-Hayford&Ghartey, 2007) found that a total of 65.36% of children who were enrolled in the programme were integrated into the formal education system, with the level of integration consistently increasing. Furthermore, 89.1% of the first cohort of children who were integrated into formal schools, completed the full cycle of primary education, thus indicating its success.

Rebates and Incentives

Economic barriers, such as family poverty and opportunity costs, have been identified as one of the main barriers to education across many countries (Filmer, 2005; Korboe et al, 2011; UNICEF, 2012a; UNICEF, 2012b; UNICEF, 2012c). In order to target the economic barriers to education andincrease school enrolment of out-of-school children, a variety of strategies are currently being implemented.

There are a number of policies that focus on the direct cost of schooling. Many of the reintegration programmes and bridging courses are free (Tuladhar, 2004; Ashley, 2005; Kanamugire & Rutakamize, 2008; Sud, 2010; Datta & Banik, 2012), which has largely contributed to the increased enrolments in such programmes. In Ghana (World Bank & UNICEF, 2009; UNICEF, 2012c), the abolishment of school fees has resulted in an increase in total primary school enrolments by 15% and enabled poor, excluded and vulnerable children to have access to primary school. Ghana also implemented a capitation grant scheme which provides funding to each enrolled child to cover primary school operating costs (e.g. sports and cultural fees, PTA dues, exam fees and infrastructure development levies) that would normally deter families from sending their children to school. Analyses indicated that the combination of fee abolishment and capitation grant led to significant increase in enrolment across Ghana, particularly in regions with extremely low enrolment trends, andto retention of most of these children in school.

There are also policies that focus on the indirect costs of schooling. In Ghana, the school mealprogrammesprovide pupils in certain primary schools in each district with one hot meal a day, and there are plans to extend this programme

to all schools. Analyses have indicated that enrolment at free mealprogramme schools increased by 16% compared to those without the mealprogramme (UNICEF, 2012c) and where possible, parents would transfer children to a school with a mealprogramme (Korboe et al, 2011). Meanwhile, in Punjab, India, the non-formal education initiative (Sud, 2010) provided incentives for parents to send their children to schools by providing additional benefits. The benefits included a small financial stipend, a snack, biannual de-worming treatment and an annual eye examination. An evaluation of the programme revealed that on the whole it significantly improved a child's likelihood of continuing to studyafter transitioning to a mainstream school. However, the evaluation also indicated that families who have children already in a mainstream school, take advantage of these benefits by enrolling them in this programme also (Sud, 2010).

Community Awareness Programmes

Strategies targeting socio-cultural barriers appear to focus on increasing parental interest in their children's education, along with strategies targeting negative attitudes towards disabilities. In Ghana (UNICEF, 2012c), the government has implemented the Education Strategic Plan (ESP 2010-2020), which aims to provide universal basic education for children. Strategies in this plan included integrating children with non-severe physical and mental disabilities into mainstream schools, along with sensitisation programmes on disability issues and special educational needs. In Kyrgyzstan (UNICEF, 2012a), children with disabilities are provided with social services such as free public bus transportation, free medical consultations and discounts on medicines and wheelchairs. A number of schools (n=38) were also made accessible for them. An evaluation was not available to determine how effective such strategies were, although the reports acknowledged that such strategies were important to address the barriers faced by children with disabilities.

To target negative attitudes towards education, both Romania and Ghana (Associates for Change, 2011; UNICEF, 2012b; UNICEF, 2012c) have used public awareness campaigns to highlight the importance of education and encourage families to send their children to school. To target the issue of parental support, Romania (UNICEF, 2012b) has set up the Partner with Parentsprogramme, which is an educational contract that ensures parents or legal guardians are aware of their responsibility to see that their children attendschool. Additionally, there is also the School after School programme, which is a partnership between the

Ministry of Education and parents' association to deliver educational, leisure and spare time activities that consolidate learning across the system.

Teacher Education

Many strategies that target school-related barriers appear to focus on the recruitment and training of teachers along with the improvement of school infrastructures. The Rwanda remedial programme (Kanamugire&Rutakamize, 2008) addressed the barrier of quality education by ensuring that it was managed in the same manner as formal schools with regard to teachers and provision of materials. For example, teachers recruited for the reintegration programme possessed the same qualifications as those teaching in formal schools. An assessment of the pilot phase of the programme showed thaton the whole it helped improve access to education for out-of-school children. Likewise, in Ghana (UNICEF, 2012c), untrained teachers are asked to complete a diploma in basic education which will increase the number of trained teachers in rural and deprived areas of the country. Romania has drafted new regulations to develop their teaching staff (UNICEF, 2012b). Under the new regulations, all teaching staff will have the title of 'teacher' and will be required to hold a higher education qualification. Lack of a follow-up assessment in both Ghana and Romania made it difficult to determine the effectiveness of the strategies employed in both countries.

Some programmes have addressed teaching methods used in schools with the aim of providing engaging classrooms for children. For example, in Rwanda (Kanamugire&Rutakamize, 2008) teacherscompleted an in-service professional development programme on teaching methods. They were encouraged to teach a subject that they were comfortable with,instead of teaching all lessons, which allowed the pupils an opportunity to interact with all the teachers and benefit from a variety of teaching styles and advice. Additionally, the teachers were also trained to teach children of different abilities, and recognise or understand their difficulties. The Railway Platform School Initiative (Datta & Banik, 2012) also addresses the issue of teaching methods. In these schools, teachers employ an interactive mode of teaching, such as using objects and performing arts to entertain and reinforce teaching. They were also trained to employ real-life examples from their local community to facilitate learning. Programme evaluations have suggested that such strategies are successful in retaining children in these classes.

Romania has a number of programmes and polices to improve school infrastructures (UNICEF, 2012b). The early childhood education reform project aimed to improve kindergarten management and existing infrastructure, and provided refresher courses for teaching, while the programme for inclusive early childhood education helped to create and improve conditions for education. This was achieved by establishing minimum operating standards for schools in the most disadvantaged communities, thus leading to access to early education and an increase in decision-makers' awareness and capacity-building in management.

Ghana and Nepal both used strategies that target the problem of physical access to education. In Nepal, theOutreach programme/satellite schools have been set up for primary school age children in small and remote communities (Tuladhar, 2004). These schools consist of temporary classes, and students who have received schooling for 3 years from satellite schools are transferred to regular schools. Ghana has set up a 'wing school' programme, which has recently been absorbed into the public education system (UNICEF, 2012c). The programme consists of 'wing schools' which are located in areas where there are no primary schools within a 5km radius and are affiliated to nearby public schools.This enables children to transitioninto the public school nearby after completing the programme. The communities where the schools are located play a key role in recruiting and selecting the teachers, who are expected to be natives of the area. This helps facilitate community school ownership and teacher identification with the children. While no follow-up study of Nepal's satellite schools was found which wouldenable the reviewers to determine its effectiveness, the wing school programme indicated very low rates of absenteeism and dropouts in communities where teachers were local residents, with school enrolment growing at a rate of 66.1%. Conversely, in communities where teachers were not residents, schools experienced challenges with dropouts and absenteeism (Associates for Change, 2011), indicating the important role of the community in transitioning wing school students into public schools.

In addition, many of the alternative non-formal schools are located in areas where there is limited access to education (Ashley, 2005; Kanamugire & Rutakamize, 2008; Sud, 2010; Datta & Banik, 2012), thus providing an opportunity for children who otherwise would not attend school.

DISCUSSION

This review was undertaken to determine the reasons for children not attending school, and the strategies that have worked to bring them back into the school

sector. A key aspect of the review was to focus on children with disability. The review suggested that the main reasons for non-attendance at school could be classified into 3 categories: economic barriers, socio-cultural barriers and school-related barriers. It also found limited research on why children with disabilities are out of school. The available research tends to suggest that socio-cultural barriers could be the leading cause for this. This includes society's attitudes towardsdisability in general and the prevalent belief that children with disabilities lack the potential to learn. Parents and communities tend not to value educational opportunities for children with disabilities. Research also shows that school-related variables (e.g. lack of infrastructure, untrained teachers) could be some of the main reasons why children with disabilities either do not enrol or drop out once enrolled in schools. A variety of strategies have been used across a number of countries to bring out-of-school children, and also children with disabilities, into schools.

On the basis of the review, a number of recommendations could be made to enhance participation of out-of-school children with disabilities in schooling. A large number of these children remain out of school as they belong to families with poor socio-economic status. Families do not see any value in enrollingchildren with disabilities in formalschooling, as it is an additional strain on their limited resources. Abolishing school fees, as well as providing financial incentives, could encourage families to send their children with disabilities to school. Previous research showed that abolishing school fees increased school enrolment by 15% in Ghana. Additionally, Ghana's meal programme in certain schools also resulted in a16%increase in school enrolment, suggesting that strategies that target indirect costs of school are also successful.

Another significant barrier, prevalent across a number of developing countries,is the negative attitude towards people with disabilities. It is critical that governments devise various strategies to address this barrier. One such strategy may include conducting community awarenessprogrammes that highlight the value of educating people with disabilities. These awareness programmes need to be conducted in partnership with local Disabled Persons' Organisations (DPOs) to highlight how providing education to children with disabilities may lead to their becoming contributing members of society. Local community members with disabilities who have been successful as a result of participation in schooling should lead such awareness programmes. It will also be useful to involve localcommunity leaders in such activities as, in some countries, their involvement

is crucial to bring about changein community attitudes. It is critical that teacher education programmes in the country also target the barrier of negative attitudes towards people with disabilities. It is often teachers in schools who set the trend of acceptance or rejection of people with disabilities. They need to be convinced that children with disabilitiesshould be provided better education and need to be treated as equal members of society. The attitudes of teachers directly influence the attitudes of the schooling community, includingstudents without disabilities, and in the long run are likely to result in spreading positive attitudes in society.

Poor quality education is a major factor that results in children with disabilities remaining out of school. A large number of teachers lack skills to provide high quality education to all children, including children with disabilities. Teachers need to learn effective teaching methods which are useful for all children, not just those with disabilities. In Rwanda (Kanamugire & Rutakamize, 2008), teachers are trained to take a competency-based approach while teaching. By teachers focussing on a subject with which they are comfortable, children can be exposed to a variety of teaching methods. Likewise, the Railway Platform schools (Datta&Banik, 2012) employ a more interactive method.Objects and performing arts are included while teaching and the teachers are trained to empathise with the difficulties that the children face. In both cases, a large percentage of students from the programmes transitioned into formal schools, indicating that such strategies are successful. Teachers need to have the head (knowledge), heart (beliefs) and hands (teaching inclusively) of inclusive teachers to effectively teach students with disabilities (Sharma, 2011). It is critical that any professional development programme or teacher education programme targets all 3 areas rather than just focus on knowledge (Sharma, 2011).

While many programmes identified in this review have shown different degrees of success in bringing out-of-school children back into the formal education system, the existence of certain barriers prevent them from being a complete success and more effortis needed to reduce the number of out-of-school children. First, many of the strategies identified in this review lack follow-up studies or programme evaluations to determine whether they were successful in bringing out-of-school children back into formal school. In order to identify successful policies from an evidence-based approach, more programme analyses are necessary.

Kanamugire and Rutakamize (2008) suggested that in order to be more inclusive, programmes should be created for children who are over the legal enrolment age (16 years and older) and want an education, while a competency-based approach

to teaching should be incorporated into the formal system. In addition, policies still need to be implemented to change school ethos to be more welcoming of out-of-school children, as negative attitudes and inflexibility of formal school structures result in children dropping out of school, despite successfully transitioning into formal schools through programmes. More importantly, the practice of child labour and the lack of familial support continue to play a large role in preventing children from accessing schools. More effective strategies targeting the culture of child labour are necessary to successfully retain out-of-school children in school and more evidence is required to determine whether current strategies are successful in changing attitudes towards education.

While many of the reports acknowledge geographical constraints and lack of transport to be an issue (UNESCO, 2010; UNICEF, 2012a; UNICEF, 2012c), there appears to be limited evidence of current strategies or policies to target this barrier. So far, there have been attempts to place non-formal schools in areas without access to schooling.While evidence suggests that this is successful at providing children who would normally not go to school with informal education, and shows promise with successful transition and retention in formal schools, there are no strategies to facilitate travel to school.

Conclusion

Providing education to out of school children in developing countries has been challenging. What is even more challenging is providing education to out of school children with disabilities. It is recognised that this challenge is huge and difficult to address within short time. There is clearly a need for more research targeting out of school children with disabilities. Future researchers and policy makers may find it useful to investigate if different strategies will have different outcomes in different countries or if common strategies can work across different contexts.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

loss, damage or injury resulting from reliance on any of the information or views contained in this publication.

REFERENCES

Ashley LD (2005). From margins to mainstream: Private school outreach inclusion processes forout-of-school children in India. International Journal of Educational Development.25, 133-144.

Associates for Change (2011). Inclusive Education in Ghana: A Look at Policy and Practice in NorthernGhana. Study report commissioned by the Voluntary Service Organisation (VSO). Retrieved from www.associatesforchange.org

Caseley-Hayford L, Ghartey A (2007). The Leap to Literacy and Life Change in Northern Ghana: An impact assessment of School for Life (SFL). Final report, Accra: UNICEF.

Croft A (2010). Including Disabled Children in Learning: Challenges in Developing Countries. University of Sussex, Education and Social Work.

Datta D, Banik D (2012). 'If the child cannot come to the school, then the school must go to thechild': The railway station platform schools in Odisha, India. Education, 3 (13), 1-17.

Filmer D (2005). Disability, Poverty, and Schooling in Developing Countries: Results from 10 Household Surveys. The World Bank Economic Review, 22 (1), 141-163.doi:10.1093/wber/lhm021

Global Partnership for Education (2013). Factsheet Access to Education.Retrieved fromhttp://www.globalpartnership.org/our-work/areas-of-focus/out-of-school-children

Kanamugire C, Rutakamize J (2008). The remedial programme for out-of-school and drop-outchildren in Rwanda. Prospects, 38, 237-246.

Korboe D, Dogbe T, Marshall C (2011). Participatory Poverty and Vulnerability Assessment(PPVA): Understanding the Regional Dynamics of Poverty with Particular Focus on Northern Ghana. GOG/DFID/UNICEF/World Bank: Accra, Ghana.

Porteus K, Clacherty G, Mdiya L, Pelo J, Matsai K, Qwabe S, Donald D (2000). 'Out ofschool' children in South Africa: An analysis of causes in a group of marginalised, urban 7 to 15-year-olds. Support for Learning, 15 (1), 8-12.

Reddy AN, Sinha S (2010). Dropouts or Pushouts? Overcoming Barriers for the Right toEducation. CREATE Pathways to Access Research Monograph No. 40. CREATE.

Sharma U (2011). Changing heart, head, and hands of teachers to teach in inclusive classrooms: Why and how? Bangladesh Education Journal, 10(2), 7-18.

Sud P (2010). Can non-formal education keep working children in school? A case study fromPunjab, India.Journal of Education and Work, 23 (1), 1-26.

Tuladhar SK (2004). The out-of-school children's programme in Nepal: An analysis. International Institute for Educational Planning: UNESCO, Paris.

UIS (2013) Schooling for millions of children jeopardised by reductions in aid UIS factsheet (Report No.25). Retrieved from http://www.uis.unesco.org/FactSheets/Pages/Education.aspx

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) (2010).Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2010. Retrieved from www.unesco.org

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) (2012).Education for all Global Monitoring Report 2012.Retrieved from www.unesco.org

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation(UNESCO) (2013). Children still battling to go to school. Education for all global monitoring report: policy paper; 10. Retrieved from http://www.unesco.org/ulis/cgibin/ulis.pl?catno=221668&set=520C6B75_3_2 72&gp=1&lin=1&ll=1.

United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) (2010).Pacific Children with Disabilities.Retrieved fromhttp://www.unicef.org

United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) (2012a).All Children in School by 2015. Global Initiative on out-of-school children.KyrgyzstanCountry Study. Retrieved from http://www.unesco.org/ulis/cgi-bin/ulis.pl?catno=221279&set=520C6B75_3_ 272&gp=1&lin=1&ll=1.

United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) (2012b).All Children in School by 2015. Global Initiative on out-of-school children.Romania Country Study.Retrieved from http://www.unesco.org/ulis/cgi-bin/ulis.pl?catno=221282&set=520C6B75_3_272&gp=1 &lin=1&ll=1.

United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) (2012c).All Children in School by 2015.Gobal Initiative on out-of-school children.GhanaCountry Study.Retrieved from http://www.unesco.org/ulis/cgi-bin/ulis.pl?catno=221302&set=520C6B75_3_272&gp=1 &lin=1&ll=1.

World Bank (2003) Education for All: Including Children with Disabilities. Washington D.C.:The World Bank.

World Bank and UNICEF (2009). Abolishing School Fees in Africa: Lessons from Ethiopia, Ghana,Kenya, Malawi, and Mozambique. Washington DC: World Bank.

World Vision (2007). Education's missing millions: including disabled children in education through EFA FTI processes and national sector plans. World Vision UK: Milton Keynes.