'Mobility, Modernity and the Reshaping of Childhood in the 21st Century: educational aspirations and challenges'

This paper explores the role of school education in the 21st Century in re-shaping the educational aspirations of children in diverse parts of the world. It argues that schooling has become a major force for social and physical mobility among children today, although with some very real risks and constraints that should be of major concern to educationalists and others involved in social policy. The paper draws on Young Lives data as well as research from other countries.

Jo Boyden, a social anthropologist, is Professor of International Development and Director of Young Lives at the University of Oxford. Young Lives is tracking the changing circumstances of 12,000 children and households in Ethiopia, India (Andhra Pradesh), Peru and Vietnam with a view to learning about the causes and consequences of childhood poverty and informing policy. Jo’s previous research centred mainly on child labour and on young people living with armed conflict and forced migration. Most recently, she has begun to explore the intersection between ‘traditional’ values and practices around children and child rearing and emergent expectations associated with the spread of ‘modernity’ (modern technologies, institutions and norms).

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‘Challenging Sedentary Schooling; education in and out of pastoralism’

This paper explores the exclusion of pastoralists from the EFA movement, and prospects for future change. It argues that the entrenched view of mobile pastoralism as antithetical to ‘modernity’ has resulted in instrumental uses of sedentary schooling to educate people out of pastoralism. EFA depends on reframing of pastoralism as both modern and mobile in order that formal education can be re-imagined as belonging within pastoralism, and pastoralists no longer have to trade formal education for their mobile livelihood.

Caroline Dyer, a linguist by training, is Reader in Education in Development at the University of Leeds. Her research focuses on policy and practices around education inclusion, particularly for nomads. She has researched and taught adult literacy to migrating Indian pastoralists; used collaborative action research for professional development with teacher educators; explored literacies in primary school classrooms and home education among Gypsy Travellers. Her current research focuses on how education, social change and the dispossession of pastoralist livelihoods in Western India.