Consortium for Research on Educational Access, Transitions and Equity

Dropping Out from School: A Cross Country Review of Literature

Frances Hunt

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University of Sussex
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Educational Access, Transitions & Equity

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The Consortium for Educational Access, Transitions and Equity (CREATE) is a Research Programme Consortium supported by the UK Department for International Development (DFID). Its purpose is to undertake research designed to improve access to basic education in developing countries. It seeks to achieve this through generating new knowledge and encouraging its application through effective communication and dissemination to national and international development agencies, national governments, education and development professionals, non-government organisations and other interested stakeholders.

Access to basic education lies at the heart of development. Lack of educational access, and securely acquired knowledge and skill, is both a part of the definition of poverty, and a means for its diminution. Sustained access to meaningful learning that has value is critical to long term improvements in productivity, the reduction of inter-generational cycles of poverty, demographic transition, preventive health care, the empowerment of women, and reductions in inequality.

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Contents

Preface....iv
Summary....v
1 Introduction....1
1.1 Purpose....1
1.2 Background....1
1.2.1 Research Questions....4
1.3 Methodological Approaches to Understanding School Dropout....5
1.4 Organisation of the Review....6
2 Factors Influencing Drop Out and Retention....7
2.1 Household Income and Financial Circumstances....7
2.1.1 School Fees and Indirect Costs of Schooling....8
2.1.2 Income Shocks....10
2.1.3 Child Work....11
2.1.4 Migration....15
2.2 Household Contexts and Motivations....17
2.2.1 Household Contexts....17
2.2.2 Bereavement and Orphanhood....19
2.2.3 Education of Household Members....21
2.2.4 Household Perceived Benefits of Schooling....22
2.2.5 Decision-Making Around Dropping Out....23
2.3 Health....24
2.3.1 Health of Children....24
2.3.2 Health of Relatives....26
2.3.3 Pregnancy....26
2.3.4 Disability and special educational needs....27
2.4 Social and Political Contexts....30
2.4.1 Gender....30
2.4.2 Rural/Urban Locations....33
2.4.3 Other Socially Disadvantaged Groups....34
2.4.4 Conflict, Politically Fragile and Emergency Situations....35
2.4.5 Age, Marriage and Notions of Adulthood....36
2.5 Supply of Schools....37
2.6 The Role of School in Dropping Out: Schooling Quality, Processes and Practices....37
2.6.1 Schooling Resources and Facilities....38
2.6.2 Teaching and Learning....39
2.6.3 Inclusions and Exclusions in Schooling Practices and Processes....40
2.6.4 School Environment and Safety Issues....41
2.6.5 Quality, Attainment and Outcomes....42
3 Processes and Precursors to Dropping Out....44
3.1 Repetition Versus Promotion....44
3.2 Low Achievement....45
3.3 Late Enrolment....45
3.4 Absenteeism and Temporary/Permanent Withdrawals from School....46
4 Interventions: To Prevent Dropping Out and Encourage Dropping In....47
4.1 School-Related Factors....47
4.2 Financial Support....48

4.3 Quality Interventions 49
4.4 Other Education Interventions 49
5 Discussion and Conclusions 51
5.1 Gaps in Research 51
5.2 Implications for CREATE Research 52
5.3 Conclusions and Discussion 52
References 54
Appendix One: CREATE's Zones of Exclusion 64
Appendix Two: Searching the Literature 65
Appendix Three: Examples of Quantitative Accounts of Reasons Behind Children Dropping Out from School 66

List of Figures

Figure 1: Drop Out Rates by Grade in Primary School in Africa 3
Figure 2: Drop Outs by Grade in Primary School in South Asia 3

List of Tables

Table 1 GERS in Primary Education, Drop Out and Survival Rates % 4

Preface

Reducing drop out is central to improving access to basic education. Most of those who do not attend school are children who have enrolled but who have crossed the threshold from regular attendance to regular absence. In most countries the numbers excluded this way are much greater than those who never attend school. In low enrolment systems more than half the children who start primary schooling will fail to complete it successfully. This review explores than many factors associated with drop out which lie at the individual, household, school and community level and maps how some of them interact. Often drop out is the result of a process rather than a single event, has more than one proximate cause, and is fairly irreversible. With older children demand rather than supply side variables may be more significant.

This review identifies gaps in research which CREATE plans to fill. These include insights into the process as well as the event of drop out, indicators of risk factors that could be used to predict drop out, opportunities and mechanisms that facilitate children to drop back in after they drop out, the impact of over age enrolment and repetition on drop out, and school friendliness factors that may promote higher rather than lower levels of attendance. There are also many other insights from the literature that are presented and which could form the basis of new enquiries. This comprehensive overview of drop out is a good starting point for any researcher seeking to unpack the processes that lead to exclusion and identify the most important causes.

Professor Keith M. Lewin
Director, CREATE
University of Sussex

Summary

This paper provides an in-depth review and analysis of literature on dropping out from school, and focuses on children who have gained access, but fail to complete a basic education cycle. The main discussion is around why and how children drop out from school. Here drop out is not presented as a distinct event, but rather a process where a range of supply-demand factors interact to influence schooling access. The paper looks at literature in relation to household, community and social contexts of dropping out, as well as school supply and practices. It also explores what research is saying around pre-cursors to dropping out and factors which may influence retention. Finally, the study identifies gaps in research around dropping out and how CREATE research could address some of these.

1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose

This study provides an in-depth review and analysis on school drop outs taken from academic and development agency literature. It looks at the issues involved in dropping out from school in different situational contexts, and develops shared understandings of dropping out across the contexts. The study asks questions about what we know about drop outs and identifies where there might be gaps in research knowledge.

Dropping out from school occurs after children have previously achieved access to school. A major problem in many developing countries, dropping out is often obscured within statistical data and by the emphasis on initial access. This study is concerned with children who have not completed a cycle of basic education, which depending on the compulsory age of enrolment, should generally encompass children from the ages of five or six to fifteen years (if initial enrolment takes place at the correct age).

The study locates the issue of drop outs at a macro level providing statistical data around drop outs, but the discussion mainly focuses on and around qualitative accounts of dropping out. While statistical data can highlight the problem, less is known about the processes of drop out, and the reasons why and how it occurs. This report brings together previous research done in this area, with a particular focus on case study, qualitative research where available. It looks at the push/pull factors in both schools, communities and households which factor into dropping out. In terms of CREATE's Zones of Exclusion, the particular emphasis of this study is on Zones 2, 3 and 5 (see Appendix One), which takes into account dropping out from both primary and secondary schooling. Given CREATE's focus on access to education in South Asia and Sub Saharan Africa, these geographical areas are given prominence within the paper, although studies on other areas are used to raise particular issues.

The study is important because it brings together a range of literature on drop outs in a way that has not happened before. Drop out is an under-researched area, even though the problem is prevalent. With EFA and MDGs targeting access to education, knowledge around drop outs and studies such as this, can help illuminate some of the complexities around dropping out and bring new insights to policy makers and educational practitioners. By understanding drop outs further there will be greater potential to move towards a more meaningful notion of access.

1.2 Background

The prevalence of drop out varies between and within countries and occurs more frequently in certain age ranges and grades (depending on the educational structure and patterns of participation in that country). Drop out, by definition, depends on children being previously enrolled, and so in countries where there is low initial enrolment (CREATE Zone 1), actual numbers who drop out may be lower than where initial enrolment is high (CREATE Zone 2).

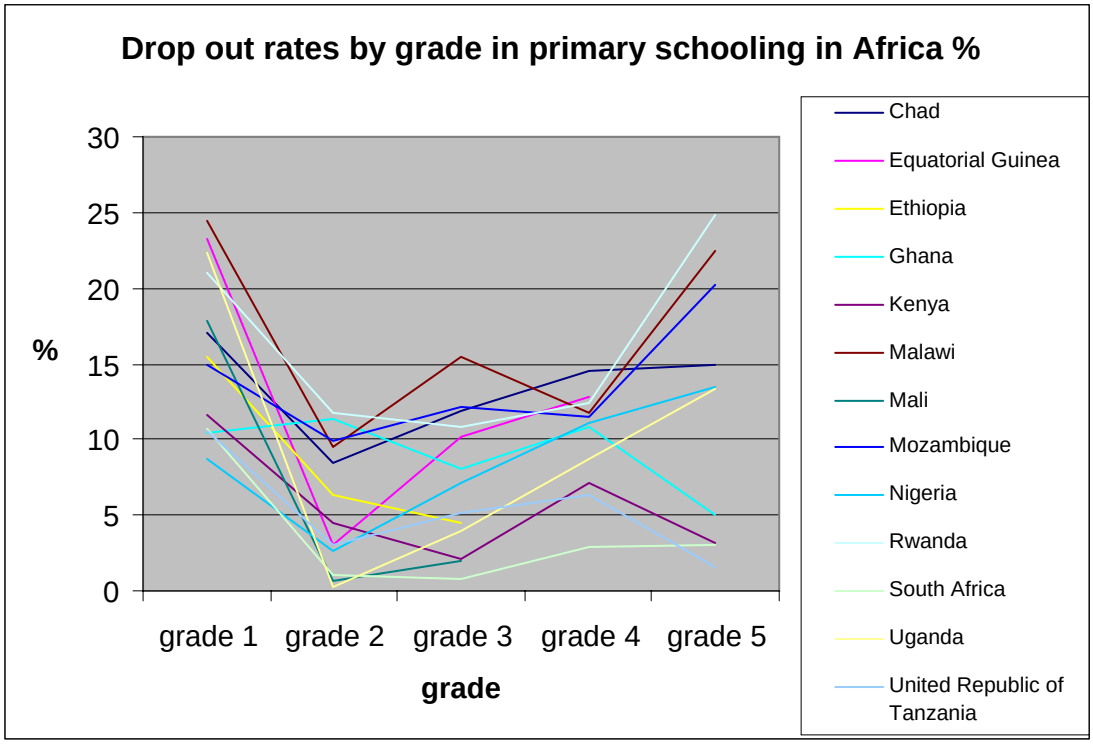
In a recent survey of UIS data (Bruneforth, 2006) on Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mali, Mozambique, Namibia and Nigeria on the characteristics of children who drop out of school, a number of conclusions were drawn. More than half of all children aged 10 to 19 who had already left primary school did so without completion in Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mali and Mozambique (but not Ghana and Nigeria, where more than 80% completed primary school). Children dropping out from primary school were often over-age learners (around one third overall), and in four countries over-age learners accounted for 60% of drop outs. Differences in school completion are most stark between children from urban and rural areas. In Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mali and Mozambique, more than 80% of rural children who had left primary school dropped out. Percentages are less than half of this amount for urban children. Differences were also vast between the two poorest and richest wealth quintiles. In Burkina Faso, Mali and Mozambique, more than 90% of children from the poorest 40% of households (the two poorest quintiles) who left primary school did not complete it. Drop out is much less for the richest 40% of households. Differences are also strong in relation to the mother's education (in Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Mali and Mozambique, more than 70% of children with uneducated/unschooled mothers who left primary school did not complete primary education) and less pronounced (although not negligible) for gender.

A variety of patterns around drop out emerge, but these differ according to context. Looking at GMR survey data[1] on drop outs[2] from primary schooling in Africa (Figure 1) and South Asia (Figure 2) some indications of the scale of the problem are evident. In Figure 1, country patterns show large percentage drop outs from grade one (within this there will be overage learners and repeaters). For example, in Malawi 24% and in Uganda 23% of the grade one cohort in 2003 dropped out from school. Percentage numbers tend to reduce in grades two to four, then rise in some countries as primary completion and secondary entry approach (Malawi, Mozambique and Rwanda all have over 20% of the grade five cohort dropping out in 2003). These numbers indicate significant drop outs in primary school and, as a result, non-completion of the basic education cycle.

[1] GMR survey data comes from a range of sources: e.g. the UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS), household survey data, OECD, national learning assessments. The different sources of data might have implications for comparability.

[2] Data availability in the GMR (UNESCO, 2006) dictates how many grades are represented in Figures 1 and 2. On the whole, data on drop outs from grades one to five are available for Sub Saharan Africa, whilst data from grades one to four is available for South Asia. This tends to be because primary cycles are shorter in South Asia (5 years), compared to Sub Saharan Africa (often 6 to 7 years).

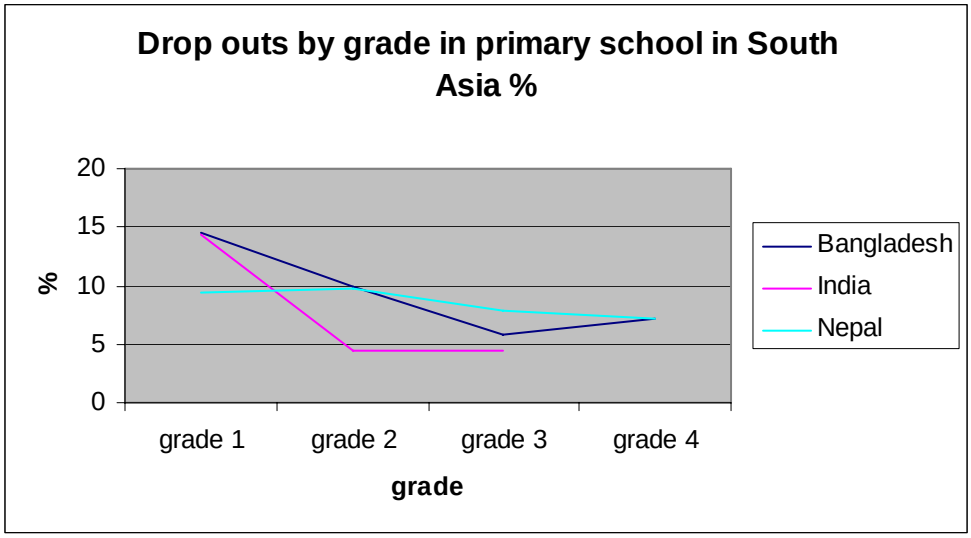
Figure 1: Drop Out Rates by Grade in Primary School in Africa



Source: UNESCO (2006)

In the South Asian countries with data available (see UNESCO, 2006) different patterns of access emerge. Similar to the African countries, both Bangladesh and India have large drop outs from grade one (14.6% for Bangladesh; 14.4% for India). However, these reduce to 4.4% for India and around 10% in Bangladesh in grade two. Drop out in Nepal remains more constant between 7-10% through the grades.

Figure 2: Drop Outs by Grade in Primary School in South Asia



Source: UNESCO (2006)

Looking at the same countries, the GMR (UNESCO, 2006) also gives percentage drop out rates in all grades and survival rates to grade 5 in schools (see Table 1). Once again, this statistical data shows substantial drop out rates with non-completion of

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Report summary:
This paper provides an in-depth review and analysis of literature on dropping out from school, and focuses on children who have gained access, but fail to complete a basic education cycle. The main discussion is around why and how children drop out from school. Here drop out is not presented as a distinct event, but rather a process where a range of supply-demand factors interact to influence schooling access. The paper looks at literature in relation to household, community and social contexts of dropping out, as well as school supply and practices. It also explores what research is saying around pre-cursors to dropping out and factors which may influence retention. Finally, the study identifies gaps in research around dropping out and how CREATE research could address some of these.

Author notes:
Dr Frances Hunt works as a Research Fellow on CREATE based in the Centre for International Education, at the University of Sussex. Her research interests include human rights, citizenship and democracy in education; school processes and schooling relations; inclusion/exclusion issues; and education in fragile states. Fran's DPhil was titled: schooling citizens: policy in practice in South Africa. On CREATE Fran is researching dropping out from schools.

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primary being the norm in a number of countries. Patterns of drop out related to GERs are difficult to identify, with for example some countries having low GERs and high drop out rates (e.g. Chad); others having low GERs and reasonably low drop out rates (e.g. Mali, Ethiopia); and some having high GERs and high drop out rates (e.g. Malawi). This paper will try to unpack some of these numbers, giving some of the stories behind the drop outs.

Table 1 GERS in Primary Education, Drop Out and Survival Rates %

Country	GER in primary education %	Drop out rates all grades % (2003)[3]	Survival to grade 5 % (2003)
Chad	64	63.3	45.8
Equatorial Guinea	132	67.4	32.6
Ethiopia	59	26.7	-
Ghana	76	40	63.3
Kenya	93	27.2	75.3
Malawi	139	67.2	43.8
Mali	51	15.4	-
Mozambique	69	69.2	49.2
Nigeria	88	37.4	72.6
Rwanda	99	69.1	45.8
South Africa	114	21.3	84.1
Uganda	126	59.3	63.6
Tanzania	64	26.6	75.8
Bangladesh	110	34.9	65.1
India	97	21.1	78.9
Nepal	114	39.2	60.8

Source: UNESCO (2006)

1.2.1 Research Questions

This paper explores four interlinked research questions:

- Why do children drop out of school before completing a full basic education cycle?
- What processes are involved in dropping out from school?
- What factors can work to mitigate against dropping out?
- Where are the gaps in research around dropping out from school?

The main focus of discussion will be around the reasons for dropping out of school and how this takes place[4]. Here dropping out is not presented as one distinct event, but rather a process of events, situations and contexts which work together to produce drop outs. Knowing the 'why' without the 'how', places the emphasis on a distinct event/opportunity, where evidence suggests it is an interplay of factors which pushes children out of school. Thus, where the literature allows, processes are looked at. Literature around who is more likely to drop out from school feeds into discussions

[3] Although not noted, this is presumed to be primary schooling only.
[4] The paper had also intended to look at 'dropping in' to school in some detail, but there was limited literature on this.

within the text. The third research question looks at examples of good practice, either to prevent drop out or to try to pull those who have already dropped out back into some educational setting. Finally, the fourth question identifies gaps in the existing research. Both are forward-looking responses to pose to CREATE researchers and policy makers working within the educational field.

1.3 Methodological Approaches to Understanding School Dropout

In terms of methodology, the research which touches on drop outs draws on a range of approaches[5]. Many studies are quantitative, derived from household survey/large scale questionnaire research (e.g. Admassie, 2003; Brown & Park, 2002; Ersado, 2005; Meekers & Ahmed, 1999; Shapiro & Tambashe, 2001; UIS & UNICEF, 2005; Wils, 2004) others take a more statistical/econometric approach (e.g. Anderson, 2005; Connelly & Zheng, 2003; Zimmerman, 2003). Some research combines quantitative and qualitative elements (Boyle et al, 2002; Colclough et al, 2000; Dachi & Garrett, 2003; Nekatibeb, 2002; Porteus et al, 2000; the PROBE Team, 1999; Rose & Al Samarrai, 2001; Vavrus, 2002). A small number of studies provide in-depth qualitative and context-specific accounts of educational access where drop out plays its part (e.g. Chi & Rao, 2003; Dunne & Leach, 2005; Liu, 2004). Few studies have carried out interviews with drop outs, and often school-based questionnaires take place with older students who have some literacy skills, rather than younger primary students. Some studies focus on one geographical area (e.g. Juneja, 2001; Liu, 2004) whilst others are more comparative in nature (Boyle et al, 2002; Brock & Cammish, 1997; Colclough et al, 2000; Dunne & Leach, 2005; Ersado, 2005).

While there is a range of literature which covers the subject of drop outs, few have drop out as a central theme. More frequently, drop out is embedded within studies, with messages around drop outs set alongside others on access more generally. Few studies account for the complexities of access, and the interactive, dynamic nature of factors which may contribute to dropping out. Rather, much of the available literature identifies one factor (or possibly more) leading to drop out, which is identified as the final push or pull out of school. What is less often seen in the literature are the processes around dropping out, the personal stories of the children, household members and teachers, their social contexts and the competing demands on them. These processes happen over a period of time, with factors interacting in different ways to influence both drop out and retention.

Both approaches have benefits and weaknesses. Studies which have used structured interviews/questionnaire research with household members and/or school staff to ask about reasons for dropping out from school[6] (e.g. Brown & Park, 2002; Boyle et al, 2002; the PROBE Team, 1999) can provide an overview of factors influencing drop out in particular contexts and some of the concerns households and schools hold (see Appendix 3 for examples of findings). However, by doing this drop out tends to be viewed as an event, rather than a process, with factors contributing to the final push from school often isolated out and made prominent. These studies are less likely to see dropping out as a series of interacting issues and events which vary according to social context, individual circumstances and expectations around education. More qualitative, smaller-scale studies on the other hand, might provide more nuanced

[5] See Appendix 2 for approaches to searching for literature for this review.
[6] Often using pre-determined tick boxes.

accounts of localised situations and touch on more of the gaps identified above, but may not capture the bigger picture around dropping out.

This paper is reliant on available literature. In some cases this is limited, resulting in perceived gaps. For example, there was less research on processes of drop out than had been expected; also there was limited literature on dropping in to school; and less research on retention over drop out; there appears to be less research on dropping out in conflict-affected areas; and limited literature on dropping out from non-state providers[7]. Literature around drop outs specifically is targeted, although some more general access-related research may be drawn on where necessary. As this report is literature-based it is also dependent on the methodological validity of the studies, documents and resources used. It also recognises the limits on a study such as this, which although attempting to be thorough, cannot attend to all the relevant literature on dropping out from school.

The available literature also helped shape the structure of the paper, with headers (and sub-headers) identifying individual factors which might influence drop out. Yet, this paper argues that the interactions between causal factors and the processes around dropping out are crucial to our understandings, and as a result these aspects are highlighted where possible. While the paper draws on the range of quantitative accounts around dropping out, the focus tends to be on the qualitative aspects of the available research.

1.4 Organisation of the Review

The review is organised around the research questions, with the first sections looking at demand and supply-side factors influencing drop out and retention (Section 2). Categories in this section emerged from the literature and have been grouped for purposes of convenience. They include issues such as financial constraints on households with regard to schooling; motivations behind schooling; health issues; socio-political contexts and school supply-side factors. Section 3 tries to highlight some of the patterns and/or precursors to dropping out. Sections 4 and 5 look at examples of good practice around drop out, and identify gaps in research and the implications for the CREATE programme of research.

[7] As a result of this the paper tends to focus on children attending/dropping out from government-provided schooling.

2 Factors Influencing Drop Out and Retention

Research suggests that a range of interrelated demand and supply factors interact to influence how and why children drop out from school. These will be looked at in more detail in the sections to come. Initially the paper looks at the financial circumstances of households and how this might be linked to dropping out.

2.1 Household Income and Financial Circumstances

Household income is found to be an important factor in determining access to education as schooling potentially incurs a range of costs, both upfront and hidden. Upfront costs include school fees, while the more hidden costs include uniforms, travel, equipment and the opportunity costs of sending a child to school. Household income is linked to a range of factors: when children start school, how often they attend, whether they have to temporarily withdraw and also when and if they drop out (Croft, 2002: 87-88). There are some research studies which look at how household income interacts with dropping out of school in particular.

A number of studies highlight the link between poverty and dropping out from school (Birdsall et al, 2005; Boyle et al, 2002; Brown & Park, 2002; Bruneforth, 2006; Cardoso & Verner, 2007; Gakuru cited in Ackers et al, 2001: 369; Dachi & Garrett, 2003; Hunter & May, 2003; Porteus et al, 2000; Ranasinghe & Hartog, 2002; UIS & UNICEF, 2005; Vavrus, 2002). Porteus et al (2000: 10), whilst describing exclusions rather than drop out per se, paint poverty as 'the most common primary and contributory reason for students to be out of school' and Hunter and May (2003: 5) call poverty, 'a plausible explanation of school disruption'. Dachi and Garrett (2003: 36) asked a series of questions to parents/guardians about the financial circumstances surrounding children's school enrolment in Tanzania:

> virtually all households responding said the main barrier to sending children to school was financial and their inability to pay. Hardly any cited a negative attitude towards school on the part of the children themselves, or that the school itself was unattractive.

Both statistical data and empirical research suggest that children from better off households are more likely to remain in school, whilst those who are poorer are more likely never to have attended, or to drop out once they have enrolled. For example, Brown and Park's research in rural China (2002) saw 'poor and credit constrained children' three times more likely than other children to drop out of primary school. Colclough et al (2000) describe the links between wealth and school retention in more detail:

> ... amongst those out-of-school, the mean wealth index for school drop-outs was generally higher than for those who had never enrolled ... children at school were, on average, from better-off households than those who had dropped out, who were, in turn, from richer backgrounds than school-age children who had never enrolled (Colclough et al, 2000: 16).

> Poor households tend to have lower demand for schooling than richer households: whatever the benefits of schooling, the costs, for them, are more difficult to meet than is the case for richer households (Colclough et al, 2000: 25).

For children from poorer backgrounds in particular the pressure on them to withdraw from school increases as they get older, particularly as the opportunity cost of their time increases.

Work patterns of household members influences whether income is coming in, and the possible expenditures available. Seetharamu (1984 cited in Chugh, 2004: 86) looking at patterns of access and non access in slums in Bangalore, India indicated that the income of the father was linked to the continuity or discontinuity of the child in school; with the fathers of most drop outs not employed. If income levels are low, children may be called on to supplement the household's income, either through wage-earning employment themselves or taking on additional tasks to free up other household members for work (see section 2.1.3). This is more apparent as children get older and the opportunity cost of their time increases.

How people regard schooling and the importance placed on it at times might shape interactions between schooling, household income and dropping out. For example, Pryor and Ampiah's (2003) research on schooling in a Ghanaian village, talks about education being regarded as a 'relative luxury', with many villagers considering education not worthwhile. Chi and Rao's (2003) research on rural China sees things slightly differently, with children's education one of the main household priorities. Yet, even in this context if rural parents are short of money, expenses on ancestral halls and gift giving are prioritised over educational spending. Another body of work indicates that withdrawal from school is a last resort for many families (e.g. Sogaula et al, 2002 cited in Hunter & May, 2003: 10). And there is research that shows households often do not want to remove children from school as they see it as an investment for the future (e.g. Bouis, 1998 cited in Hunter & May, 2003: 10).

Research indicates links with household income, gender and dropping out. For example, Fuller and Laing (1999 cited in Grant & Hallman, 2006: 6) found an association with a family's financial strength, measured by level of household expenditure and access to credit, and the likelihood a daughter will remain in school in South Africa. Kadzamira and Rose (2003) indicate that when the cost of schooling is too high for households in Malawi, it is often girls from poorest households who are less likely to attend. Conversely, Glick and Sahn's (2000) research in Guinea indicates that when household income increases, there is greater investment in girls schooling, with no significant impact on that of boys. Colclough et al (2000: 1) are keen to point out that while poverty is associated with under-enrolment, 'the gendered outcomes of such under-enrolment are the product of cultural practice, rather than of poverty per se'.

2.1.1 School Fees and Indirect Costs of Schooling

While the previous section looked at household income and dropping out, here the focus is on schooling costs, such as fees and other more indirect costs which impact on household decisions around access.

Research indicates that direct and indirect schooling costs are important factors in whether children enrol in and attend school (e.g. Dachi & Garrett, 2003: 16; Fentiman, Hall & Bundy, 1999; Rose & Al Samarrai, 2001). While research on this often relates to access per se, there is also some research which indicates that the costs of schooling, including fees, is a central reason for dropping out (Brock & Cammish, 1997: 27; Brown & Park, 2002; Colclough et al, 2000; Hunter & May, 2003; Liu, 2004; May et al, 1998 cited in Hunter & May, 2003; Mukudi, 2004; Rose & Al Samarrai, 2001).

Colclough et al (2000) carried out quantitative survey research and qualitative interview-based research with educational stakeholders (community members, parents, teachers, pupils, etc.) in sample communities in Ethiopia[8] and Guinea in order to identify information about the constraints affecting the participation and performance of girls and boys in school, particularly in rural areas. In the field surveys, an inability to pay the direct costs of schooling was found to be one of the 'most important causes' of non-attendance in both countries, with those dropping out most frequently citing a lack of money to pay for school expenses as an important reason for dropping out. In interviews, parents in Ethiopia often talked about difficulties in paying school fees, especially prior to harvest (when they became due); the ability to buy exercise books, pens and the necessary clothing for school also influenced whether children could enrol or were withdrawn from the first grade (Rose & Al Samarrai, 2001). Some described their children dropping out after enrolment, because they could not meet the direct costs of schooling. Additional costs e.g. registration payments, gaining copies of birth certificates (for registration), textbooks and uniform costs, were all indirect costs many parents in Guinea found difficult to meet.

Not only do school fees lead to under-enrolment and drop out, they also limit attendance at school (Mukudi, 2004) and lead to temporary withdrawals. Research indicates children may be locked out of schools if they cannot pay schooling fees (Obasi, 2000; Ackers et al, 2001 cited in Mukudi, 2004). In Boyle et al's (2002) research in some areas of Uganda and Zambia, the inability to pay school fees meant children withdrawing from school for periods of time, however temporarily.

Schooling costs may link with gendered patterns of access, with households in some cases less willing to pay fees for girls' education. For example, Brown and Park's (2002) research in rural China indicates that an inability to pay school fees had led to the decision to dropout for 47% of girls, but only 33% boys in primary school; in junior secondary high fees was cited for half the girls, but only 8% of the boys.

While many educational systems require children to pay fees to attend school, some countries have adopted fee free systems. While this may ease problems of drop out resulting from schooling costs, indirect costs and quality issues may increase. South Africa has recently introduced a system where schools in the lowest quintile are allowed to become 'fee-free'. By 2005, 3 million pupils at 7,000 primary and secondary schools had already or were in the process of becoming, fee free (Pandor,

[8] See also Rose & Al Samarrai, 2001.

2005). There is as yet there is little research into the impact of this policy on access and retention.

2.1.2 Income Shocks

How households deal with income shocks is also an important factor in maintaining schooling access. Research indicates that vulnerable households can withdraw children from school as part of their coping strategy to deal with shocks to income, often in order to work, save on costs or to free other household members up to work (Boyle et al, 2002; de Janvry et al, 2006; Jacoby & Skoufias, 1997; Gubert & Robilliard, 2006; Sawada & Lokshin, 1999 cited in Ersado, 2005). At what stage children are withdrawn from school within this coping mechanism might differ. Households are likely to draw on a number of other coping strategies: e.g. using household assets, taking out loans, asking for assistance. Whether households have access to these is likely to influence their decision-making processes. Where these possibilities are not present, it is difficult for the household to protect itself against external shocks, meaning children may be forced to leave school as part of a household coping strategy (Becker, 1975 cited in Duryea, 2003; Hunter & May, 2003; de Janvry et al, 2006).

This vulnerability is more apparent in certain contexts and poor, rural communities seem to be particularly at risk. Research points to this being the case in rural Pakistan (Sawada & Lokshin, 1999) and India (Jacoby & Skoufias, 1997). In these contexts, Boyle et al (2002: 6) talk about 'a vulnerable demand (for education), commensurate with the dynamics associated with poverty and the vulnerable household'. Yet, research by Hunter and May (2003: 17) in South Africa claims that shocks to a household do not seem to be a strong predictor to school disruption, with poor households attempting to defend the education of their children in the face of a range of shocks.

In communities where income shocks do occur, literature suggests there is often a sequence to how households employ coping strategies. Strategies which have little long-term cost are adopted first while strategies with long-term costs that are difficult to reverse are adopted later (Devereux, 1999 cited in Hunter & May, 2003). Poorer households with fewer physical assets may increase their labour supply, with women and children often called upon (World Bank, 2000 cited in Hunter & May, 2003). While these coping strategies often attend to short term shocks, the consequences of withdrawing children from school can have longer term implications, because these temporary withdrawals often lead to more permanent drop out.

Access to some form of credit during times of income shock appears to limit its effect on withdrawals from school. For example, research on conditional cash transfer programmes (where school attendance is a requirement) in Mexico by de Janvry et al (2006) reveals that they can protect enrolments in times of income shock and act as some sort of safety net to schooling. The study, which looked at household survey data in 506 rural localities, also showed that while children were retained in schools during times of income shock, their workloads were also increased in order to cope with increased financial pressure. Similarly, research by Ersado (2005) on patterns of child labour and schooling decisions, showed that in rural Nepal and Zimbabwe access to a commercial bank had a positive effect on child schooling and a negative

impact on child labour. Guarcello et al (2003, cited in de Janvry et al, 2006) indicate that parents' access to credit and to medical insurance provides risk-coping instruments that help protect children from dropping out of school. Access to credit in these conditions tends to be sought to manage shocks, rather than as long term schooling strategies. In cases where access to this credit is not available, in times of income shock there will be more pressure on households to withdraw children from school.

2.1.3 Child Work

There is a substantial research literature on various aspects of child labour and educational access, including the relationships between child labour and poverty; the types of work children are carrying out (paid, household-unpaid, agricultural); household structure, educational access and work; whether child work hinders or helps access to schooling; the gendered and locational aspect of working and access, etc. While conclusions made should be embedded within the contexts of the research, a number of studies have produced similar findings which are drawn upon here. There are some studies which look specifically at the relationships between schooling dropout and child labour specifically, and how child labour might contribute to both the processes of dropping out and in some cases to enabling retention. These will be looked at in more detail.

First, drawing on some points about access and child labour in general, some points will be raised. Differences exist in terms of whether work is paid or unpaid; income generating in some way; or part of what might be regarded as household chores or support. It is important to note the difficulties in trying to pinpoint causal determinants around such complex and household-specific decisions and attributes, particularly where factors interact with each other. In this case, research indicates poverty, gender, location, household education levels, household income levels, and season often interact with child labour to influence a child's access to education. For example, rural children are more likely to work than urban or peri-urban children (see Admassie, 2003; Andvig et al, n.d.; Blunch & Verner, 2000; Canagarajah & Coulombe, 1997; Ersado, 2005). In many cases, girls have more duties than boys (Kane, 2004); yet some studies indicate that in particular contexts boys from poor-urban household have particular pressures on them to work, e.g. Brock and Cammish's work on Jamaica (1997). And children in rural households are more likely to juggle work with school, whereas in urban households it is more likely to be either/or (Andvig et al, n.d.). How child labour is defined is also important.

The most prevalent types of child labour appear to be domestic and household-related duties (girls) and agricultural labour (boys), which are for the most part unpaid, under-recognised, and take up substantial amounts of time. Labour of this sort does not necessarily impede educational access (Admassie, 2003; Canagarajah & Coulombe, 1997; Moser, 1996; Ravaillon & Wodon, 1999; the PROBE Team, 1999), with children frequently combining household/agricultural duties with some schooling. Having said this, studies indicate forms of child labour create pressure on a child's time. For example, children who combine work with school, depending on the nature and volume of work, can have erratic school attendance, regular school absences[9] (e.g. Croft, 2002; Brock & Cammish, 1997: 34; Ersado, 2005; Guarcello et

[9] Studies of this kind are difficult to find because schools often do not hold attendance records.

al, 2005) or increased instances of lateness (Guarcello et al, 2005). While still having educational access, low attendance in particular is seen as a precursor to dropping out (see section 3.1.4). Similarly, agricultural work is often seasonal with clashes with schooling timetables, leading to seasonal withdrawals from school. While these withdrawals are 'temporary', research suggests they may lead to more permanent withdrawals from school (Boyle et al, 2002: ix; Brock & Cammish, 1997; the PROBE Team, 1999). While still in school, children who are falling behind due to regular absences, temporary withdrawals and heavy out of school workloads, could be members of the silently excluded (CREATE Zone 3), those who attend, but fail to engage adequately in teaching and learning processes (see for example, Rose & Al Samarrai, 2001).

In some household contexts child labour is enabling, i.e. it allows children to gain access to school. Children may earn money, or their work may free-up other household members to go to school. Research from Ethiopia (Rose & Al Samarrai, 2001) showed that because of the tasks they did (e.g. sell firewood), boys were better placed to provide income to share the cost of their education than girls. Studies show some children[10] migrating to take up posts where there is some chance of gaining or continuing their education (see ILO/IPEC, 2004).

> In some cases, employers do allow the child to attend school or vocational classes, although almost always this is allowed only after the domestic tasks have been completed, with the result that children in domestic service are often reported by their teachers as arriving late, attending irregularly or being distracted from their work (ILO/IPEC, 2004: 34).

Similarly, some children enter domestic service with the idea of earning enough money to enable them to return to school.

In other cases child labour can be disenabling, and an active factor leading to drop out. Specific work-related tasks, for example, full time child care and work in peak agricultural times are less easy to reconcile with schooling. Child labour is seen as: the prime reason for non-enrolment and drop out in Ghana according to Fentiman et al (1999); a cause of 50% of drop outs in Delhi (Municipal Corporation of Delhi, 1999 cited in Juneja, 2001); a 'prime cause for absenteeism, repetition and most particularly drop-out rates' in Tanzania (Dachi & Garrett, 2003: x); the most important reason for the drop out of rural children in Ethiopia (World Bank, 1998 cited in Andvig et al, n.d.:7); and leading to two years less schooling in Bolivia and Venezuela (Psacharopoulos, 1997 cited in Ravallion & Wodon, 1999). Colclough et al's (2000) research in Ethiopia and Guinea showed child labour to be a significant reason for dropping out in both countries. The following quote underlines some of the problems children face leading them to dropping in and out of school:

> In Ethiopia, many children, of both sexes, who enrol in September, at the beginning of the school year, leave by November because demands on their labour during harvest time are so great. In some cases, they re-enrol the

[10] Although this is not always/often the case, see e.g. Admassie (2002: 173) on Ethiopia where children doing domestic work outside their homes 'typically live and routinely work long hours without any access to education'.

> following year in grade one but, again, are unable to complete the year (Colclough et at, 2000: 17).

While poverty is often promoted as a driving factor pushing child labour (Andvig et al, n.d.; Blunch & Verner, 2000; Duryea, 2003) and leading to drop out, other studies read it differently. The PROBE report (1999) suggests that children work because they are unable to go to school, as opposed to dropping out of school in order to work. In South Africa, Hunter and May (2003: 11) describe how the depressed job market might act as a deterrent to dropping out, and may encourage children to stay in school longer. A number of researchers indicate that a buoyant job market and the ability to earn good money is a motivating force behind decisions to leave school (e.g. Dachi & Garrett, 2003; Duryea, 2003). Duryea (2003) highlights the pull of the labour market (as opposed to the push of poverty) as a main factor in children dropping out of school in urban Brazil. The study of 14–16 year old boys and girls, saw children more likely to leave school as local labour market conditions became more favourable. Children were more likely to be working in areas with thriving labour markets, meaning child labour was higher in these areas, rather than those cities with the highest poverty rates. The labour market was 'competing' for children's time. Conversely, the paper suggests that labour market downturns in this context did not tend to push children into the labour market because there were actually fewer opportunities for work for children. Cardoso and Verner (2007) exploring retention and child labour in urban Brazil noted higher retention for girls than boys, with girls largely remaining in school till around 18, but boys starting to drop out around the age of 13. The suggestion here is that the pull of the labour market took boys away from school. Similarly, Ersado (2005) does not see the link between poverty and child employment as crucial in urban areas (although it is in rural areas). She states:

> the evidence from Nepal, Peru, and Zimbabwe indicates that the impact of poverty on a child depends on the location. While there is strong evidence that poverty drives child labor in rural areas, there is a general lack of support for the poverty hypothesis in urban areas (Ersado, 2005: 477).

Hazarika and Bedi (2003) analysed data from the 1991 Pakistan Integrated Household Survey (covering 4,800 households in 300 rural and urban communities) and specifically focused on a sample of 1900 10-14 year-olds. The aim was to look at the relationships between schooling costs, child labour and schooling access. Their results found that extra-household child labour and schooling costs were positively related, so if schooling costs were lowered then there was less likelihood of children working outside the household. However, intra-household child labour was insensitive to changes in the costs of schooling. Meaning that reducing school costs had no affect on the amount of work children had to do within the household.

In terms of age as a child grows older, the opportunity cost of their time often increases, leading many to drop out (Admassie, 2003; Blunch & Verner, 2000; Canagarahaj & Coulombe, 1997; Ersado, 2005; Glewwe & Jacoby, 1995 cited in Fentiman, 1999: 340). This can be seen for example in the migration habits of children (often from economically poorer communities) for employment and domestic support, which increases after the ages of 13 (see section 2.1.4). With some children starting school late (often children from poorer households, some in weaker health), the years they have in school are further restricted.

Household work patterns and structure can also influence whether children drop out. Al Samarrai and Peasgood (1998: 18) explore the 'unclear' effect a mother going to work might have on her daughter's schooling chances, while:

> the income effect will have a positive effect on girls' schooling chances through a general increase in resources available for schooling ... daughters may have to take on more of the household chores in place of the mother implying that they will have less time to go to school.

Other research indicates that if a mother participates in the formal wage economy, it can be associated with their daughter's 'suppressed' school attainment, perhaps because of increased household demands placed on girls (often the eldest daughter) (Fuller & Liang, 1999). In this case, girl children take on some of the domestic duties the mother may have previously carried out. Yet, research by Ersado (2005) in Nepal suggests the opposite, with a mother working outside the home having a positive effect on child schooling.

Studies also indicate that girl children frequently drop out of school to look after younger siblings (e.g. Brock & Cammish, 1997). The presence of children less than 6 years old in the household tends to increase the probability of older siblings working and not schooling in Ghana, and the presence of female adults within the household increased the probability of girls schooling and not working (Canagarajah & Coulombe, 1997). A Lloyd and Brandon study (1994 cited in Andvig et al, n.d.) on fertility and schooling in Ghana showed that each additional younger sibling significantly increased the probability that an elder girl would drop out of school.

In interviews with street children in Tanzania (Dachi & Garrett, 2003) some respondents described how changes in household circumstances (e.g. death of a parent; abandonment by a parent) had forced them to leave school and earn some sort of a living. Guarcello et al's (2004) study of children and work in Burundi indicated that maternal (but not paternal, nor double) orphans and foster children were more involved in economic activity than non-orphans. Orphans living without their surviving parent were more involved in work and less in school than orphans not separated from their surviving parent (see also section 2.2.2).

Linkages between educational access and child labour are also gendered, and frequently it is the girl child who is most affected (Andvig et al, n.d.; Blunch & Verner, 2000; Boyle et al, 2002; Canagarahaj & Coulombe, 1997; Colclough et al, 2000; Ersado, 2005; Kane, 2004; Rose & Al Samarrai, 2001). In many contexts, girls take on a heavier workload within domestic/household settings (e.g. water and fuel collection, younger sibling care, and general domestic tasks), whereas boys might be more likely to be involved (often to a lesser extent) in agricultural duties/the formal labour market (Canagarahaj & Coulombe, 1997). The type of work duties carried out has implications for both initial and sustained access to schooling, and rural girls seem more likely to be affected than urban girls (Ersado, 2005).

Yet, in some contexts the labour of boys tends to be higher than that of girls (e.g. research by Ravallion & Wodon, 1999, showed that in rural areas in Bangladesh the boy child worked an average of 26 hours per week, as opposed to 20 hours for the girl

child), with increased pressure on boys to drop out. Boys are more likely to be involved in more physical forms of labour and as they grow older changes to their physical growth make them more marketable/usable. Some tasks boys might be more likely to carry out, e.g. farming, may be seasonal rather than permanent, and while seasonal absentees are most often able to return to school, their temporary withdrawal increases the likelihood of drop out. In some urban areas there are also substantial numbers of boys, in particular, who have entered the informal working economy, many of whom are regular absentees from school or drop outs, e.g. Cote D'Ivoire, Jamaica and South Africa (Appleton, 1991 cited in Bredie & Beeharry, 1998; Brock & Cammish, 1997; Hunter & May, 2003). Hunter & May (2003) draw on research by Tanner, Krahn & Hartnagel (1995) which indicates a higher number of boys (than girls) leave school in South Africa because earning money and attaining adult status is more attractive to them. In rural areas in Cote D'Ivoire, higher child wages have the effect of increasing the probability of boys dropping out, and decreasing the likelihood that girls will drop out (Appleton, 1991 cited in Bredie & Beeharry, 1998). Rose and Al Samarrai (2001) state that, in the case of Ethiopia while boys may be the first to be enrolled in school, in times of economic crisis, when waged employment is available, they may also be the first to be withdrawn.

A number of factors seem to interact to influence whether children become vulnerable to drop out or actually drop out of school because of child labour. These include the location (urban/rural); gender; type of work; opportunity cost; household contexts and income; length of work commitments; and age. On many occasions child labour is part of a household's risk management strategy, with access to credit/assets influencing whether a child can stay in school (see section 2.1.2). Without these assets, children might be more vulnerable to dropping out.

2.1.4 Migration

Child migration can be linked to both increased and decreased educational opportunities (Hashim, 2005). For example, children may move into urban areas to access education; but also may migrate to gain paid employment, which may limit educational chances; children living in slum areas or without permanent residence may move frequently, often leaving school as a result (Chitnis & Suvan, 1984 cited in Chugh, 2004).

Migration patterns of communities and labour market expectations may influence demand for schooling and therefore dropping out. For example, Ping and Pieke's (2003, cited in Hashim, 2005: 13) review of rural-urban migration in China suggests that there is little incentive to acquire an education beyond elementary literacy in their case study community, due to labour market demands. Thus, in villages where there is a lot of rural-urban migration, pupils frequently drop out of school before the completion of compulsory education to migrate to cities. In other cases, an education might be the means by which young people can leave communities in order to find better work elsewhere and as such there is an external incentive to remain in school. Colclough et al (2000) highlight the experiences of girls migrating to work as housemaids in Guinea and Ethiopia, but rather than income being used to contribute to schooling expenses, they are usually obliged to give their income to their parents.

In terms of adult migration (where remittances are generally transferred back to communities) there is some research in relation to retention and drop out. In poor rural Pakistan where economic migration is usually undertaken by men (leaving female-headed households), evidence (see Mansuri, 2006) suggests that children in migrant households are more likely to attend school and remain in school, accumulating more years of schooling compared to those in non-migrant households. Yet, girls in migrant-households headed by women are still significantly more likely to drop out than boys, and both boys and girls in these households tend to work more. Mansuri's (2006) paper concludes that while educational benefits of migration relate to the increased income flows into the household, traditional household structures and social patterns remain. Research by Cordova (2006) also highlights the positive relationship between migration, remittances and schooling retention. The research makes the following claims: In El Salvador, US$100 of remittance income lowers the probability of children leaving school by 54% in urban areas; and in the Philippines, a 10% rise in household income through remittances leads to a proportional increase in enrolment rates among children aged 17 to 21[11].

In terms of children who have migrated to schools, there appears to be limited research in relation to dropping out. Dunne and Leach (2005) indicated an increased vulnerability to early withdrawal for child educational migrants in Ghana and Botswana. Liu (2004) describes the difficult conditions in boarding schools in China (with poor food and dormitories) and how this had led a small sample of children to drop out. Research on rural-urban individual child and household migration indicates that around three times more migrant children are out of school, than non-migrant children i.e. long term residents, with migrant children four times more likely to drop out (Batbaatar et al, 2006). The study carried out qualitative research with parents of migrant-drop outs. The main reason given for dropping out was that urban schools would not accept the children when they moved. These urban schools were often overcrowded, but with achieving decent attainment results, were keen not to let standards slip with the influx of rural children (with perceived weaker educational levels). Other factors raised included poverty levels of migrant families, with some not being able to pay school fees and related costs, a lack of available support structures and a lack of influence/standing within their new communities which might have enabled access to schooling.

Migration can also lead to temporary withdrawals from school, while access is gained to other schools. In South Africa the migration process is significant as students try to gain access to better quality schooling. These often overcrowded schools can reject applicants, leading to temporary gaps in education as potential students apply elsewhere. Porteus et al (2000) outline the problems of migrants accessing schools in South Africa, with schools requiring documentation, e.g. birth certificate and school transfer forms, which can delay access. Similarly in Mongolia, Batbaatar et al (2006: 31) note the administrative difficulties often faced by rural migrants to urban areas:

> Migrant children have to submit their registration documents (provided by the administrative unit) to be accepted into school. If they do not have this registration, or do not obtain temporary resident registration, and if they are not de-registered from their rural residential area, it is very difficult to enrol in

[11] Although it's unclear whether this refers to the 'basic' education cycle.

> schools in urban areas ... rural schools and administrative units are sometimes reluctant to de-register children who are migrating because a drop in the number of children registered in their local schools means a decrease in their budget.

The influence of migration on dropout is also inter-related with fostering, as discussed further in section 2.2.2.

2.2 Household Contexts and Motivations

The household contexts and living conditions of children often seem to play an influencing role in access to education. This might correspond with other factors such as income, education of family members, size and scope of household, as well as age of household members. Al Samarrai and Peasgood (1998: 22), drawing on Peasgood et al *(*1997), suggest the effect of household context is greater on initial access rather than on drop out, stating:

> although dropping out is closely related to poverty, many social factors also play a strong role with the pupils themselves sometimes taking actions which result in them leaving school independently of their families' wishes.

This suggests that household contexts are only one in a range of factors which might lead to drop out. Research on household characteristics and dropping out is explored below.

2.2.1 Household Contexts

Who makes up the household seems to have an influence over educational access and retention, particularly in poorer communities. Grant and Hallman's (2006) research on education access in South Africa shows children living with mothers were significantly less likely to have dropped out of school relative to those whose mothers were living elsewhere or whose mothers were dead. In other work on South Africa, Hunter & May (2003) describe a 'particularly notable' relationship between family background and dropping out. Here, youths from poor families, from single-parent families, the children of poorly educated parents and children with fewer role models in higher education, were more likely to drop out. This same interlocking of household related factors appeared in research on female drop outs in Ethiopia. In research by Al Samarrai and Peasgood (1998) female-headed households in Tanzania appear to put a higher priority on their children's education.

How many children are within the household is important in many cases and can be a 'significant determinant' of access (Boyle et al, 2002: 4), but research differs on the impact of household size on access and drop out. Some studies indicate that with larger household sizes (and in particular numbers of children) the financial burden/potential workload is greater; children are less likely to attend school, and often drop out. However, with more children in the household, jobs can be spread between them and siblings more likely to attend, e.g. in Ethiopia (Colclough et al, 2000). Research in Pakistan indicates that while an increase in family size reduces a girl child's household work, the presence of younger children appears to increase their workload (Hakzira & Bedi, 2003). As in other studies, the number of siblings under 5 years of age has a strongly negative impact on older girls' schooling and leads to drop

out, while the number of sisters aged 13–20 have a positive impact on girls' grade attainment (Glick & Sahn, 2000). Household size and composition interact with other factors to influence drop out, for example, late enrolments, large families, low educational levels, gender and birth order (see Leka & Dessie, 1994 cited in Nekatibeb, 2002; Odaga & Heneveld, 1995 in Nekatibeb, 2002).

Al Samarrai and Peasgood (1998) used multivariate regression techniques to analyse household survey data collected in rural Tanzania in 1992, focusing on how household and individual characteristics affect whether or not a child goes to primary school, completes primary and attends secondary. In terms of household contexts, a number of factors affect educational access and the potential to drop out. Where a child is born in relation to other siblings may affect schooling decisions:

> on the one hand, children born into the family early, when resources are stretched over fewer members of the household, may be more likely to go to school. On the other hand, a child born into the family later may have lower opportunity costs than an older sibling because the need to look after other siblings would be reduced (Al Samarrai & Peasgood, 1998: 4).

While more children in a household increases the financial burden, an increased number of children potentially reduces the work burden on individual children (although this is possibly less the case for older children who might more readily be pushed to work or help more with household chores). Birth order slightly reduced the probability of boys completing (0.8 per cent) and raised the probability of girls completing (3.4 per cent), with younger girls standing more of a chance than older girls of completing (Al Samarrrai & Peasgood, 1998). Al Samarrrai and Peasgood (1998) contend that education may be treated as an investment for some children, but not for others; and that the educational experiences of one child can affect the probability of younger siblings attending school, either positively or negatively. Yet, they also conclude that 'it remains unclear exactly how siblings influence education decisions' (1998: 20). Their research also indicates that the working contexts of families (and their income group) can influence the probability of access, with children from households involved in trade more likely to be in school than farming households, but this not having a significant effect on the probability of completion.

In many societies, in Africa in particular, a large number of children are fostered (estimated to be 25% of children by Zimmerman, 2003). There can be both positive and negative effects of fostering on educational access. In many cases children are fostered in order to allow them greater educational opportunities. At other times the focus is on foster children providing forms of child labour in households e.g. domestic duties, with less focus on education (see section 2.1.3). Based on an analysis of 8,627 'black' South African children, Zimmerman (2003) claimed foster children were no less likely than non-orphans to attend school. In fact, they tended to move from schools that had difficulty in enrolling them to homes nearer to schools that were more able to do so. School attendance is highest for fostered children in Burundi (Guarcello et al, 2004), compared to children living with their immediate family. This suggests that children are often being fostered in order to get better educational opportunities. Anderson (2005) carried out multivariate analysis on a random sample of children from 11,211 'black' households in South Africa, looking at the genetic relatedness of one child from each household with other household members. Results

suggested households invested more in children who were more closely related. Glick and Sahn (2000) look at the complexities of households where there are polygamous relationships, with a male household head having several wives, and households often including individuals from the extended family. Thus children might be related to each other in multiple ways in the household. Unlike siblings, the presence of other children in such households, has few effects on educational attainment, even for girls.

Konate et al (2003) looked at which children households in Mali chose to send to school using data from a nationwide survey of migration and urbanisation in 1992-3 and a survey of family patterns and children's education in Mali (1999-2000). Children of the head of household were usually favoured over others in the household (i.e. those fostered, entrusted to the family and those living in it with parents other than the heads of household). Taking place of residence into account, the percentage of children without parents present was much higher in towns than in the countryside, with rural children migrating into towns for both work and/or education. Living away from both parents, 'does seem to seriously affect a child's educational opportunities' (Konate et al, 2003: 7). Indeed, 'the family system that enables these children to be taken in does not lead to them performing as well in school or staying there' (Konate et al, 2003: 7). In large households, i.e. those over 16 people, the percentages of children attending school dropped. The study suggests that three factors assisted with retention: the presence of a lamp or table at home; help with homework; and not having to do domestic chores after school. Yet it could be argued these are actually proxies for income and household education levels.

2.2.2 Bereavement and Orphanhood

Bereavement amongst family members and in particular parents often makes children more vulnerable to drop out, non-enrolment, late enrolment and slow progress (Case et al, 2004; Evan & Miguel, 2004; Gertler et al, 2003; Bicego et al, 2003, cited in Case & Ardington, 2004; Bicego et al, 2002 cited in Hunter & May, 2003; Lloyd & Blanc, 1996 cited in Ainsworth et al, 2005). Whilst being orphaned is often linked to an increased likelihood of childhood poverty, this is dependent on the household context and who then becomes the child's carer. Orphanhood often exacerbates financial constraints for poorer households and increases the demands for child labour and drop out (Bennell et al, 2002; Yamano & Jayne, 2002, in Ainsworth et al, 2005). Some countries have targeted support to assist orphans access education. In South Africa a foster care grant is available and in Botswana food rations and other kinds of material support are provided to the most disadvantaged orphans (under the National Orphan Programme).

There is a body of work which looks at HIV/AIDS, bereavement and drop out (e.g. Ainsworth et al, 2005; Chipfakacha, 1999 cited in Hunter & May, 2003; Gillborn et al, 2001; Bennell et al, 2002). Chipfakacha's research on Uganda has shown that deaths from AIDS are associated with reduced schooling for children. Indeed a UNICEF (2000: 30) report on twenty countries shows that the average difference between enrolment rates for orphans and non-orphans is 19 percentage points. Ainsworth et al (2005) highlight reasons why adult morbidity and mortality as a result of AIDS (although many of these factors need not be linked to AIDS) may adversely affect demand for schooling. For example, children may be required to care for an ill household member or carry out economic inputs; households with terminally ill

prime-age adults are likely to have reduced income and more costs e.g. medical and funeral bills, reducing the amount available for schooling; two parent orphans often miss out on educational opportunities compared to children living with parents in the same household; and teacher shortages may increase if numbers of teachers contracting HIV/AIDS increases. With relation to drop outs, research from Malawi suggests that 9.1% of children were found to drop out of school the year following the death of one parent, but numbers rose to 17.1% for two parents (Harris & Schubert, 2001 cited in Jukes, 2006). In Zimbabwe, orphanhood was found to decrease the likelihood of school completion. However, school completion was sustained, particularly for female orphans, where orphanhood resulted in a female-headed household and greater access to external resources (Nyamukapa & Gregson, 2005, in Jukes, 2006).

Access to schooling after bereavement seems to be linked to who died, who children live with afterwards and the age of the child/level of education at bereavement. Case and Ardington's (2004) quantitative research on parental bereavement in Kwa Zulu Natal, South Africa shows differences between maternal and paternal death. Maternal orphans were significantly less likely to be enrolled in school and have completed fewer years than a child whose mother was alive. Households whose father died were generally poor prior to the father's death and continued to be so after, as a result poor educational access was put down to poverty rather than orphanhood. Similarly, there was no significant difference between losing mothers alone, and losing both parents (Case & Ardington, 2004: 17). While 55% of children whose fathers had died lived with their mothers, only 10% of children whose mothers had died lived with their fathers, rendering maternal orphans virtual double orphans. Guarcello et al (2004), researching on Burundi, claimed that orphans faced a higher risk of lost schooling and non-attendance. In Burundi attendance rates varied by category of orphan (Guarcello et al, 2004). Paternal orphans attended schools in greater proportions than maternal orphans; male orphans were more likely to attend school than female orphans. Double orphans were 14 percentage points less likely to attend school full-time, and eight percentage points less likely to attend school in combination with work, than non orphans. Being a single orphan reduced the probability of attending school full-time by 11 percentage points, and of attending school in combination with work by four percentage points. The death of a parent made it six percentage points more likely that a child worked full-time.

Research taken from household surveys on north-west Tanzania 1991-4 (see Ainsworth et al, 2005) attempts to measure the impact of adult deaths and orphan status on primary school attendance and hours spent at school. There was no statistically significant difference in attendance rates by orphan status. The study showed there was no evidence that children 7–14 dropped out of primary school due to orphan status or adult deaths. But among school children, school hours were significantly lower in the months prior to an adult death in the household and seemed to recover following the death. The attendance of younger children was more vulnerable to adult mortality than older children, with young children in poor households with a recent adult death having a 10 percentage point lower attendance rate than children in poor households without an adult death. This was not the same for orphans in non-poor households, indeed children in non-poor households with an adult death had even higher attendance than those in non-poor households without an adult death. Girls often reduced their attendance in school immediately after losing a

parent, but this tended to reduce after some months. Children living with close family members had higher attendance ratings than those living outside the family or with more distant family members. There was no evidence that the older children were dropping out of primary school because of orphanhood or deaths, which seems to counter the suggestion that children drop out as a coping strategy. Similarly, Bennell et al's (2002) research on AIDS orphans in Botswana suggests rates of permanent drop out are not substantial because of support given by the government and relatively little overt discrimination of orphans by teaching staff and students.

There are often gender dimensions to vulnerability of schooling after parental bereavement. Girls often drop out of school to be caregivers to siblings and research suggests girls who have lost mothers may be especially vulnerable with respect to schooling (Giese et al, 2003; World Bank, 2002; UNAIDS, 2002 in Case & Arlington, 2004). Research by UNICEF (2006, in Pridmore, 2007) highlights reports from East Africa that girls orphaned by AIDS are increasingly being steered towards early marriage by their caregivers, which would likely lead to drop out.

Often children dealing with bereavement have to move into foster care. Not only are they dealing with the trauma of this bereavement, but they often have to move households and schools. This disrupts schooling patterns and can be linked to periods of absenteeism (see section 2.2.1).

2.2.3 Education of Household Members

Research indicates that the educational level of household members is particularly influential in determining whether and for how long children access schooling. Ersado (2005: 469) talks of 'the widely accepted notion that parental education is the most consistent determinant of child education (and employment decisions)'. Higher parental/household head level of education is associated with increased access to education, higher attendance rates and lower drop out rates (Ainsworth et al, 2005; Al Samarrai & Peasgood, 1998; Ersado, 2005; Connelly & Zheng, 2003; Grant & Hallman, 2006; Hunter & May, 2003; Duryea, 2003; Rose & Al Samarrai, 2001; Seetharamu, 1984 cited in Chugh, 2004: 86). A number of reasons are put forward for the link between parental education and retention in school. Some researchers indicate that non-educated parents cannot provide the support or often do not appreciate the benefits of schooling (Juneja, 2001; Pryor & Ampiah, 2003).

There is evidence that the gender and education level of the parent can influence which child is more likely to access and remain in school for longer. Often it is the mother's educational level in particular which is seen to have an affect on access (e.g. Ainsworth et al, 2005). But this varies in certain contexts. Brown and Park's (2002: 533) research on China indicates that for each additional year of a father's education, the probability of his child dropping out of school falls by 12-14%. And Cardoso and Verner's (2007: 15) research on Brazil claims that the 'schooling level of the mother ... does not have a significant impact on the probability that the teenager will drop out of school'.

Al Samarrai and Peasgood's (1998) research in Tanzania suggests that the father's education has a greater influence on boys' primary schooling; and the mother's on girls'. While a married mother's primary education can increase the probability of

girls enrolling in primary school by 9.7% and secondary by 17.6%, it has no significant effect on the enrolment of boys. They claim that educated mothers giving preference to girls' schooling, implies that 'mothers have a relatively stronger preference for their daughters' education and that their education affords them either increased household decision-making power or increased economic status' (Al Samarrai and Peasgood, 1998: 395). Glick and Sahn's (2000) results (taken from research in an urban poor environment in West Africa) offer some similar outcomes to Al Samarrai and Peasgood (1998): improvements in fathers' education raises the schooling of both sons and daughters (favouring the latter), but mothers' education has significant impact only on daughters' schooling.

Ersado (2005) suggests provision of adult education programmes to counter the educational deficit facing many households would be useful in bolstering sustained access to education for many children. Yet, this might not be enough. Al Samarrai and Peasgood (1998) also contend that while education of the household head increases the probability of completion, the basic literacy of the household head does not improve completion chances, rather heads having attended primary school does. Perhaps this needs to be investigated more.

2.2.4 Household Perceived Benefits of Schooling

Research indicates that the importance household members place on education is an important factor in whether children gain access to schooling and for how long, but there is less research on how this may attribute to dropping out.

Research suggests perceived returns from education play an important part in whether and for how long children receive education. In some part children are seen as household assets whose education could, to varying extents, benefit the household unit. Thus, perceptions of how education affects future prospects appears important to retention. Al Samarrai & Peasgood (1998) claim perceived benefits to the household from education will depend on a range of factors including: prospective remittances the family can expect from their children; the likelihood of obtaining paid work; the way individual children can translate education into improved productivity; and the time preferences of the household. Literature indicates that many poor households see a child's education as a way out of poverty (Chi & Rao, 2003; Hunter & May, 2003). In Chi and Rao's research in China (2003), an educated child is often expected to leave the household (moving from rural to urban) to find work. In this way the child becomes an asset and judging for how long to educate children becomes a strategy for the long term prospects of the family.

Studies also describe a lack of understanding and misinterpretations of parental/household motivations around schooling. The PROBE (1999) report talked of a 'myth of parental indifference' towards children's schooling. And research by Boyle et al (2002: 45) indicates that:

> teachers and community leaders often expressed the view that the poorest parents (who they believe to be uneducated) have little or no understanding of the benefits of education and many children do not attend school (or attend irregularly) because their parents do not value education.

However, their research (which looked at barriers to education for the poorest households in Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Kenya, Uganda and Zambia) demonstrated that:

> on the whole, the poorest parents and their children do indeed value education and usually have clear and rational reasons for not participating, or participating infrequently … (Indeed) … one of the clearest threads running through (the country reports) is the strong sense that the poorest income groups, as much as the richest, are making very reasoned judgments about schooling children based on assessments of the quality of education available, value for money, and investment potential (Boyle et al, 2002: ix).

Some studies indicate a reluctance and lack of support towards a child's education by parents and household members. This lack of interest the child's schooling is cited as an important factor in dropping out or infrequent attendance (Municipal Corporation of Mumbai, 1990 cited in Juneja, 2001; Pryor & Ampiah, 2003). Pryor and Ampiah (2003) researching in a rural Ghanaian village describe how households make rational decisions not to invest in their child's education. For these villagers schooling is considered not worthwhile as they suspect it is irrelevant to future prospects (often as farmers). Many question whether there are any returns to education for children who do not leave the village and gain post-basic education. Many are also contemptuous of those who 'waste' education by returning to engage in farming (Pryor & Ampiah, 2003: ix). Similarly in Boyle et al's (2002) research, respondents (in Sri Lanka, Zambia, Uganda and Kenya in particular) often did not send their children to school because they thought there would be no job at the end of it and as such, limited returns to their investment. There seems some evidence that children are being withdrawn from primary school when access to secondary is problematic.

2.2.5 Decision-Making Around Dropping Out

The processes by which households make decisions about dropout, taking account of principal-agent considerations and intra-household dynamics, appear under-researched. In terms of decision-making strategies, Al Samarrai & Peasgood (1998: 396) describe them as being determined by an 'interaction of social, cultural and economic factors working through power relations within the household'. They describe how decision making is often a negotiated process taking place between members of the household, rather than one individual. They propose:

> The stronger the bargaining power of a family member the more influence they will have on resource allocation decisions (Sen, 1990). Bargaining power will be dependent on an individual's characteristics, and therefore the attributes of other household members, as well as the household heads', will be relevant when looking at schooling decisions. (An educated mother) is likely to have more bargaining power within the household and her preferences for educated children will play a larger role in the decision to send her children to school (Al Samarrai & Peasgood, 1998: 397).

Liu (2004) carried out qualitative research in two rural communities in the north of China, in particular focusing on drop outs at secondary level (and carrying out interviews with drop outs and the families of drop outs). Among the reasons put

forward for dropping out was perceived future prospects (or lack of them), school failing to provide impetus/motivation for continued study and youngsters admiring the lifestyles of contemporaries who had already left. More specifically, parents indicated the youngsters were 'tired of study,' with schools being 'no fun'; there was little hope of entering university; and if they did graduate from university, few prospects afterwards; youngsters admired those working in the city (with most dropouts going to the city to work soon after they left school); and they were persuaded by parents to leave.

Liu (2004) categorised parents into three areas: those supportive of children dropping out, those indifferent and those opposed to it. In most cases it appears children made the decision to quit schools themselves, with parents opposed to the move often scolding, trying to persuade and physically punishing the youngster in order to get them to rethink; but those supporting the decision providing little resistance. In many cases a 'lack of hope' both on the part of parents and children seems to infuse decisions to drop out of school, particularly for boys. Girls on the other hand, if they do not reach university, are more likely to be drawn into marriage at an early age, with less of a burden placed around their future prospects.

Liu (2004) also describes the rational choices children and parents made about educational access (and dropping out) in the context of rural China. Liu talks about how parents have traditionally seen schooling as a potential route to higher education, increased prestige and social mobility. Exam results are the key to success within this context. However, various factors work against youngsters gaining access to higher education, these include: the limited spaces available in senior secondary schools; a few students being given preferential treatment in schools, excluding the vast majority; the lack of prospects for jobs post higher education; and inability to pay fees for higher education. Liu (2004) carries on, 'as rational individuals, people deem learning necessary only when they see that it is paying off economically and /or socially to the fullest extent' and with 70% of the population in China engaged in agricultural activities (in 1997), many do not see the need for substantial educational investments. Indeed, 'their rational calculations about the costs and benefits of schooling and their decisions guided by the principle of optimality have rendered compulsory education impotent in the local context' (Liu, 2004: 19).

2.3 Health

In this section, literature on health and dropping out is reviewed, with links also made to aspects of household income, decision-making, social-contexts etc. as discussed in other sections.

2.3.1 Health of Children

There are a number of studies which look at health of children, access to education and cognitive development (e.g. Alderman et al, 2001; Pridmore, 2007), but few which directly tackle issues connected with health and dropping out. Indeed, Pridmore (2007) suggests the that long-term effects of health and nutritional status of younger children and their implications for school enrolment, drop out and achievement are 'less well understood'. Health problems are often linked to other factors and in particular, poverty.

Health (e.g. under-nutrition, stunting, etc.) is related to late enrolment which, in turn, is often associated with high dropout (see section 3.1.3). Glewwe and Jacoby (1995) investigated how child health/nutrition affected the age at which children first enrolled in school, with some not being sent to school at the appropriate age because parents/guardians do not think they are physically ready. Alderman et al (2001), studying children in rural Pakistan, stated that child health/nutrition had a greater impact on girls enrolment than boys. Subsequently, late enrollers frequently leave school early. Conversely, Daniels and Adair (2004, in Pridmore, 2007) explored height for age Z score at 2 years in association with schooling trajectory and outcomes for 2,198 children in the Philippines. The findings showed that: greater height for age protected against late enrolment among both boys and girls; taller boys and girls were less likely to repeat grades and less likely to drop out during grade school. The study concluded that by improving early childhood nutrition, the likelihood of high school completion in developing countries may increase. Having said this, research in one area in Ethiopia indicates that lower body mass index (BMI) may contribute to children staying in school, probably because they are less able to contribute to work demands (Rose & Al Samarrai, 2001).

Research indicates that school-aged children who suffer from protein-energy malnutrition, hunger, or who lack certain micronutrients in their diet do not have the same potential for learning as healthy and well-nourished children (Pridmore, 2007). Studies suggest that these children attend school less frequently, are more likely to repeat grades, drop out early and fail to learn adequately due to poor levels of attention, low motivation and poor cognitive function (Pollitt, 1990; Grantham-McGregor & Walker, 1998; Rosso & Marek, 1996 cited in Pridmore, 2007).

Irregular attendance is often the result of children's health problems (Batbaatar et al, 2006; Boyle et al, 2002; Colclough et al, 2000; Fentiman et al, 1999; Porteus et al, 2000). Whilst many students are often able to return to school, there are issues associated with long absences and reintegration, such as catching up with the other students. The PROBE report (1999: 33) highlights the link between illness-related absence and drop out, as 'resuming studies after a prolonged absence can be difficult'. Indeed, health problems were given as the reason for drop out by around a quarter of respondents (Batbaatar, et al, 2006) in areas of high-out-migration (usually poor and rural), in Mongolia[12].

In many countries, children infected with HIV in utero or through breast feeding are unlikely to reach school-age. With the absence of anti-retroviral drugs, those who do make it to school have reduced attendance and many drop out as they become too ill. As children become sexually active, HIV/AIDS-related infections increase, leading to missed schooling and drop outs. For example, AIDS related deaths among students in secondary school in Botswana is projected to be around 558 in 2009 (Bennell, 2005), with 0.24% of the 15-19 population group thought to be infected. Yet other countries tend to have lower rates of infection in teenage years, e.g. Ghana, suggesting limits to generalisability.

[12] However, the link between migration and health is not clear.

2.3.2 Health of Relatives

Children whose parents/siblings fall ill might be expected to be caregivers for these sick relatives, at times causing them to miss or drop out of school. This is especially the case for girls (Case & Ardington, 2004; Chesterfield and Enge, 2000; UNAIDS, 2000 cited in Kane, 2004). For example, some drop outs interviewed in Mongolia indicated that caring for relatives had lead to them leaving school. One child spoke about returning to school afterwards and being told to leave as they had not completed the curriculum for that year. Another had to move with their mother when she entered hospital, and in the new area they were unable to enter school and as a result had to drop out (Batbaatar, et al, 2006).

The frequency of drop outs appears to be context specific, with some areas affected more than others. For example, quantitative research by Case and Arlington (2004) in South Africa indicates that children did not get pulled from schools to look after dying mothers. Bennell et al (2002) in discussing HIV/AIDS, child caregivers and drop out in Botswana, stated their research had provided no information on the numbers of children affected in this way, and teachers had only been able to identify a small number of students affected. Yet it seems children still attending school in times of household illness might be affected by the situation at home. In research by Akunga et al (2000) in Kenya, pupils living with people infected with HIV/AIDS reported low concentration levels in schools as they tried to cope with home/school lives. The trauma caused by illness can also have longer term implications. Hunter and May (2003) claim that while relatives might get better after a period of illness, they often emerge from that period poorer and more vulnerable (Hunter & May, 2003: 8). This has implications for a range of factors affecting education.

2.3.3 Pregnancy

There is a range of research around pregnancy, dropout and re-entry into schools. Studies indicate that pregnancy is a significant cause of dropout for teenage girls from school (e.g. Cardoso & Verner, 2007; Fentiman et al, 1999; Grant & Hallman, 2006; Hunter & May, 2003; Njau & Wamahiu, 1998 in Nekatibeb, 2002; Dunne & Leach, 2005; Brock & Cammish, 1997; Kane, 2004; Boyle et al, 2002). In Dunne and Leach's (2005: 38) research on secondary schools in Botswana and Ghana, the predominant reason for female dropout was cited as pregnancy.

Some studies suggest there are predictors of teenage pregnancy (and thus drop out). These include:

- Girls with poor school performance (Grant & Hallman, 2006; Department of Family Health study in Kenya 1988, in Grant & Hallman, 2004);
- Girls who have previously been temporarily withdrawn from school (Grant & Hallman, 2006);
- Low economic status (Hallman and Grant, in Grant & Hallman, 2006);
- Family migratory life styles and the consequent vulnerability of girls (Dunne & Leach, 2005).

In some cases, institutionally-led discriminatory practices can act as a factor in pushing girls towards dropping out. In South Africa, while students cannot be

discriminated against because of pregnancy, in interviews teachers and principals claimed that students were expected to leave school 'as they start to show' (Hunt, 2007: DPhil research data). Forms of gender violence against girls can lead to girls becoming pregnant (Boyle et al, 2002) (see section 2.6.4).

It is also the case that some girls may chose to get pregnant, and pregnancy is a planned lifestyle choice. Lloyd and Mensch (1995 in Grant & Hallman, 2006) claim that the lack of social and economic opportunities for girls and domestic demands placed on them, along with gender inequities of education system, may lead to poor academic performances which may endorse early motherhood.

Both Malawi (Kane, 2004: 71) and Botswana (Dunne & Leach, 2005: 28) have, or have had, laws which temporarily exclude (with the pregnant girl) the father of the child from school, if they are attending. Yet, Dunne & Leach's (2005) research suggests that in practice this only affects the girl, meaning drop out for girls is much higher than for boys as a consequence of pregnancy. Many countries allow girls who have been pregnant to return to school (e.g. South Africa, Malawi and Botswana). Yet, there is little evidence to suggest re-entry levels are significant[13]. According to Grant and Hallman (2006) re-entry may depend to some extent on whether the girls become primary care givers to their child/ren, or whether they are able to share or relinquish childcare responsibilities. Young women who live with an adult female were more likely to return to school following a pregnancy-related drop-out (Grant & Hallman, 2006). Research by Meekers and Ahmed (1999) in Botswana claimed that those students with good motivation and results before pregnancy were more likely to return.

There are other factors which mitigate against re-entry. Some girls marry or move into their partner's home following a pregnancy (Kaufman, 2001 cited in Grant & Hallman, 2006) which might move them away from their educational base. In Botswana, while girls are allowed to re-enter 'it has been found that many girls do not return to school due to fear of ridicule, intimidation, social branding and harassment by the school community' (Dunne and Leach, 2005: 21, drawing on Chilisa, 2002). In some cases there might be a reluctance at the school level to girls' re-entry and the 'intimidating social context experienced by returners' (Dunne & Leach, 2005: 28). Similarly, while policies may allow re-entry 'this information may not be clearly conveyed throughout the system … or communities may continue to adhere to their own cultural norms preventing these girls from attending school' (Kane, 2004: 71). Pregnancy also increases financial pressures on potential students, with other financial factors still applying e.g. school fees. In research by Grant and Hallman (2006), of the students in South Africa who had been pregnant and not returned to school, 19% cited their inability to pay school fees as a reason. Thus, 'in these cases, disentangling the relative importance of pregnancy and economic vulnerability in determining school dropout is difficult' (Grant & Hallman, 2006: 9).

2.3.4 Disability and special educational needs

While there is some research on education for children with disabilities and special education needs (SEN) within the context of EFA (see Lynch, 2001), Filmer (2005)

[13] However, Hallman and Grant (2003, in Grant and Hallman, 2006) in Kwa Zulu Natal, South Africa saw 32% of 14-19 year olds who had been pregnant, currently attending school.

notes the lack of 'systematic empirical analysis' around access to schooling for children with disabilities. This is also apparent for drop outs. Perhaps the lack of initial access for children with disabilities and SEN means fewer are able to drop out and less studies available.

Part of the issue here is around the heterogeneity of children with disabilities and SEN[14] as well as difficulties in terms of categorisation between and even within countries[15]. There are a range of definitions of what constitutes disability, which makes cross-country analysis problematic. As Filmer (2005) suggests, at the school level, some forms of disability/SEN are more visible than others, some less visible and difficult to identify given the situational contexts in which some communities/schools operate. The type and extent of access will often be influenced by the needs of the child and the educational provision available, with some conditions less problematic in terms of access.

Overall though, the scale of educational exclusion for children with some form of disability/SEN appears to be vast. Various figures are quoted, but depend on the definitions used. UNESCO (n.d.) claims that more than 90% of children with disabilities in developing countries do not attend school (although no definition of categorisation is given). Peters (2003a: 14, citing Habibi, 1999) highlights differences in educational access estimates for disabled children, ranging from less than 1% (Salamanca Framework for Action) to 5% (in other sources). Birdsall et al (2005) claim about 40 million of the world's out-of-school children have some form of disability, with just 5% of these children estimated to complete primary school, and many either never enrolled or dropping out very early. Figures vary between and within countries for certain groups of children. However, Peters (2003b) claims that disability may be the single most important factor excluding children from schooling. Given that so few children with disabilities gain access to school, there is limited opportunity for them to drop out.

Disability interacts with other forms of disadvantage to restrict access further. Rousso (2003) claims that girls with disabilities are less likely to have access to schooling than boys. Annor (2002) indicates that access to education for many with disabilities in Ghana is more likely to be an urban rather than a rural phenomenon. And research suggests middle class children with disabilities are more likely to have access to education than those from poor backgrounds. Thus poor girls living in rural areas with disabilities are probably most likely to be denied access. Access for children with disabilities/SEN is also affected by individual, supply and societal factors, such as distance to school, particularly if children have mobility problems; supply of schools which offer specialist facilities/inclusive educational practices; and cultural expectations around disability, etc.

[14] Although the two are different (but at often overlapping) categories, they are combined for the purpose of this study.

[15] In terms of definitions, Peters (2003a: 11) describes the ISCED-97 (International Standard Classification of Education) system, i.e. 'those with SEN are defined by additional public and/or private resources provided to support their education'. Another form of categorisation which has been adopted in a number of countries differentiates children into: Category A: students whose disabilities have clear biological causes; Category B: students who are experiencing learning difficulties for no particular reason; Category C: students who have difficulties arising from disadvantages.

Filmer (2005) using household survey data from 11 countries adopted varying definitions of disability, which were 'most closely consistent with an impairment definition of disability'; and did not include mental health, chronic illness or the inability to carry out specific activities. The findings show a significant lack of educational access. Filmer (2005: 15) states that the 'lack of school participation due to disability is often larger than the associated characteristics such as gender, rural residence, or economic status differentials'. He claims that 'typically … the gap in school participation between children with and without a disability is on the order of twice as large as those associated with rural residence or wealth' (Filmer, 2005: 14). Filmer (2005) describes how children with disabilities are not only less likely to start school, but also in some countries have lower transition rates. Grade survival profiles indicate that gaps in access for children with disabilities (compared to those without) increased through the grade cycle in Indonesia, Jamaica, and Romania (indicating increased drop out); but remained parallel or decreased in Benin, Cambodia, Mongolia and Mozambique (indicating less drop out) (Filmer, 2005: 12). In all cases, children with disabilities were less likely to have initial access. In terms of access specifically, Peters (2003a: 31) claims that 'the vast majority of children with disabilities have mild impairments. These children most likely constitute a significant percentage of drop-outs and grade-level repeaters'. So while there is evidence of drop outs from school (CREATE Zone 2), initial exclusion (CREATE Zone 1) seems to be more significant.

Once initial access has taken place, there is limited research around how school-related (interlocking with demand-side) factors influence sustained access to schooling. The role of teachers is important. Appropriate teaching methods could enhance the learning potential of many students with SEN, but many teachers do not gain the appropriate training (Obeng, 2007; Thurman, 2003); nor do they in some cases know how to identify forms of learning difficulties (Obeng, 2007). A study by UNESCO (1998 cited in Lynch, 2001) in Bangladesh described how many of the learning deficiencies identified were to a large part a result of the teachers' failure to teach the appropriate skills needed. While these children are present in school, the lack of appropriate learning can lead to silent exclusion and the potential to eventually drop out. A study by Lynch (2001: 18) indicates that the large categorisation of children with SEN might be, in some cases, a viable way for teachers to justify under-achievement, and thus act as a rationale for these children to drop out. Many of these children, in fact, may just not be receiving the appropriate education. In this sense, teachers appear to present the perception that non-access is acceptable for these children under these circumstances.

Dupoux et al (2006) indicate that the severity of the disability influences teachers' attitudes, **'**as the perception of severity increases, teachers' positive attitudes decrease (Forlin, Douglas & Hattie, 1996 in Dupoux et al, 2006). Thus, teachers are more disposed to accept students with mild disabilities than students with behavioural-emotional disabilities (Dupoux et al, 2005; Ward, Center & Bochner, 1994 in Dupoux et al, 2006) and less disposed towards students with social maladjustments and emotional disturbance (Leyser & Tappendorf, 2001; Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996 in Dupoux et al, 2006). On a similar note, while there appears to be little empirical research on its relationship to dropping out, Rousso (2003) indicates that there is growing recognition that disabled students often face harassment. School-related factors such as large class sizes further restrict the potential of teachers to be able to

cater to the specific educational needs of individual students, whether they are 'special' or not. Research by Asamani (2000) and Obeng (2007) indicates a reluctance on the part of teachers to have children with SEN in their lessons because of large class sizes and as a result an inability to meet the specific needs of these children.

Generally, there seems to be a lack of detailed analytical research into the scale of disability and SEN in schools and its relationship to dropping out. Specifically, literature on gender, disability and drop out is sparse; and there is little on the processes and practices of schooling as an influencing factor in dropping out.

2.4 Social and Political Contexts

2.4.1 Gender

As highlighted throughout this review, gender cuts across a wide range of constraints that lead to drop out. This section focuses on the gendered aspects of dropping out with an emphasis on demand-side factors in particular e.g. household contexts, gendered cultural practices etc. (gendered schooling practices and supply side issues are covered more in section 2.6.3). While the emphasis in studies of gender and access tends to be around the education of girls and enabling the retention of girls in school, in some contexts it is boys who are more likely to withdraw early (e.g. South Africa, Jamaica). Often this takes place in communities where initial access is largely equal for both genders, and the move out of school for boys is often seen as a pull to the labour market (see section 2.1.3).

Colclough et al (2000) talk about gendered cultural practices which influence girls and boys educational chances and experiences. They describe, for example, gendered roles in society which shape, 'the balance of incentives for girls and boys to attend school' (2000: 4). For example, in some societies the main leadership roles in public life are taken by men, which could potentially restrict the aspirations of girls; marriage of girls happens at a younger age than boys, limiting the likelihood of continued schooling; and labour market practices can influence both male and female withdrawals differently. Whilst not always the case (see previous paragraph), in many societies there remain fewer accepted incentives for girls to continue schooling, which can provide a push towards early withdrawal. Thus while the gendered nature of access is context specific, it often reflects societal perceptions of gendered roles and the role education can play in affirming this.

Gendered practices at the household level affect the opportunities of girls and boys to access and complete education. In household decision making processes around educational access, trade-offs between children are made. Studies indicate the preference many households have for the education of boys over girls, with girls' education often deemed less important and drop out consequently more likely (e.g. Admassie, 2003; Boyle et al, 2002; Kobiané, 2002; Odaga and Heneveld, 1995 in Nekatibeb, 2002; Rose & Al Samarrai, 2001). For example, the gendered division of labour within households often sees girls taking on household duties and child care duties which takes them out of school (see section 2.1.3). The nature of marriage, where girls move into the husband's household, thus bringing fewer perceived benefits to their households, also restricts the perceived need for continued schooling. Perceptions of the value of girls' education differed from those of boys'. Boyle et al

(2002: 46) suggest that households in their study tended to see boys' education bringing greater future economic rewards, which was not to be the case with girls (whose futures were expected to be lie in family care and marriage).

Research studies give examples of gendered household practices and convictions which appear to influence schooling retention. Colclough et al (2000) describe how some parents in Ethiopia claimed that twelve years of schooling would mean their daughters could not perform housework and as a result may not be able to find husbands. Similarly, in Guinea parents mentioned that primary schooling was irrelevant to girls' future roles. Both indicated a lack of motivation towards the continued schooling of girls. In addition, an ILO/IPEC (2004: 19) study highlights the propensity for girls to be excluded or withdrawn from school earlier than boys, 'in the belief that, as a girl, she does not need to be educated or indeed should not be too educated in case it blights her marriage potential'. Indeed, educating a girl is often seen as a poor investment because the girl will marry and leave home, bringing the benefits of education to the husband's family rather than to her own.

This is not the same for all girls. In Glick and Sahn's (2000) study (using data from a survey of 1725 households conducted in Conakry, Guinea in 1990), a number of factors appeared to influence the increased retention of girls in the education system[16]. These included: more years of schooling for both mothers and fathers; household permanent income and expenditure; and an increase in female siblings aged 13-20 years (however, an increase in the number of children in the household, under the age of five, had a negative affect on girls access and a positive influence on dropping out). Boys' educational retention was not affected in the same way.

As recognised in the literature, gender interlocks with other factors raised elsewhere in this paper which both directly and indirectly appear to relate to drop out. In most instances if girls get pregnant they drop out of school (see section 2.3.3); many schools do not have separate sanitary facilities for girls, which is particularly problematic as girls get older and start to menstruate (section 2.6.1); if schools are located too far away and travel deemed a 'risk', girls can be withdrawn (section 2.5); the pull of the labour market (section 2.1.3); early marriage (section 2.4.5); and girls are more likely to be the victims of abuse (section 2.6.4). In more indirect terms, in households that have limited resources, boys are often educated over girls; gendered curriculum and schooling practices tend to silently exclude (see section 2.6.2). Girls living in rural areas often have less access to schooling than boys in similar areas, with rural children on the whole having less access than urban children (see section 2.4.2). There is more pressure for girls to leave as they get older, and thus gendered patterns can be accentuated at the secondary level.

There is limited research with drop outs themselves which might provide insights into how individuals see gendered practices affecting schooling decisions. However, research by Vavrus (2002) carried out in the Kilimanjaro Region of Tanzania does

[16] As a result of this study, Glick and Sahn (2000) further suggest a variety of ways access and retention to girls' education could be enhanced. These include: policies that raise household income levels; targeting girls education specifically (to ensure intergenerational influences); increased availability of market substitutes for domestic work and changes in home technology (to reduce household 'dependence' on the labour of girls; the availability of subsidized childcare; adjusting schooling timetables.

explore perceptions of retention, using essays from girls in school and life histories of girls out of secondary school, as well as observation and questionnaires/questionnaire interviews. With a small sample (70 girls) it highlights how a variety of factors influence female retention in schools, such as a father's presence in the household, economic resources of the household, and education levels of household members. The paper emphasised how cultural notions around gender and poverty interact to restrict educational access for girls. Secondary school girls writing essays responded to the question: What are the differences between girls who finish secondary school and those who only finish Standard VII? In it they construct an image of female drop outs, which is in contrast to perceptions of those who graduate, with individual defects of drop outs taking on more importance than external constraints. Secondary school students argued they had a better moral character and knowledge of family planning issues than those not in school, with many drop outs having 'multiple unwanted pregnancies'. They also suggested that without a secondary school education, women would be unable to find work, unable to maintain good relations with their partner and unable to plan family size. They contrast this with their perceptions of secondary school graduates, who are able to get work, husbands who respect them and children they get on well with. It also contrasts with primary school leavers perceptions of themselves: they did not consider themselves 'uneducated'; their hopes for the future were similar to those of secondary school students. Yet they feared they would be unable to continue with schooling because of the prohibitive cost of school fees, school supplies and the opportunity costs to their families from the loss of their income. In the examples given, the girls talk about wanting to continue their education in some way, but the economic hardships made this difficult/impossible. In the article Vavrus (2002: 544) states, 'the demand for girls' schooling is generally high, but cultural *and* economic forces keep this desire from becoming a reality for many girls in the region'. As Colclough et al (2000: 1) claim:

> Poverty – at both the national and household levels – is associated with an under-enrolment of school-age children, but that the gendered outcomes of such under-enrolment are the product of cultural practice, rather than of poverty per se.

Having said this, there do seem to be indications that perceptions around gender might be shifting in some contexts (e.g. Boyle et al, 2002). In numerical terms, educational access for some girls is increasing e.g. Bangladesh, and in others, educational access for girls is generally higher for girls than boys, e.g. South Africa. Research in Guinea (Colclough et al, 2000) indicates that compared with ten years ago, parents believed that many more of them were now aware of the broader benefits of girls' schooling, such as being able to read and write, earning incomes to help themselves and taking better care of their own families. Yet despite some advances, Colclough et al (2000) claim that negative attitudes towards girls' schooling, relative to boys' schooling, remain. Similarly, Boyle et al (2002) indicate that even contexts where the value of education is perceived to be in gendered terms 'equal,' when households are faced with financial difficulties it is still the girls who are more likely to be pulled from schools.

2.4.2 Rural/Urban Locations

In many instances educational non-access in general (Konate et al, 2003), and drop out rates more specifically, are higher in rural rather than urban and peri-urban settings (e.g. Birdsall et al, 2005). Indeed, Birdsall et al (2005: 338) claim that 'in many countries, the rural/urban education gap is the most important factor explaining education differentials'. There are a number of possible reasons for this. Households in rural areas tend to be poorer, schools more inaccessible, household members less educated and pressures on children to work to support the household (e.g. in domestic and agricultural duties), greater. Moreover children in rural areas often enroll later. While in urban locations, there tend to be more schools and the choice of options available to households are greater.

Mugisha (2006) reminds us that this rural/urban divide in educational access is not always true, given demographic differentials within certain areas. He gives the example of slum areas in urban conurbations, and specifically one in Nairobi, Kenya exploring patterns of school enrolment comparing urban slum, urban non-slum and rural children (using data from the Kenya Demographic and Health Survey for 1993, 1998 and 2003, slum survey data and focus discussion groups with slum dwellers). Currently, over 60% of Nairobi's residents live in slum areas. The results suggest that school enrolment is higher in urban non-slum rather than in urban slum, and is higher in slums than in rural areas at younger ages. However, this is only true up to age 9 for females and 11 for males, when school enrolment for slum children declines and the rate of decline is faster than their rural counterparts. Comparatively, enrolment rates begin to decline at 13 for rural males and 14 for rural females. High drop out rates in slum areas are attributed to poor quality primary schooling, limited access to secondary schools, increased vulnerability to risky behaviour e.g. sexual activity, alcohol, drugs, difficult home environments and increased child labour. In Mugisha's research (2006) the schools that serve the slum communities are mainly non formal and are generally characterized by staff shortages, crowded classrooms and lack of resources. But schools situated outside the slum communities are in most cases unaffordable to the slum dwellers and secondary schooling access is at times problematic.

Kabore and Pilon (n.d.) explain how policy makers tend to regard urban areas as homogenously having higher enrolment than rural areas, and not noting inconsistencies within urban areas. Looking at the capital of Burkina Faso, Ouagadougou, intra-urban disparities (geographical and socioeconomic) exist in enrolment (both supply and demand driven). The number of primary school places does not meet overall demand, with outlying districts getting fewer. State education is concentrated in the centre of the city and private on the outskirts (especially in the poorer areas, where the government does not build schools).

> In the outer districts, with few state schools, the choice is often between not sending children to school (because private schools are too expensive) or making them travel … a long way each day (Kabore & Pilon, n.d: 15).

Lower access is greater in these poorer, outer districts, particularly for girls.

2.4.3 Other Socially Disadvantaged Groups

This section looks at literature on dropping out for socially disadvantaged groups. The term 'socially disadvantaged group' is used as a term to incorporate disadvantaged ethnic, religious and ethno-linguistic groups, etc. It does not attempt to understand the context-specific complexities of individual situations, nor does it claim that 'social disadvantage' is a constant. Research does indicate in certain circumstances some socially disadvantaged groups might have less access and retention than other children. Often there are interlocking reasons for this, including poverty, cultural practice, gender, etc. These socially disadvantaged groups are often seen as 'hard to reach'.

Research often focuses on who is excluded, rather than how or why children are excluded. For example, Birdsall et al (2005) highlights some of the access issues for diverse ethno-linguistic groups e.g. in Bangladesh, Ethiopia and Pakistan. Ames (2004) describes the lower enrolment of girls in some rural and indigenous areas in Peru and some of the barriers to retention. In the sample used by Al Samarrai and Peasgood (1998) in Tanzania, Muslim boys were 6.8% less likely to complete school secondary school than Christian boys, although there is no difference for girls[17]. They are also 8.7% less likely to attend secondary schooling. Belonging to a household that has traditional religious beliefs lowers the probability of having ever attended school by 7.7% for girls and attending secondary school for both boys and girls (by 16.9% and 18.8% respectively). These groups might be more likely to be from nomadic communities, often making access and continued access more problematic. Data from India indicates that, although improving, 37% of scheduled caste children and 49% of scheduled tribe children dropped out of primary school before completion (GoI 2003-4 in Sedwal & Kamat, 2008), with girls being more likely than boys to drop out.

There is also some research on why children from socially disadvantaged groups are possibly more likely to drop out.

Sedwal and Kamat (2008) indicate a number of reasons for children from scheduled caste or tribe groups being more likely to drop out from school in India. These included: economic disadvantage, poor quality of available schooling (many study in badly-equipped schools with poor infrastructure and under-trained teachers) and forms of social expectation. In this context, the PROBE team (1999) and Balagopalan and Subrahmanian (2003a, 2003b) describe discrimination against under-privileged social groups as endemic and exclusionary. Indeed, Balagopalan and Subrahmanian (2003a, 2003b) describe how children from upper-caste and better-off households are increasingly moving into private schools, leaving most primary schools in urban and semi-urban areas with substantial majorities of scheduled caste and tribe children, and predominantly upper-caste teachers. In this context, Balagopalan and Subrahmanian (see id21, n.d.) describe how children do not drop out of school but are pushed out. Discriminatory practices pushing children out of school include: verbal abuse from teachers; children given cleaning tasks in school; children suffering humiliation when using home language rather Hindi; increased corporal punishment for these groups; a push towards manual labour jobs, rather than the formal wage economy; and the low quality of educational provision for these groups.

[17] He does suggest as a caveat, however, that sample numbers were low and the surveyed areas were predominantly Christian.

Research has taken place on educational access for nomadic and pastoralist communities[18], who are often viewed as hard to reach and with lower enrolment rates than national averages, particularly for girls (Carr-Hill et al, 2005). High drop out rates for nomadic/pastoralist children (generally in Africa) were linked to a range of factors (some of which are relevant to children in general) including: communities frequently moving, perceived low returns to education, school fees, marriage for girls, a lack of interest in education, a lack of curriculum relevance, environmental conditions, school distance, child labour and the inflexibility of the formal schooling system to adapt to the needs of nomadic children (Carr-Hill et al, 2005; Kratli, 2001a; Kratli, 2001b). While some schemes have been developed (see Shepherd School Programme in Ghana, section 4.4) to attract and retain children from nomadic communities in education, the sense is many nomadic communities continue to be marginalised from schooling provision with implications for both initial access and drop outs.

2.4.4 Conflict, Politically Fragile and Emergency Situations

Children caught up in conflict, politically fragile and emergency situations often find difficulties remaining in school and many drop out. Many children are forced to migrate, disrupting the schooling they had, with different pressures on time (and resources). Migration might take place internally within countries or externally, outside counties. Often these children have difficulties in accessing education in new areas and face problems in terms of language, discrimination, lack of identification documentation, etc. Access to household assets might be problematic and income restricted; poverty levels may increase; there might be more emphasis on 'survival' rather than remaining in school; and opportunities for potential employment might be low, decreasing the perceived need for education (Sommers, 2005). Financial security might be further stretched if deaths of household members occur. Forced recruitment or voluntary enlistment of child soldiers prevents children from going to school (O'Malley, 2007) and pushes many boys, in particular, to drop out. At the same time, research indicates girls face increased pressure to withdraw from school in times of crises (Sommers, 2005; Sommers, 2002).

In terms of supply-side factors which restrict sustained access, schools can be closed down or destroyed in fragile environments. Research by O'Malley (2007) describes the use of targeted violence on schooling facilities and individuals, particularly in times of conflict, which might push children and teachers to stay at home or flee (rather than attend school). Teachers might receive little or no payment, and without new training, unqualified teachers are brought in to fill gaps (Nicolai, 2003). It is likely that in fragile environments secondary and higher education provision is likely to lapse quicker than primary provision, with communities often taking on a role as education providers. This often means increased pressure on older children to drop out of school (Rose and Greeley, 2006).

Some children are able to access schooling in emergency facilities/refugee camps which are often supported by NGOs. However the often temporary and volatile nature

[18] In terms of numbers: approximately 6% of the African population are nomads, living in 20 countries (Carr-Hill et al, 2005). Reports indicate between 15 million and 25 million out-of-school children globally are nomads and pastoralists (Oxfam, 2005).

of some camps means that sustained and meaningful access can be problematic. Research by Sommers (2005) into education provision in a refugee community in southern Sudan (Kakuma) indicates issues with quality, as well as high drop out rates and multiple risk factors for children's education. For example, there were low student attendance, low teacher retention, lack of access to secondary provision, high teacher-student ratios, lack of incentives for education, and gendered practices which pushed girls from school. Indeed, Sommers (2005: 178) states, 'in Kakuma the drop outs dominate'. Yet in many cases, children have a better chance of accessing schooling in refugee camps than in their own communities (Sommers, 2002). Concerns for the re-integration of youth, many of whom are school drop outs, back into schooling are raised by Rose and Greeley (2006), as disaffected youth have the potential to heighten fragility and volatility.

2.4.5 Age, Marriage and Notions of Adulthood

While the pressure on children to leave school tends to increase as children grow older and their opportunity costs rise (Colclough et al, 2000), there are other age-related factors which can influence schooling access and dropping out. There are also cultural notions around adulthood and age which may in some circumstances affect access to schooling. This section looks at notions of adulthood, how education is perceived in some communities where children move towards adulthood, and how these influence drop out.

Research highlights a number of important points with regard to education and rites of passage ceremonies which mark the move from childhood to adulthood. Firstly, the ceremony and preparations for it may overlap with the school calendar, which can increase absenteeism and potential dropouts from school (Boyle et al, 2002; Kane, 2004; Nekatibeb, 2002; Syongho, 1998 cited in Ackers et al, 2001). Boys in Guinea undertaking initiation ceremonies had primary schooling disrupted, with ceremonies sometimes taking place in term time, absenteeism lasting up to one month, and sometimes leading to drop out, while for girls it was often considered 'shameful' for them to return to school (Colclough et al, 2000). Secondly, money available for schooling might be used for the initiation event (Kane, 2004). And lastly, this move into adulthood at times means that 'new' adults can think themselves too grown up for schooling (Kane & DeBrun, 1993, Thomas, 2002 cited in Kane, 2004). Nekatibeb (2002: 7) describes how communities in Ethiopia accept these girls as 'adults', but teachers or schools continue to consider them as children and this may create tension. Initiation ceremonies thus affect girls' and boys' access differently in different contexts.

Research also highlights a link between age and drop out for girls. For example, when girls start to menstruate or reach 'maturity'/puberty, they might be withdrawn from schools (Mekonnen cited in Molteno et al, 2000; Nekatibeb, 2002; Rose & Al Samarrai, 2001). In some cases this might be to ensure the girls' reputations are kept 'intact' (Nekatibeb, 2002). In other cases girls are withdrawn from school at this time to marry (Brock & Cammish, 1997).

In certain communities girls in particular are encouraged to marry as they reach puberty and/or become sexually mature (or even in some contexts even earlier). The early marriage of girls is linked to drop outs in certain contexts (Boyle et al, 2002;

Brock & Cammish, 1997; Colclough et al, 2000; Fentiman et al, 1999; Rose & Al Samarrai, 2001; Syongho, 1998 cited in Ackers et al, 2001). In areas where girls marry early, and/or go to other households, drop out is often high. Having said this, where marriage is concerned in some contexts such as India, education levels can work both ways, as schooling might get girls a 'better' marriage, but this may also raise the cost of the marriage for parents – in this case parents might be inclined to remove their daughter from school (the PROBE Team, 1999).

2.5 Supply of Schools

Educational access can be restricted by an inadequate supply of schools or enough school places in many countries (Colclough et al, 2000). While the lack of schools is more likely to affect initial access rather than drop out, there is evidence that limited school supply influences drop out. For example, if schools are in short supply it is more likely they would be located further away; and there are generally fewer secondary schools, making the transition problematic in some places.

Research points to distance to school being an important factor in educational access, particularly for rural populations (Boyle et al, 2002; Mfum-Mensah, 2002; Nekatibeb, 2002; Porteus et al, 2000). In research sample areas in Ethiopia and Guinea, 'as elsewhere, the greater is the distance from home to school, the less likely it is that a child will attend' (Colclough et al, 2000: 19). In terms of drop out this might particularly affect transitions to secondary or junior secondary schools in rural areas, where there might be fewer schools and which are further away (Fentiman et al, 1999); for younger children, particularly if the journey is deemed too far (Juneja, 2001); for girls where parents/guardians are afraid of sexual harassment, especially as they grow older (Colclough et al, 2000; Nekatibeb, 2002; the PROBE Team, 1999); and for girls who are seen as being 'weaker' than boys (Colclough et al, 2000). In research in rural communities in Pakistan (Lloyd et al, 2005), girls' enrolment was highly responsive to the presence of an all girls school in the village.

Where secondary schooling is unlikely (for these and other factors) households might be more likely to withdraw children earlier from primary. For example, Ainsworth et al (2005) state that the likelihood of children in their research area (in Tanzania) attending primary school decreased with distance to the nearest secondary school.

2.6 The Role of School in Dropping Out: Schooling Quality, Processes and Practices

Factors within schools, for example, institutional configurations, processes and practices and schooling relations, all influence types and experiences of access. These generally interplay with demand-side factors, but in some cases experiences of schooling can be a main or the main determinant in whether a child leaves school early. Education quality is raised by many researchers as a major factor influencing schooling access (e.g. Ackers et al, 2001; Boyle et al, 2002; Brock & Cammish, 1997; the PROBE Team, 1999). As access to education increases with EFA and UPE, the spotlight moves towards quality in order to ensure sustained access. Boyle et al (2002) suggest quality has been compromised to some extent with increased access. What quality actually means though is a matter of debate (e.g. the PROBE Team, 1999; UNESCO, 2004). Definitions of what actually constitutes quality vary, with few studies identifying the specific links between 'quality' and drop out. This section

looks at aspects of 'quality' relevant to debates around dropping out, and focuses also on schooling practices and processes.

2.6.1 Schooling Resources and Facilities

In this section schooling resources and facilities are looked at in terms of schooling systems, human resources and in-school resources. While links to dropping out are explored in many cases they may be indirect, feeding into an overall notion of quality.

Birdsall et al (2005: 339) question the quality of schooling systems in low–performing countries, where the institutional and management challenges are 'significant'. They describe institutions with high teacher absenteeism; spending and investment which is unresponsive to local needs and preferences; a lack of accountability and incentives for performance. Ghuman and Lloyd (2007) and Hunt (2007) also describe the lack of accountability and monitoring mechanisms in some schools. Ghuman and Lloyd (2007) note how teachers once hired are difficult to fire, meaning performance and attendance are difficult to guarantee; and Hunt (2007) centres on a lack of monitoring of policy in practice, in particular the corporal punishment ban in South Africa. There is little research into how these directly reflect in drop outs, however some of the behaviours they allow teachers to enact are noted (see section 2.6.2).

In terms of human resources, research indicates that female teachers often have an important impact on schooling quality for female pupils (Colcough et al, 2000). However, the availability of female teachers in some countries is low, and particularly in the higher grades of schooling. For example, in Colclough et al's (2000) research some of the rural schools visited in Guinea and Ethiopia had no female teachers; this is not uncommon. Schools without, or with few, female teachers are often less attractive to parents/guardians on the grounds of safety/security of female students, and also provides fewer role models to motivate towards continued attendance.

School facilities, availability of resources e.g. textbooks, desks, blackboards have been noted to influence drop out (Brock & Cammish, 1997; Molteno et al, 2000). The availability of (separate) sanitary facilities is important for female retention, particularly as girls get older and start menstruation (Colclough et al, 2000; Fentiman et al, 1999; Lafraniere, 2005). In research by Colclough et al (2000) only 5 of the 11 schools visited in Ethiopia had latrines, and, of these, only one was separated for boys and girls. In most cases, these latrines were not in a suitable condition for use. In Guinea, only two of the six schools visited had latrines. The lack of latrines led to female absence during menstruation and 'of subsequent poor performance or drop-out of girls'.

In many contexts different service providers can offer different resources and facilities, with implications for drop out. Lloyd et al (2005) highlight differences between private and public schools; and girls' and boys' school in Pakistan. They indicate a schooling system where private schools seem to offer better facilities, teacher-student ratios and teacher attendance, with girls' schools seemingly missing out. For example, in girls' schools teachers tended to have fewer years of teaching experience and are more likely to be absent than teachers in boys' schools. Private schools had 'more amenities, smaller classes, more teachers with a lighter teaching load, a higher percentage of teachers residing in the community, and a lower teacher

absentee rate' (than public schools) (Lloyd et al, 2005: 693). Having said this, teachers in private schools had much less experience and were less likely to be qualified.

Teaching and Learning

There are various aspects of teaching and learning which may be linked to dropping out.

The **quality of the teaching/learning** experience for children in schools are linked to the learning outcomes of children (see section 2.6.5). Moreover teaching and learning can influence children's experiences of schooling, their motivations and the move towards dropping out. A recent research report from the University of Zambia (2003 cited in Smith, 2003: 10) describes the reality of the classrooms of the Southern Province:

> where teachers have not prepared lessons, have no schemes of work, do not mark pupils' books consistently and do not determine satisfactory goals for teaching. Classrooms lack materials and textbooks and little worthwhile learning can be observed.

Smith suggests that the classroom practices and lack of resources indicated above have an impact on retention of students.

There are various studies which look at the prevalence of **teacher absence** in schools (see Alcazar et al, 2006; Banerjee & Duflo, 2006), yet little as yet to link this to drop outs. However, absence rate as an indicator of quality is important to note, particularly as teacher absence usually means limited teaching and learning. Research indicates absence rates as frequently high. Chaudhury et al, 2005 (in Banerjee & Duflo, 2006) looking at surveys of absence rates put the figure at over 24% in India; in a survey of 60 non formal education centres in Udaipur, India, teacher absence was monitored by the research team at 36% (Duflo & Hanna, 2005 in Banerjee & Duflo, 2006). The global teacher absence project put public-primary school teacher absence rates as follows: Bangladesh (16%); Ecuador (14%); India (25%); Indonesia (19%); Peru (11%); and Uganda (27%) (Chaudhury et al, 2005).

Research by Alcazar et al (2006) looked at teacher absence in Peru. They noted that teacher absence was concentrated in poor and rural communities (those most disadvantaged in terms of educational attainment). They suggest that poor communities may be less able to hold teachers accountable and/or that working in poor conditions may decrease teacher motivation. In remote areas, transport difficulties may make it more difficult for teachers to arrive at school on time and remote posts might be less attractive to teachers, leading to decreased motivation. In Pakistan where schools are generally segregated by gender, Ghuman & Lloyd (2007) describe a shortage of female teachers to teach girls, which would particularly affect schools in rural areas. A 2004 survey of primary schools in rural Pakistan showed that while 14% of male teachers were absent, 32% of female teachers were not attending (World Bank 2002b in Ghuman & Lloyd, 2007).

In terms of the teachers themselves, those with greater education tended to be absent more frequently than those who have less education in Peru (Alcazar et al, 2006). Research also shows that years of teaching at a school, teachers' level of education, and teachers' training are not associated with lower absence of teachers across several countries (Chaudhury et al, 2005). Indeed, factors such as being male or a head teacher, which reflect higher salary and seniority, were consistently related to higher absence, probably because they confer power and protection from any monitoring systems in place (Chaudhury et al, 2005) (see section 2.6.1). Additionally, research in Peru and Pakistan (Alcazar et al, 2006; Ghuman & Lloyd, 2007), shows that teachers born and living in the district where the school is located have lower absentee rates, with this seeming particularly to be the case for female teachers.

A number of texts refer to the role **language** might play in dropping out (Lynch, 2001; Jackson, 2000). Specifically, when students are taught (especially in the earlier years) in languages which are not their native tongue, this can be particularly exclusionary. Jackson (2000) describes repetition rates increasing for children in Burundi (up from 28% to 40%) in the first two years of using French as the language of instruction. Kane (2004) uses the example of Moroccan Berber children who are taught in a classical Arabic not in daily use (as well as French), but is only able to speculate on the connection between this and high drop out rates. Research from Paraguay (Patrinos & Psacharopoulos, 1995) based on a 1990 household survey of children aged 12-19, indicates that 'language strongly influences school attainment and performance'. In this sample children who speak only Guarani at home have equal access to schooling, but their performance in school (in terms of years of attainment and grade repetition), is considerably inferior to that of Spanish-only and bilingual pupils. It goes on to suggest that, 'language influences school performance and is highly correlated with poverty, leading to dropout and low earnings' (Patrinos & Psacharopoulos, 1995: 58). Here language was the 'single best predictor' of repetition and the 'cost' of being a Guarani-only speaker is about one year of schooling attainment.

Bilingual education is often seen as one means of improving the educational attainment of children prone to educational exclusions as a result of dropping out, in developing countries. Enge and Chesterfield (1996) in particular notes how bilingual programmes have been partly effective in increasing retention and decreasing drop outs of indigenous groups in Guatemala. Yet, it is difficult to attribute this to the bilingual effect, given schools also received teacher training inputs and increased instructional materials.

2.6.2 Inclusions and Exclusions in Schooling Practices and Processes

As indicated previously, it seems evident that some children are more likely to receive education of poorer quality. Often these children are from poorer backgrounds, sometimes rural and from socially disadvantaged groups. Quality in these terms might relate to facilities, time on teaching, teaching quality, etc. Also social practices and forms of social discrimination within schools can, in certain contexts and configurations, act to exclude children from schooling. These will be explored in terms of dropping out.

While poorer children tend to have increased difficulties in accessing education on a sustained basis, the quality of provision received can be weaker. Molteno et al (2000: 2) make this link in terms of dropping out, stating; 'children with hard-pressed life conditions drop out, having learnt little. Vulnerable children get the worst of school systems, when they have most need of the best'. This correlation between weaker quality, poverty and drop outs is emphasised too by Chugh (2004) and Filmer and Pritchett (1998, cited in Kane, 2004), both in India. Richer households are more able to afford to move children to other schools, in cases where quality is weak.

In terms of supply-side factors there can be gendered practices inherent in schooling and schools which may influence drop out and retention of both boys and girls (although there is little research on this as a direct link). Research frequently cites the gendered curriculum and learning resources e.g. textbooks, which promote specific notions of 'femaleness' and 'maleness', which can shape how children identify themselves, their life chances and as such their educational prospects. Gendered practices within the classroom might include teachers encouraging/discouraging students according to gender, encouraging students to take on gendered tasks and roles within the classroom (Kane, 2004). The school may not have adequate sanitary facilities which is often of added importance to girls; few female teachers and role models which provide motivation for students to achieve; and the journey to school may be perceived as too long/dangerous for girls in some areas. Research provides some support to these claims. For example, research into teachers' attitudes towards students in schools in Ethiopia and Guinea (Colclough et al, 2000) indicated teachers were more positive in general about the participation, interest and intelligence of boys rather than girls in schools. Reports from Peru suggest teachers have very low expectations of girls, because they believe they will drop out (Ames, 2004). Glick and Sahn (2000: 80) claim, 'classroom and school environments in Guinea appear to be significantly less conducive to learning for girls than boys (World Bank, 1995), negatively affecting their chances for promotion as well as their later productivity and earnings potential'. But, this study adds little more to what these conditions and practices might be. In other contexts, schooling practices might be more likely to exclude boys e.g. in South Africa (Hunter & May, 2003).

Other forms of social discrimination e.g. against lower caste/scheduled tribe children are highlighted in the PROBE report, with 'social discrimination at school … another common cause of child reluctance' (1999: 28). These factors are not generally deconstructed in terms of dropping out.

2.6.3 School Environment and Safety Issues

There are a number of studies which highlight issues of safety in schools, particularly within teacher/student relationships. Few make the direct link between safety and dropping out, probably due to a lack of research linking the two issues. Here corporal punishment and gender violence are looked at.

The use of corporal punishment or force is practiced by teachers in many countries (Boyle et al, 2002; Hunt, 2007; Humphreys, 2006; the PROBE Team, 1999). In some cases this is illegal e.g. South Africa, in others it is legal but comes with restrictions, e.g. Botswana. The direct link between the use of corporal punishment and dropping out has not been explored fully in literature, however the different relationships have

been alluded to. Boyle et al (2002) suggest that beatings and intimidation 'affect children's motivation to attend school'. The PROBE report (1999: 27) describes a 'gradual discouragement from attending' as a result of the beatings and humiliation from teachers, and that drop out is not uncommon after being beaten. Beatings are not just given by teachers, and bullying from fellow pupils could be equally as problematic. Moreover verbal abuse from teachers as described by Liu (2004), also leads to dissatisfaction with schooling and dropping out.

A particular focus in recent years has been on gender violence in schools (e.g. see Human Rights Watch, 2001; Leach et al, 2003). While research alludes to its links with educational access (e.g. Porteus et al, 2000) and in particular drop out, studies around these linkages are limited. The emphasis in many cases is on the relationship between sexual abuse by male teachers with female pupils/or male pupils with female pupils, pregnancy and then absenteeism or drop out for girls (e.g. Boyle et al, 2002; Kane, 2004; Pridmore, 2007).

2.6.4 Quality, Attainment and Outcomes

> Poor school quality is associated with poor academic results, with higher levels of repetition and drop-out and with lower progression ratios to higher levels of the education system (Colcough et al, 2000: 20).

Links between perceptions of quality, outcomes and drop outs are explored, specifically, in terms of how households perceive the importance of educational outcomes; how attainment can act as a disincentive to progression; and how attainment levels can be used to push students from school (see sections 2.2.4 and 2.2.5). In other sections the link between repetition and drop out are explored (see section 3.1.1).

The notion of quality when related to issues of access is not just linked to schooling processes as defined by educational professionals. In many cases, it is about how households perceive educational quality in relation to their own contexts, often in terms of the aspirations/expectations for children and the perceived relevance and ability the education they are receiving has to achieve this. How households define 'quality' in this regard is touched on, but not explored in much detail in the literature. Much appears to refer to aspects of educational achievement, although Brock and Cammish (1997) state that the main quality issues which affected school attendance in their research, were related to inadequacies in teacher quality (subject knowledge, pedagogy and attitudes to students) and availability of teachers (attendance in school, numbers employed and their distribution).

Educational quality (or in fact perceived quality) seems to affect decision making around schooling access and retention in many contexts. Pryor and Ampiah (2003: 200) in their research in a village in rural Ghana noted that, 'many villagers consider that education in Akurase is not worthwhile because: - the schooling in the village is not of sufficiently good quality to warrant investment of time, energy and economic resources'. This was a view also raised by Chimombo in relation to absenteeism in Malawi, stating:

> what concerned me as I visited the schools and observed large scale

> absenteeism was the fact that the high degree of absenteeism were legitimised by parents ... They (parents) said that they were aware that their children were not learning very much in school ... They would rather make the pupils stay at home and assist in household chores than let them go to school where no effective learning was taking place (1999: 265 cited in Croft, 2002: 91).

Colclough et al (2000) describe how poor outcomes lead to lower demand and to increased non enrolment and drop out. Liu (2004) describes how parents collate educational quality with educational goals and achievement in the contexts of the research in China, and low or indifferent achievement often indirectly put pressure on a child's educational access. Youngsters achieving at an early age are frequently selected by teachers for preferential treatment in order to pass exams, with others notified that 'they have little hope of achieving that ultimate goal which is only meant for the few' (Liu, 2004: 15). Many are unable to progress to senior secondary schooling, which becomes increasingly selective. Liu (2004) suggests many of those 'excluded' children become disheartened by the process as a result. Similarly, research by Ainsworth et al (2005) in Tanzania, indicates primary drop outs increase in areas where distance to secondary school is longer.

Parents were interviewed about their children dropping out of school in Mongolia (Batbaatar, et al, 2006). They suggest that in some schools which were being encouraged to reach higher performance standards, children with poor academic results were being 'allowed to drop out'. Similarly children in this study indicated they had been encouraged to leave because they had not reached certain levels e.g. basic literacy levels.

3 Processes and Precursors to Dropping Out

In this section some of the known processes and precursors to dropping out from school are highlighted. While everyone's story is different, certain patterns around process emerge. Drop out is not a distinct event, but rather a process of events, situations and contexts which work together to produce drop outs. Often there are precursors or signs that a child might be likely to drop out. For policy makers it would be important in these processes to try to locate points of intervention: critical moments where children might stay or leave school, and where action could be taken.

3.1 Repetition Versus Promotion

Various studies have looked at the benefits and non benefits of repetition versus promotion from one grade to another, within the context of schooling dropout and retention. Schools in many countries require that students successfully complete a grade before allowing them to gain access to the higher grade. With situations where absences and temporary withdrawals are high, and quality levels low, repetition rates in many countries are high. For example Kane (2004, drawing on UNESCO, 2002) states that in over half of all African countries, more than one in ten students repeat at least one grade of primary school.

There are added difficulties with this. Children repeating (especially if they were late entrants too) extend the age range in a particular grade; if children repeat more than once this may be problematic. Teaching to different age groups has different requirements, e.g. in terms of teaching/learning practices and curriculum. Yet, in some countries age ranges in a grade 1 class might range from 4 to 11 years, and in grade 9 from 13 to 21 years (Lewin, 2007). The lack of progression might lead some parents, guardians and children to question whether they should remain in school. This seems particularly the case for girls, where research by Brock and Cammish (1997) in Sierra Leone and Vanuatu, indicates that girls who needed to repeat would often be withdrawn from school instead, whereas boys might be more likely to repeat. Kane (2004) describes how boys repeat more than girls, with boys having a higher student performance. This seems to imply (but does not state) that the consequence of this is higher female drop out over repetition.

Studies indicate a correlation between repetition and educational exclusion (and other precursors to drop out). Links between repetition and drop out have been noted both in the immediate sense (children needing to repeat might be withdrawn from school) and the longer term (children who have repeated are at some stage more likely than non repeaters to drop out from school) (see Nekatibeb, 2002; Brock & Cammish, 1997; Grant & Hallman, 2006; Hunter & May, 2003; Rose & Al Samarrai, 2001; UNESCO, 1998 cited in UNESCO 2003; UIS, 2005). Based on research findings in two communities in Ethiopia, Rose and Al Samarrai (2001: 55-6) state:

> Repetition may also be a deterrent to completion. If children have to repeat a grade they will be older before they reach the last grade of primary school, which again increases the opportunity cost of their time and increases the chances of girls withdrawing when they reach puberty. Furthermore, a large proportion of children repeat in early grades, which causes them to lose

> interest in school. Of the dropouts who had repeated a grade, two-thirds repeated the first grade.

Ackers et al (2001) describe how in Kenya low transition rates between standards 6 and 7 are partly explained because schools discourage weaker students from taking the Kenya Certificate in Primary Education (KCPE) exam in order to protect the school's image. This means 'weaker' students either repeat or are pushed out of schooling.

While repetition might be promoted as a means to support the educational achievement of students, its consequence might have the opposing effect. Grissom and Shepherd (1989, in Hunter & May, 2003) found that repetition increased rather than decreased the risk of dropping out, meaning that efforts to reduce grade repetition both early and late in students' school careers may be an important means of drop out prevention (Roderick, 1993 in Hunter & May, 2003). Having said this, Colclough and Lewin (1993) suggest automatic promotion is only viable if accompanied by other reforms e.g. curriculum development and reorganisation of teaching.

3.2 Low Achievement

There is evidence that children with low achievement are more likely than those with higher achievement to drop out (Boyle et al, 2002; Hunter and May, 2003). Low achievement is related to a range of factors discussed elsewhere in this paper, for example, absenteeism, repetition, quality issues, household contexts, demands on children's time, etc. It is also looked at in more detail in section 2.6.5 on quality and outcomes.

Jukes (2006) looks at research on early achievement and retention in school later on. Research by Liddell and Rae (2001, in Jukes, 2006) assessed the direct impact of test scores on grade progression in Africa, looking at the relationship between achievement early on and likely school completion:

> Children were assessed in Grade 2 and their progress through primary school monitored. Each additional SD scored in Grade 2 exams resulted in children being 4.8 times as likely to reach Grade 7 without repeating a year of schooling. According to these estimates, an increase of 0.25 SD in exam scores in the second grade would lead to children being 1.48 times as likely to complete Grade 7 (Jukes, 2006: 66, drawing on Liddell and Rae, 2001).

3.3 Late Enrolment

Children who begin schooling beyond the official age of entry (in most countries aged 6 years) are more likely to drop out than those who start at the official age; and less likely to complete a full cycle of education (Colclough et al, 2000; Croft, 2002; Grant & Hallman, 2006; Nekatibeb, 2002; Rose & Al Samarrai, 2001; Wils, 2004; UIS & UNICEF, 2005). The late entry along with early withdrawal further limits the number of years children have in school. As children get older pressure on them to work increases (see section 2.1.3). The UIS/UNICEF study (2005: 36) states:

> The age of a child is one of the most important variables to be considered when analysing patterns of school (non-)attendance ... it matters whether children start school at the prescribed entry age and, thereafter, whether they are in the appropriate grade for their age. When children start late or repeat grades, it increases the likelihood that they will drop out before completion.

Late enrolment is linked to a number of factors including health status of the child (Pridmore, 2007); household perceptions of the suitable age for initial enrolment; low socio-economic status; gender, and in particular the enrolment of girls; distance to school and how young children can manage the journey; and deferring costs (Brock & Cammish, 1997). Delaying the onset of education, is likely to drastically reduce the overall period spent in school and have serious effects on completion.

3.4 Absenteeism and Temporary/Permanent Withdrawals from School

Accurate attendance records of students in school are not maintained by all schools, making it difficult at times to see the link between absenteeism, temporary withdrawals and dropping out from school. Yet, research indicates that irregular attendance and temporary withdrawals can both be precursors to dropping out (Grant & Hallman, 2006; the PROBE Team, 1999).

Irregular attendance and temporary withdrawals can be caused by a range of factors including: child ill health; ill health of family members; distance to school; labour requirements; pending school fees. As a result of irregular attendance or temporary withdrawal, children can fall behind at school and find it difficult to readjust on returning. The PROBE report (1999: 35) states, for example, that, 'leaving school is, by and large, an irreversible process: once a child has dropped out, even for a relatively short period, it is often hard to send him or her back to school'. While some of these cannot be foreseen, there may be ways that schools, education authorities and households can work to limit absence and better manage them when they do occur.

4 Interventions: To Prevent Dropping Out and Encourage Dropping In

Good practice around drop outs could occur in different stages and zones of access, in direct and indirect ways. They could catch children both before they drop out and when drop out has occurred, helping secure some form of continued education. Good practice in this case would be in terms of securing some form of sustained education for these children.

Some research and evaluation studies have looked at the programmes and interventions which exist around dropping out. In the main the studies focus on the direct effects of specific interventions around dropping out, rather than linking indirect interventions (e.g. teacher training) to drop out. While these indirect interventions might be less easy to map, they may be as effective. Interventions which have seemingly had some positive influence over preventing drop outs or supporting those children who have dropped out into some form of education, are described below.

4.1 School-Related Factors

Pre-school: Pre-school centres can help prevent drop outs, as elder children (usually girls) with childcare responsibilities are frequently removed from school to look after younger siblings (Andvig et al, n.d.). Pre-schools might alleviate some of that pressure. Moreover, evidence suggests children attending pre-school in some contexts remain in school longer and are less likely to drop out of primary.

Flexible schooling hours/systems: Many children, particularly those in rural, agricultural areas have pressures on them to work which often clash with traditional schooling timetables. Temporary withdrawals in harvest times and for migrating communities pull children away from school, often leading to more permanent removals. Flexible schooling timetables have been known to cut drop outs. For example, the daily programme might take place at times that do not interfere with children's work duties, shift systems and evening classes might be in place; and the annual programme may shift so those involved in seasonal tasks are not excluded. Kane (2004) outlines a range of flexible interventions towards schooling (e.g. schooling hours and schedules) which have boosted girls' enrollment and reduced dropout rates.

Automatic promotion rather than repetition: Schools in many countries require students to successfully complete a grade before allowing them to gain access to the higher grade, meaning children who do not attain the required level often have to repeat. However there are links between repetition and drop out. Research indicates that in some contexts, automatic promotion might reduce drop out (e.g. Colclough & Lewin, 2003).

Language of instruction: There is research indicating that language of instruction in the early years can influence drop out rates. Schools that offer both first language/local language as languages of instruction in the early years of schooling have been reported to lead to lower repetition and dropout rates (World Bank, 2002c

cited in Kane, 2004), along with higher attainment levels. Enge & Chesterfield (1996) looking at bilingual education and student performance in Guatemala note that following inputs on the National Bilingual Education Program there was a slight positive effect on promotion, repetition and drop-out rates.

Post primary education: Research indicates that in some countries the demand for primary education may be determined in part by the availability of secondary education (Birdsall et al, 2005), with households perceiving limits to the benefits of primary education alone. Thus by giving communities secondary education opportunities, primary enrolments and retention may increase too.

4.2 Financial Support

Access to credit: In times of income shocks research indicates that if households have some access to credit (e.g. banks, local networks) they are generally less likely to withdraw children from school. Ersado (2005) suggests this would have most impact in rural areas.

Conditional child support: There are a number of interventions which give households and children some form of support (either monetary, food, etc.) on the basis that children enrol in and attend school. This conditionality of school enrolment/attendance, de Janvry et al (2006) notes, has substantially more affect on schooling compared to unconditional transfers. The PROGRESA program in Mexico provided cash transfers to families whose children were enrolled in schools and who sought preventative health care. It had significant effects on school enrolment, but not on student attendance (Schultz, 2000 in Banerjee & Duflo, 2006).

Bangladesh launched a **Food-for-Education programme** in 1993. The main feature of the programme was to provide a free monthly food grain ration based on the household's income and them having at least one primary-school-age child attending school that month. An evaluation (Meng & Ryan, 2003) looked at whether the poor households who were part of the programme were more likely to send their children to school and whether they had better retention than their non-participating counterparts. Using regression analysis, the evaluation found that on average the programme increased school attendance by 21 to 28%, and increased the duration of the child's schooling by 0.57 of a year to 2.1 years. So while the programme does not offer an absolute solution to educational access, it does offer further educational opportunities. Ravallion and Woodon (1999) talk of nearly full school attendance amongst participants in their study of the effect of this programme on child labour demand. While children were able to attend school, parents still required children to work, and therefore put increased pressure on the time of children.

Unconditional child support: Unconditional child support interventions give households and children some form of support (either monetary, food, etc.) but do not insist that children attend school. There is substantial research of this type of programme on South Africa. Literature suggests incentive-based income grants have benefits including the reduction of drop out rates, and increased progression through grades, with the reliance on child labour reduced (Ravallion & Woodon, 1999 in Hunter & May, 2003). Case et al (2005) looked at child support grants (targeted at poor children under the age of 7 and given to care givers rather than parents) in a poor

rural district in Kwa Zulu Natal, and states, 'children who received the grants are significantly more likely to be enrolled in school in the years following grant receipt than equally poor children of the same age' (2005: 468). Targeting children so young with this type of programme also helps ensure children start school at the appropriate age rather than being late enrollers; Child Support grants in 2002 were associated with an 8.1 percentage point increase in school enrolment among 6 year olds; and a 1.8 percentage point increase among 7 year olds. The South African Pension Scheme (see Edmonds, 2005) has also been shown to increase children's schooling.

Scholarship programmes: Cameron (2000) looked at the impact of a social safety net scholarships in reducing school drop outs during the Indonesian economic crisis. The scholarships were found to have been effective in reducing drop outs at the lower secondary school level by about 3 percentage points but had no discernible impact at the primary and upper secondary school levels.

4.3 Quality Interventions

Monitoring: There is a need for improving monitoring, accountability mechanisms and incentive (Banerjee & Duflo, 2006; Birsdall et al, 2005). Involving parents in these processes through school governance bodies and increasing information flows to parents is also seen as important.

Community involvement: Research indicates that forms of community involvement with schools can improve educational access, reduce drop outs and improve teacher attendance (Birdsall et al, 2005). Kane (2004) gives the example of 'mother education committees' in India and the EDUCO programme in El Salvador (which has brought more girls into school and cut down on the numbers of girls dropping out).

4.4 Other Education Interventions

Adult education programmes: Some data suggests that literacy programmes for uneducated mothers may help to increase school participation by their children (Birdsall et al, 2005). Thus access to adult education programmes, particularly for women:

> should be considered an important complement to interventions to increase access and retention at the primary school level (Birdsall et al, 2005: 340).

Alternative forms of education: Non state providers and in particular NGO and faith-providers can offer educational opportunities for children who have withdrawn or are excluded from the state sector. Moreover, non state providers offer opportunities in areas that state educational provision does not reach. Given that non state providers (referring here mostly to NGO provision) target vulnerable children, often the types of provision available can cater towards their specific needs. Some different types of examples can be found below.

The Door Step School in Mumbai and Pune offers a range of educational opportunities including the School-on-Wheels which is a mobile school offering non formal education provision to out of school and working children (7 to 18 years of age) residing in deprived urban areas (slums, children living on the streets etc). Providing this flexible approach to learning within the communities where children

live and work supports both children who have never been to school, and those dropped out from the formal education system.

The Shepherd School Programme (SSP) targets pastoralist children in northern Ghana, who have never attended school or who have dropped out from the formal system. The SSP has some unique features which encourage children to remain for the programme. It has flexible school schedules and timings; uses facilitators rather than teachers; local communities manage and oversee SSP provision; and the programme uses local language in early years provision. Mfum-Mensah (2002) carried out research on stakeholders' perceptions of the impact of the SSP. Interview data suggests that the SSP had a positive impact on educational access and retention. SSP has been discontinued now due to lack of funding.

5 Discussion and Conclusions

5.1 Gaps in Research

While this paper has worked from existing research around drop outs from schooling, there have also been opportunities to identify gaps in the literature where more research could be carried out.

Overall, when writing this paper I found there were fewer studies around dropping out from school than I had expected, given the scale of the problem and its crucial relationship to EFA. In many cases, the focus seems to be on getting children into schools in the first place, rather than ensuring some sort of sustained access once they are present. In many of the studies which did exist drop out was embedded within discussions of other factors and while drop outs cannot be seen in isolation, the subject has perhaps not been given the prominence in research terms that it deserves.

There is little research on the processes of drop out, with most studies focusing on who drops out and why. If drop out is viewed as a process, then children's stories around dropping out from school emerge not in isolation, but as a series of decisions, events and interactions which lead in a certain direction. While each story is different, research would show how they are different and whether patterns around the processes of exclusion can be identified within particular contexts. Looking at 'at risk' children and tracking them through the decisions, events and interactions could provide valuable insights into how some children become excluded from school, whilst others remain enrolled and attending, as well as what the tipping points are and how these might be managed. If processes are known then critical intervention points can be identified before drop out occurs.

There are limited numbers of in-depth qualitative accounts of dropping out from school based on interviews with and life histories of drop outs. We know as researchers that low socio-economic status, gender, geographical location, etc. are factors which are likely to influence access and drop outs, yet we know less about the qualitative stories which surround them and how interactions between factors work in particular contexts. Linking these small scale in-depth studies to the bigger, quantitative picture would enhance our understandings of drop out further. Additional qualitative research focusing on the processes of drop out in relation to those at risk of dropping out could help to provide greater depth and understanding to the issues raised in the existing literature reviewed here.

Within this study I have also identified the following research gaps. There is little literature on:

- Dropping into school: while the focus is on dropping out, there is less known about how children can return to school, the difficulties they face and how schools encourage/discourage this;
- Retention: why some children stay and others leave;
- Disability/SEN and drop outs;
- Dropping out from non state providers of education and the specific factors which might influence this;
- Motivational factors around education: how households and individuals

value education in particular contexts, and how this links into school decision making processes;

- The role of teachers (and head teachers) in facilitating and encouraging the retention of students within the system and/or pushing students out of schools;
- Responsibility around dropping out: an interesting area for research would be around the locus of responsibility to enable sustained access and people's perceptions of where this responsibility lies. This is crucial for understanding how decisions are made and why around drop outs; the push/pull factors; how parents and schools approach children leaving; and whether the interaction between the two sides could be enhanced at all to pull children back into schools.

5.2 Implications for CREATE Research

CREATE could potentially play a role in exploring some of these issues in some detail. Indeed, some of the planned inputs will address this. The school and community studies (ComSS) taking place in Ghana, South Africa, India and Bangladesh will provide detailed data from educational stakeholders and hopefully look at some of the interactions between school-community-household-individual which the design promotes. The quantitative elements of the studies will provide information on patterns over large sample areas. Additionally, structured interview research with drop outs could provide more in-depth data on drop outs and processes of drop out. CREATE might also pay attention to other more qualitative elements of research which would add a greater dimension to the ComSS studies, and carry out some of the types of in-depth research which are highlighted in 5.1.

5.3 Conclusions and Discussion

This paper has outlined a range of factors which can and may influence dropping out from school. It argues that drop out from school can rarely be put down to one event or one impact. Rather drop out is influenced by a range of interacting factors, which are specific to individual contexts (and agency) of each child. To this end drop out is seen as a process rather than an event, with individual stories being difficult to replicate. Yet, through looking at the literature, patterns emerge which suggest that in particular contexts certain children are more prone to dropping out; and specific measures might address some of the risks facing these children.

In particular, previous research indicates that poverty in its various guises often influences schooling retention. This appears to influence both schooling demand (e.g. inability to pay school fees and other costs, pressure on children to work/free others to work, lower health indicators) and school supply (e.g. schools serving poorer communities often have lower quality indicators, with teachers less likely to want to work there, fewer resources, fewer schools). Thus households from poorer backgrounds who struggle to send their children to school often find the educational provision they receive lacking, increasing the pressure on children to withdraw.

Poverty also interacts with other points of social disadvantage, with the interaction of factors putting further pressure on vulnerable children to drop out. For example, orphans, migrants, lower caste/scheduled tribe children and children from minority

language groups in many, but not all, contexts have disrupted access, and are more prone to drop out. Gendered social practices within households, communities and schools, influence differing patterns of access for girls and boys; in certain contexts girls are more prone to dropping out, and in others (often poor and urban) the pressure seems to be on boys to withdraw. Evidence suggests there are ways to target certain vulnerable population groups, e.g. through child support grants, curriculum interventions, and flexible learning approaches which appear in case study examples, to sustain access.

Additional factors affecting motivations and decision-making relating to educational access are also key to understandings of dropping out. Perceptions of how education will influence lifestyle and career possibilities/probabilities are shown to be factors in both early withdrawal and sustained access in different contexts. Availability of options further down the line at secondary school and beyond, shape decision making for children at the primary level. Perceived quality of education and the ability for children to make progress through the schooling system can affect the priority placed on schooling within the household. It is also evident that children whose parents have received some sort of schooling are more likely themselves to attend school for longer. In particular, a mother's education level often influences length of access for girls.

There are frequent precursors to dropping out, where children could be seen to be at risk or vulnerable to early withdrawal. This paper has identified four 'at risk' indicators from the literature: children repeating grades, children with low achievement levels, children who enrol overage and children who have regular absence or previous temporary withdrawals from school. There might be more, and in terms of processes of access and dropping out perhaps these need further exploration. Identifying points of intervention to assist 'at risk' children is crucial, if EFA is to be achieved.

Finally, this paper reinforces one of the central themes of CREATE. CREATE's approach to access centres around the notion of sustained and meaningful access to education, rather than access in terms of initial enrolments only. The frequency and complexity of dropping out as displayed within this paper reinforces the need for such a definition. To look at access without a focus on sustained and meaningful access, would show just part of the picture. A focus on drop outs and the processes of drop out is integral to our understandings of educational access. This paper has brought together a range of research studies on drop outs. However, more work needs to be done, in terms of increasing understandings of drop out and identifying suitable policy interventions, if the problem of drop out is to be addressed.

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Appendix One: CREATE's Zones of Exclusion

CREATE has identified seven zones of exclusion from basic education:

- Zone 0 – children who are excluded from pre-schooling.
- Zone 1 -children who have never been to school, and are unlikely to attend school.
- Zone 2 - children who enter primary schooling, but who drop out before completing the primary cycle.
- Zone 3 - children who enter primary schooling and are enrolled but are 'at risk' of dropping out before completion as a result of irregular attendance, low achievement, and silent exclusion from worthwhile learning.
- Zone 4 – children who fail to make the transition to secondary school grades.
- Zone 5 children who enter secondary schooling but who drop out before completing the cycle.
- Zone 6 children who enter secondary schooling and are enrolled but are 'at risk' of dropping out before completion as a result of irregular attendance, low achievement and silent exclusion from worthwhile learning.

For further information see: www.create-rpc.org.

Appendix Two: Searching the Literature

Literature around drop outs was collected through the following systematic approach. Firstly, keyword searches were carried out on two educational databases: the CREATE database, which has been set up as part of the CREATE programme (and has over 1400 entries) and the Education Resource Information Centre (ERIC) database. Educational journals and websites of key international development organizations (the World Bank, UNESCO, UNICEF) were searched.

The following keywords were used as part of an initial search:

drop out, retention, repetition, repeater and withdrawal;

in combination with:

school, education, primary school and secondary school;

in combination with:

Africa, Asia and developing countries.

Then as themes began to emerge an additional set of keywords were searched with combinations of the above search string. Those included:

gender, girls and boys
age and marriage
poverty, household income and income shock
fees, school fees and costs
child labour, domestic work and seasonality
orphans and fostering
health, pregnancy and bereavement
family and education of family
school quality, school processes, teachers and attainment
location and transport
language
decision making strategies

Citations were followed up through Google Scholar through which further relevant texts were sourced. Key references cited in the literature were followed up. I contacted a range of people and organisations who might have resources on drop outs.

Key word searches around dropping out were also used within the text. Themes began to emerge from the readings which fed into part of the search criteria (as above) and helped shape the design of this study.

Appendix Three: Examples of Quantitative Accounts of Reasons Behind Children Dropping Out from School

The following extracts show examples of quantitative research looking at reasons why children drop out from school in different countries.

Extract One: What is the Main Reason for Pupils to Leave School?

	Nepal	Bangladesh	Uganda	Zambia
• Lack of money to pay school expenses	14.9	61.9	48.1	55.3
• Didn't want to continue	24.1	11.5	6.8	14.4
• Difficulties with school work	0	3.5	0.8	0
• Expelled from school	0	0.9	0.8	0.5
• Earning money	13.8	2.7	0.8	0
• Needed to work at home	13.7	5.3	0.8	0
• Illness	4.6	3.5	9.8	2.9
• Marriage	8	0	7.5	1
• Pregnancy	0	0	9.8	1.9
• Death in the family	1.1	0.9	2.3	1
• Failed a grade and would have to repeat	4.6	2.7	1.5	11.5
• Too old to go to school	1.1	0	1.5	0
• Completed schooling (primary and secondary)	5.7	0	4.5	3.4
• Transfer	0	0	0.8	0
• Withdrawn by parent/guardian (corporal punishment)	3.4	0	0.8	0
	95	92.9	96.6	91.9

Source: Boyle et al (2002)

Extract Two: Survey with parents of 106 drop outs aged 6-12 years in India.

Which of the following best describes the circumstances whereby this child dropped out?

	Boys	Girls
Not allowed by school/teachers to continue	5	2
Child did not wish to continue	35	16
Withdrawn by parents	47	66
Other	13	16
	100	100

If the child is withdrawn by parents, explain why?

	Boys	**Girls**
Child is/was needed for other activities	50	68
Schooling is too expensive	54	29
School is too far	0	6
Poor teaching standards at school	8	18
Hostile school environment	4	6
Child fell ill	4	9
Child not bright enough	0	6
Child is not interested in studying	8	6
Parents are not interested	8	27
Other	8	22
	144	197

Source: The PROBE Team (1999: 37)