




Search

Topics

- Administration
- Adult Education
- Assessment & Evaluation
- Social Context
- Counseling
- Curriculum
- Diversity
- Early Childhood Education
- Higher Education
- International Education
- Learning
- Policy
- Research Methods
- Teacher Education
- Teaching
- Technology
- Intersections

Discussion

- Technology - Good for Students AND Teachers
- Fiddling with Indicators while using Toxic Tests
- Ode to Dewey
- Clearly Articulated Proposal--Thank You!
- VAM Sham BAM

[more >>](#)

Announcements

- Call for proposals--Special Issue on Mentoring
- Call for Manuscripts
- CALL FOR CHAPTER - HANDBOOK OF RESEARCH ON LEARNING IN THE AGE OF TRANSHUMANISM
- CALL FOR CHAPTER - HANDBOOK OF RESEARCH ON LEARNING IN THE AGE OF TRANSHUMANISM
- CALL FOR PAPERS IMMIGRATION, BEING IMMIGRANT OR REFUGEE IN THE CONTEXT OF EDUCATION POLICIES IN THE WORLD- IJEP 2018 ISSUES
- Call for Papers- International Journal of Management, Economics and Social Sciences

[make a post](#) | [more >>](#)

## Education, Social Progress, and Marginalized Children in Sub-Saharan Africa: Historical Antecedents and Contemporary Challenges

reviewed by Getahun Yacob-Abraham — June 01, 2018

**Title:** Education, Social Progress, and Marginalized Children in Sub-Saharan Africa: Historical Antecedents and Contemporary Challenges

**Author(s):** Obed Mfum-Mensah

**Publisher:** Lexington Books, Lanham, MD

**ISBN:** 1498545696, **Pages:** 240, **Year:** 2017

[Search for book at Amazon.com](#)



In the preface to *Education, Social Progress, and Marginalized Children in Sub-Saharan Africa*, Obed Mfum-Mensah introduces the three theoretical frameworks he plans to use in his text: sociohistorical, discourse analytical, and narrative epistemological. He then provides an introduction to Western education in sub-Saharan Africa during colonialism, discussing education by missionaries whose primary aim was to proselytize and “civilize” the local population. With regard to education, the missionaries and colonial authorities were mainly concerned with training low-level manpower to serve in the colonial administration. According to the author, some aspects of colonial and missionary education have been inherited by the modern, postcolonial education system.

The main focus of the book is on marginalized children, including children from poor communities, girls, children from Muslim communities, and children with disabilities. Marginalization is discussed in relation to gender, disability, lifestyle (e.g., nomadic life), geographical location, religion, and language.

With the help of literature, the author defines marginalization as follows:

Sociological literature explains marginalization

Article Tools

- Email this article
- Print this article
- Post a Comment

Related Articles

- Higher Education in Development: Lessons from Sub Saharan Africa
- The Silent Epidemic
- Crisis and Hope: The Educational Hopscotch of Latin America
- A Song for Humanistic Education: Pedagogy and Politics in the Middle East

Related Discussion

[Post a Comment](#) | [Read All](#)

About the Author

- Getahun Yacob-Abraham *Karlstad University*  
E-mail Author  
GETAHUN YACOB-ABRAHAM is a lecturer in pedagogy at Karlstad University in Sweden. His research interests include education in relation to democracy, international and multicultural perspectives on education, and conflict management. Recent publications include "Internationalization in Teacher Education: Student Teacher's Reflections on Experiences from a Field Study in South Africa" (with von Brömssen) in *Educational Inquiry* and the book *Literacy and Democracy in South African Primary Schools* (with Barksdale).

Member Center

Welcome Getahun Yacob!  
[My Account](#) | [Logout](#)  
[Submit My Work](#)  
[TCR @ Your Library](#)  
[Book Reviews @ Your Library](#)

In Print



This Month's Issue  
Back Issues:

2018

**Email**  
Free Weekly Updates

**FOLLOW**  
TCR on Twitter

**RSS**  
Featured Articles

as a mechanism of rejection by which a society produces some groups as its outsiders. Marginalization enforces inequality and creates a dependent position within hierarchically ranked groups which is enforced by active rejection from the labor market and other opportunities (Baczko and Raichlen 1978; Brodwin 2003). Marginalized groups occupy unequal and disadvantaged positions and are excluded from full participation in social life despite their normative claim of equality. (p. ix)

In many sub-Saharan African countries, both the Christian missionaries and the colonial school authorities taught the inferiority of women. In addition to this, the traditional communities in the region were not ready to accept that girls should go through schooling, strengthen their position in society, or share power with men. According to the author, this oppression of women remains a structural and systematic problem. Girls face sexual harassment and violence in their communities and also in schools, which are supposed to be the safest places for them. Girls face sexual abuse, corporal punishment, and verbal abuse from teachers, and a lack of hygienic materials and toilets in schools also makes it more difficult for them to attend school.

In some African communities, disabilities are considered a curse. In these contexts, families don't want to expose children with disabilities outside the home. When these children do get the opportunity to go to school, they often become the victims of negative attitudes on the part of teachers as well as parents of other children. The author indicates that large class sizes, a lack of resources, and a lack of trained teachers further aggravate the problems faced by disabled children.

Children in Muslim communities are disadvantaged for different reasons. Muslim communities were traditionally resistant to Christian missionaries, and most Muslim children attended religious schools instead of Western-style schools. As Western-style schools started to assume a dominant position in these societies, the children who attended them were more able to find employment, achieve higher social standing, and accumulate wealth.

The book also discusses the rural-urban divide and the disadvantages of being a child from a remote rural community with

poor communication and without trained teachers or facilities. It also deals with the dilemma faced by parents in rural areas where sending their children to school often means sacrificing the economic role that they would otherwise play in the family. On this note, the author discusses the Shepherd School Program in Ghana where arrangements were made for children to both attend school and participate in their families' economic activities. This contributed to parents being more amenable to their children attending school.

Another issue raised in the book is about different approaches to curriculum development. An example is given of a local NGO project aimed at decentralization and community ownership of the curriculum. The project showed the advantages of relating the curriculum to the day-to-day reality of the children in the community, using the local vernacular in lessons, and allowing elected community leaders to run the local school. However, critics of the program point out the negatives of being isolated from the national curriculum, using the vernacular language (which disadvantages these children compared to their peers receiving their lessons in English), and having schools run by amateurs without administrative experience.

Based on the problems presented above, the author discusses two main goals of education: labor power production and advancing human rights. Whereas the main concern of colonial-era education (and even, to some extent, education in postcolonial times) was producing manpower to fill government posts and labor power for the production sector, in recent years there has been an increasing recognition of education's relation to human rights and its role in providing citizens with the resources necessary to exercise their democratic rights and responsibilities.

The book brings together a wide range of empirical data and relevant literature on the subjects discussed. The results of the studies presented in the book will be of paramount importance to the governments in the region as well as to the international community that is working to improve education among the region's marginalized populations.

Indeed a commendable work, *Education, Social Progress, and Marginalized Children in Sub-Saharan Africa* sheds light on the historical and contemporary realities in different countries in the region. However, I wonder if focusing research on only one country, Ghana, could have given us deeper insight into the issues raised. I also wonder whether, instead of dealing with such a wide range of marginalization issues, the author could have concentrated

on fewer issues and gone into greater depth. Overall, however, the work is well organized, and the author gives a relevant picture of the historical and current reality of marginalization in Ghana, Kenya, and other sub-Saharan Africa countries.

**Cite This Article as:** *Teachers College Record*, Date Published: June 01, 2018  
<http://www.tcrecord.org> ID Number: 22390, Date Accessed: 6/2/2018 2:55:45 AM

[Purchase Reprint Rights for this article or review](#)



Add TC Record RSS feeds to your site

Copyright 2018 Teachers College, Columbia University. All rights reserved.  
[Privacy Policy](#) | [Terms of Use](#) | [Copyright Agreement](#)