

World Class Fantasies

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World Class Fantasies

- ***Early Childhood and Development Work: Theories, Policies and Practices***. Edited by Anne Trine Kjørholt and Helen Penn.
- It provides a critical account of the theories and global policies which inform work in the field of early childhood
- It explores how those theories have operated in practice and discusses tensions between global politics and local practices in different parts of the world
- It suggests effective local practices and policies in working with young children, which also reflect the need to respond to wider inequalities and social injustices

World Class Fantasies

- **Book content:**
- Theoretical perspectives: A chapter each on inequality, child rights, womens' rights, child development theories, and measurement
- Examples of local practice from Zambia, Kenya, South Africa, Pakistan, Uzbekistan, and from ethno-musical studies across Mali, Cuba, Azerbaijan and India

World Class Fantasies

- Book – a Discursive Method of Working:
- Initial two chapters, on inequality and child rights, presented at a 2 day seminar for contributors at the Norwegian Centre for Child Research, funded by Noraid.
- Contributors invited to critique opening chapters, and to discuss the relevance of their own chapters in the light of them.
- Final meeting of contributors in Lusaka, Zambia, hosted by the University of Zambia and funded by SCF-Norway.

World Class Fantasies? Examples of rhetoric on early childhood development

- *Investing in the early years is one of the smartest things a country can do to eliminate extreme poverty, boost shared prosperity, and create the human capital needed for economies to diversify and grow. Early childhood experiences have a profound impact on brain development—affecting learning, health, behaviour and ultimately, income. (World Bank website, 2019.)*

World Class Fantasies: Examples of rhetoric on early childhood development

- *We must act urgently to make investing in early childhood development a priority in every country to achieve the 2030 (sustainable development) goals. Investing in early childhood development is a cost-effective way to boost shared prosperity, promote inclusive economic growth, expand equal opportunity, and end extreme poverty. For every \$1 spent on early childhood development, the return on investment can be as high as \$13. (UNICEF 2019)*

World Class Fantasies: Examples of the Rhetoric on Early Child Development

- To achieve the goal of enhancing the competence and quality of our populations and establish sustainable, stable, equitable, pluralistic democratic societies, we have to find ways to optimize human development, health and well-being in all regions of the world...to do this we have to understand the development of the brain and its continuing evolution and how experience in early life affects its development.
- Frazer Mustard/Brookings Foundation. 2006:47

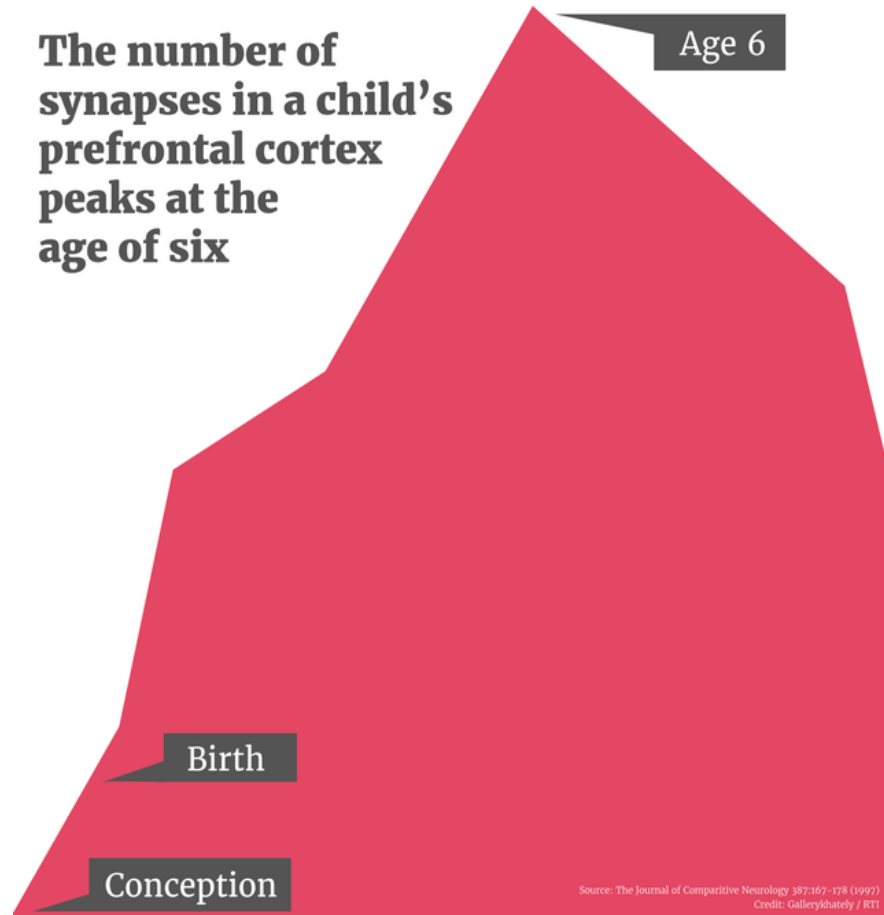
A rationale for Intervention?

- This optimism based on simplistic readings of neuroscience. A basic feature of brain architecture, its rapid growth in early childhood, has been exaggerated out of all proportion.
- The assumption is that just as the brain (and body) need micronutrients to sustain it, so it needs “early stimulation” to grow;
- Poor mothers in their ignorance, do not provide this stimulation for their children’s brains or bodies and need guidance from experts.
- Many “successful” programmes are based on this assumption – eg the series in the prestigious medical journal *The Lancet* (*Advancing Early Child Development: From Science to Scale*.(2007-2016)

A rationale for Intervention

- The attraction of this approach to brain based approach to ECD is that it shifts attention away from structural issues and broader inequalities.
- It fits into Heckman's economist ideas that investing in early childhood is a profitable approach which brings substantial returns, and is cheaper than other economic reforms.
- Stimulation and nutrition programmes are relatively cheap and easy to administer as interventions

A rationale for intervention:



World Class Fantasies?

Despite the rhetoric and evangelism of those putting forward ECD as a solution to global poverty, outside of the ECD community, there is no discernible support for the idea that ECD can influence poverty.

Instead there is a lively political and theoretical debate about the nature and causes of global poverty and inequality

Centre for Global Development (Hickel)

- There is no single simple narrative of progress; much depends on the metrics we use (and they are very flawed). Both the proportion of people living in poverty as well as absolute numbers are important indicators. They tell us different things about the world.
- The present rate of poverty reduction is too slow for us to end poverty in our lifetimes. To achieve this goal, we would need to change economic policy to make it fairer for the world's majority. We will also need to respond to the growing crisis of climate change and ecological breakdown, which threatens the gains we have made.

Global Poverty Consensus Report

- **Global Poverty Consensus Report (GPCR)** is a joint project, based at Harvard, that aims to contribute to the global discussions on poverty by identifying existing and emerging consensus about the causes of poverty and how best to eradicate and prevent it.
- Their initial report published in 2015 is based on the views of 39 recognized experts in the field of global poverty—including Nobel laureates- from across a range of disciplines, from economics to politics to philosophy.

Global Poverty Consensus Report (GPCR)

- GPCR concludes that the international institutional economic order, especially as it has been advanced by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization (WTO), is a major contributor to the persistence of poverty, and even a cause of it.
- The global order keeps in place arrangements that have been advantageous to developed countries but detrimental to developing countries. Reasons include extreme inequality of influence amongst countries in shaping the priorities of global economic institutions, flawed models of economic growth, asymmetrical or unfair trade agreements, and intellectual property rights regimes-especially drugs.

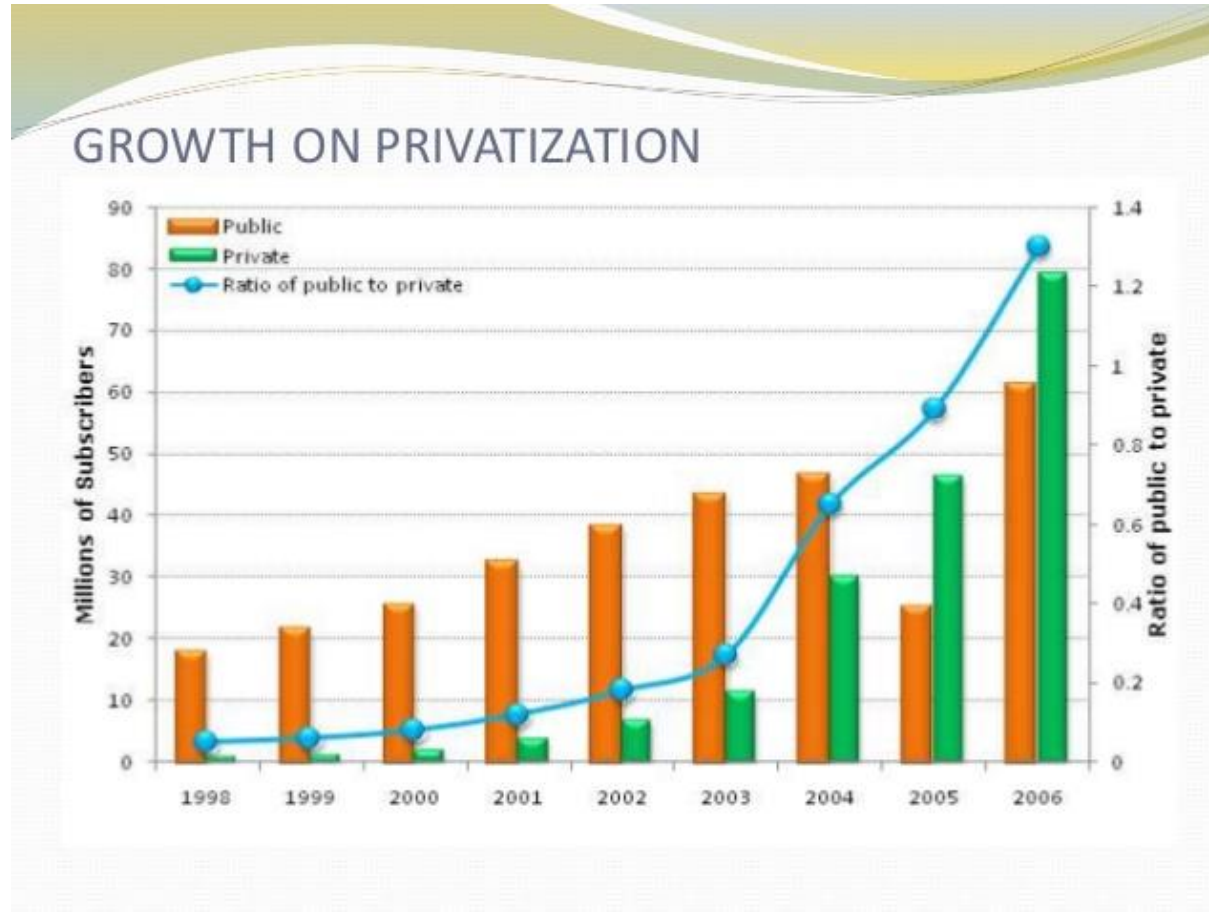
World Class Fantasies:

- The global financial order (IMF/World Bank/WTO) also favours free movement of capital and global businesses.
- It minimizes the role of the state in favour of entrepreneurial solutions to growth and stability
- The agenda of privatization has been relentlessly pursued across the world.

World Class Fantasies

- In 2015, the World Bank argued for increasing private sector financing “from billions to trillions” to meet the Sustainable Development Goals.
- In 2017, it announced its “Maximizing Finance for Development” agenda, which “prioritizes private financing and sustainable private sector solutions”
- The Bank seeks to “crowd the private sector in” and to “reserve scarce public financing for those areas where private sector engagement is not optimal or available”.

The growth in privatization and inequality



The growth in privatization and inequality

- Which ever country you look at, and whichever sector you look at, privatization has increased.
- Profitable enterprises are reserved for the private sector, while unprofitable activities are publicly funded only as a last resort.
- At the same time, inequality has increased, and the richest have got richer, as the poorest have got poorer

UN Report Sept 2018

Extreme poverty and human rights

- The UN has argued that one of the main identifiable causes of poverty and inequality is this belief in privatization
- Privatization is generally presented as an efficient technical solution for managing resources and reducing fiscal deficits, but in fact, it is an integral part of an economic and social philosophy of governance.
- This ideology of governance holds that “anything that strengthens the private sector [against] the State is protective of personal freedom”.

Un Report on privatization

- This redefinition of the public good raises fundamental questions from a human rights perspective.
- Can businesses dedicated to maximizing their own profits protect the rights of the community? How do corporations ensure the rights of the least well-off without undermining their own profitability?

UN Report on privatization

- What happens to participation and accountability when private corporations, operating on commercial principles, take key decisions affecting or even countermanding government concerns and legislation about public welfare and individual rights?
- The role of government is downgraded on in monitoring and ensuring fair delivery of services

The consolations of Philanthropy

- Charitable organizations and foundations are being urged to step in to take over the residual services for the poor. (eg ECD services)
- But charitable organizations – NGOs and INGOs – have also been semi-privatized, and urged to think of their work in terms of businesses seeking profitable returns.
- Charities have become entrepreneurial and aim for measurable, quantifiable returns on their charitable capital. They specify
- “investment benchmarks”

Impact Foundation

The Future of Business and Philanthropy

Business: profit
motive only

Corporate
social
responsibility

**Impact
Company**

Charity:
revenue,
+donation

Charity:
donation
funded only

Philanthropy meets investment

- *Venture philanthropy* and *social investment* are about matching the soul of philanthropy with the spirit of investment, resulting in a high-engagement and long-term approach to creating social impact.
- the Sustainable Development Goals are a business opportunity, that “offers a compelling growth strategy for individual businesses, for business generally and for the world economy.”

(UN report 2018)

Two examples of venture philanthropy

1) Bridge International Academies.

- Controversial Chain of private schools in Kenya, Uganda and Liberia and elsewhere, based on pre-set lessons delivered on the internet, and run despite Government bans.
- Funded by Gates Foundation and DfID
- <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2017/aug/03/uk-urged-to-stop-funding-ineffective-and-unsustainable-bridge-academies>

The Consolations of Philanthropy



Examples of venture philanthropy

2) CIFF

- The Children's Investment Fund Foundation was established in 2002 by [Chris Hohn](#) and [Jamie Cooper](#). The funds came from Hohn's private equity company, and were set against tax. The internal blurb says:
- With a rigorous business-like approach to philanthropic funding, the foundation was focused on clear returns for children from the outset. The emphasis on data to measure impact has been widely adopted by other development funders.

Examples of venture philanthropy-CIFF

After more than 10 years of innumerable internal rows, court cases, senior staffing changes, gross underspend and programme failures, CIFF now says of itself:

CIFF is reinventing itself. Not because we have changed our mission, but because we have decided to be bolder. Whatever the challenges, we are determined to help solve some of the biggest problems facing children. In the face of political changes around the world, clear-sighted leadership and robust coalitions are needed now more than ever to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals. For the first time, we are articulating multi-year intent and resourcing, as well as a way of doing business that we think reflects our appetite for performance.

Consortiums of Philanthropists

- Big funders forming overlapping caucuses and fund each other to do work!
- Eg The Early Childhood Development Action Network: a global network to strengthen support for young children launched by Bernard van Leer (which used to give direct grants to small local projects)
- *Mark this year (2017) in history as the one when a new global network committed to comprehensive early childhood development action is taking off! The Early Childhood Development Action Network is a global partnership committed to the proposition that all young children, anywhere in the world, in any circumstances, should achieve their developmental potential.*

ECDAN- Early Childhood Development Network

- *UNICEF and the World Bank Group launched the initiative at the flagship World Bank Spring Meetings event, 'Smart Beginnings for Economies on the Rise', in April 2016, marking a milestone moment for young children. But the network really came to life when a large number of organisations became active participants, making it a real network.*
- *So far United Nations agencies (ILO, UNESCO, UNICEF, and WHO), the World Bank, civil society organisations and non-governmental organisations, foundations (including ClIFF, Fisher Price Toys, and the Lego Foundation), the private sector, regional early childhood networks, academics, think tanks, and related global initiatives, have been engaged. An Interim Executive Group comprising representatives of the different stakeholders was set up to develop a blueprint for the network. Soon the essential remaining constituents and countries will join.*

Early Childhood Development Action Network

ECDAN Achievements (Sept 2016 – To Date)



KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

Six Task Forces (100+ organizations) developed recommendations on global public goods.

To support knowledge Exchange developed and disseminated case studies, editorials, and technical papers

Co-developed the Nurturing Care Framework with WHO, UNICEF, WBG, & PMNCH.

Organized and hosted webinars; conference presentations; and networking events.



COLLABORATION & COHERENCE

Key sectoral global partnerships (7) convened for the first time around ECD; consultations on how ECDAN can support ECD agenda within sectors.

Countries started to create, test, and refine planning for action at scale, providing the building blocks for ECDAN's approach to engaging with other interested countries.

Coordination with regional networks on ECD.



ADVOCACY & COMMUNICATION

Co-organized high-level advocacy event on ECD at the 2017 UNGA with UNICEF, WBG, and other partnerships.

Co-organized launch of the Nurturing Care Framework at the 2018 WHA with WHO, UNICEF, WBG & other partners.

ECDAN platform used for communication with ECD partners through newsletters, key events, webinars, and other opportunities.

Facilitated global consultations on ECD issues (e.g. investment benchmarking, Nurturing Care Framework, ECDAN mission)

Center for Education Innovation: a register of initiatives

Who we work with:



Saving Brains – Bold Ideas with Big Impact



A partnership of:



BILL & MELINDA
GATES foundation



World Class Fantasies

- We know that poverty is highly contextual, and many of the traditional ways of measuring it on a global scale are deeply flawed
- We know that international governance institutions are heavily weighted to act on behalf of rich countries, and rich individuals within those countries; and in particular heavily promote a neo-liberal philosophy of government with policies like privatization which have been detrimental to the poor;
- We know that the Sustainable Development Goals (15-year development agenda which set 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) spanning 169 targets monitored by 244 indicators) are based on false assumptions and unrealistic objectives. (ODI and many others)

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- We know that philanthropic organizations, many of whom have benefited from lax taxation policies, tend to develop their own unaccountable ways of operating that may favour their own business linked operations – eg Bridge and the Gates Foundation.
- We know that there are USA based consortiums of international non-governmental organizations that favour simplistic universal programmes on early childhood and promote global solutions.
- We know they draw their rationales from misleading views about intervention which grossly underestimate the complexities of poverty and inequality and their impact on children

What can be done for a better ECD/ECEC system

- Abandon the hype
- Insistence on Child Rights
- Insistence on Women's Rights
- Insistence on the importance of local knowledge, local contexts and local measurements
- Insistence of governmental responsibility for oversight, coordination and distribution of services – no cowboy philanthropism
- Insistence on lessening the damaging impact of gross poverty, eg cash benefits and safety nets