2015 ESP Working Paper Series

Omega Schools Franchise in Ghana: A case of "low-fee" private education for the poor or for-profiteering?

Curtis B. Riep

2015 No. 63

The Privatisation in Education Research Initiative (PERI) is a global research and networking initiative seeking to animate an accessible and informed public debate on alternative education provision. In particular, it examines the social justice implications of changes in the coordination, financing and governance of education services.

The Open Society Foundations work to build vibrant and tolerant democracies whose governments are accountable to their citizens. Working in every part of the world, the Open Society Foundations place a high priority on protecting and improving the lives of people in marginalized communities.

www.opensocietyfoundations.org

The Education Support Program and its partners support activism, research, policy, and pratices that promote education justice. Education justice involves the right of nondiscrimination in education access and the unequal distribution of resources to achieve more equal outcomes in education achievement. Central issues and activities include supporting the renewal and rebuilding of education systems in post conflict countries, promoting equal education and inclusion for marginalized groups, strengthening critical thinking and education quality, and helping civil society play a progressive and engaged role in the education reform process. The program implements its strategies and programs internationally with particular focus given to Africa, Central Asia, the Caucasus, Europe, the Middle East, Russia, and South and South East Asia.

The Education Support Program's Working Paper series disseminates information about research involving ESP-supported issues to educators, researchers, teachers, and education policy makers. To access other ESP Working Papers, please contact: Piroska Hugyecz piroska.hugyecz@opensocietyfoundations.org

WORKING PAPER

Omega Schools Franchise in Ghana: A case of "low-fee" private education for the poor or for-profiteering?

Curtis B. Riep

2015 No. 63

Privatisation in Education
RESEARCH INITIATIVE

The Privatisation in Education Research Initiative (PERI) is a global research and networking initiative seeking to animate an accessible and informed public debate on alternative education provision. In particular, it examines the social justice implications of changes in the coordination, financing and governance of education services.

About the Author

CURTIS B. RIEP is currently a PhD student in the Department of Educational Policy Studies at the University of Alberta. His research interests involve the interdisciplinary study of global political economy and privatizations in education with a specific focus on the growth of multinational education corporations and their operations in various contexts.

Abstract

This research paper explores the emergence of Omega Schools Franchise—a "low-fee" private for-profit school franchise in Ghana. Omega Schools operate on a "Pay As You Learn" system, in which student customers pay ₵1.50 (about US$0.65) per day for classroom services. Income generated from daily tuition fees cover the operational costs of each school, including teacher salaries and other material inputs, whilst also turning up a surplus. Profits are then used to finance the construction of new schools in the franchise and/or provide capital return to company shareholders. In 2012, Pearson, the largest multinational education corporation in the world, became a private equity investor and shareholder of Omega Schools for the purpose of growing the company through venture capital and, more-generally, to "experiment" in the low-fee private school sector. Whilst the joint venture between Pearson and Omega Schools has been advertised as an altruistic initiative intended to help achieve "Education for All" by expanding access to education among the most poor and marginalized students, it also, and more accurately, represents a global business strategy to grow markets and capital accumulation from the provision of "low-fee" private schooling services for the poor. It will be argued that Omega Schools represent an emergent form of Low-Cost Private Banking Schools (LCPBS), in which concerns for market-based returns on investment, generated by the chain of private profit-seeking schools, is the *modus operandi* of a service delivery model that can have exploitative effects on teachers and students.

Key findings of this research suggest that the extent to which Omega Schools can be expected to extend initial access to students who remain excluded from schooling provision in Ghana is negligible. This is primarily because the daily fee payment system is not "low-fee" or "affordable" for the most economically disadvantaged in Ghana. User fees charged by Omega in relation to household income suggest these students would have to expend approximately 25–40% of their income to access these services. Fee-paying private schools like Omega are more an elective for those who can already afford to pay, rather than be a method for extending access to the most marginalized. Whilst Omega Schools aim to provide mass access to "low-fee" private education for the "poor" at the "at the lowest cost on an unprecedented scale" ("Omega Schools," 2014)—and to do so profitably. A principal strategy for cutting-costs and increasing profit-margins, however, has been to employ unqualified teachers and pay them severely low wages. This research raises critical questions around "who wins" and "who looses" as a result of Omega's growing chain of low-cost private for-profit schools. Therefore, the findings of this study have implications for the global debate on low-fee private schools, and their involvement in efforts to universalize access to basic education.

Acknowledgements

Although some of this paper is critical of Omega Schools, I am most grateful to Ken Donkoh for allowing me to conduct research in his schools and for agreeing to be interviewed. This research would not have been possible without his help. I am also grateful to the numerous officials from the Ministry of Education and Ghana Education Service who generously shared their time with me in support of this research project. I would also like to thank those of you who shared your meaningful insights and thinking on this work through various discussions and forums. Finally, this research was made possible through funding provided by the Privatisation in Education Research Initiative (PERI) of the Open Society Foundations (OSF). I am most grateful for this financial assistance and support.

Table of Contents

List of Figures

1. Introduction

Low-fee private schools (LFPS) marketed towards low-income learners are on the rise, globally. This research paper explores the emergence of Omega Schools Franchise—a "low-fee" private for-profit school franchise in Ghana. Omega Schools have stated that their aim is "to bring quality education to as many children as possible" since they believe it "is possible for a private company to educate the poor at a profit" whilst providing "high quality education at the lowest cost possible" ("PALF," 2014). Omega Schools operate on a "Pay As You Learn" system, in which student/customers pay ₵1.50 (about US$0.65) per day for education services. Income generated from daily tuition fees cover the operational costs of each school, including teacher salaries and other material inputs, whilst also turning up a surplus. Profits are then used to finance the construction of new schools in the franchise and/or provide capital return to company shareholders. Each new school in the franchise is considered financially sustainable and profitable on account of daily fees paid by customer/learners. Pearson, the largest multinational education corporation in the world, became a private equity investor and shareholder of Omega Schools in 2012. By 2014, Omega Schools Franchise had grown to include 38 profit-generating schools with more than 20,000 fee-paying students. As Omega claims: "The enterprising poor, in huge numbers, are voting with their feet. They are sacrificing their meager earnings to put their wards into low-cost private schools" ("Omega Schools," 2014).

A globalizing mission to universalize access to basic schooling and achieve "Education for All" continues to shape education and development governmentality in the global-South. Under pressure to solve the global "crisis" of education, forms of privatization, including outsourcing, commercial enterprise, and public-private partnerships, "are being promoted as a cost-effective and fast solution to bring 'Education for All' to developing contexts" (Verger, 2012: 125). In turn, "business opportunities" have opened-up for private-sector influence and participation in the delivery of education services (Ball, 2012). Shifting global corporate social engagement norms and frameworks have facilitated the engagement of multinational corporations to participate in "global partnerships for development," including "Education for All," through core business activities (Bhanji, 2008). For example, in a report by the UN, entitled "The MDGs: everyone's business," multinational corporations are encouraged to "design and market products and services that are adapted to low-income markets and that contribute to children's education" (Gradl et al., 2010: 24) As a result, private corporations such as Pearson, have emerged as new financiers, investors, partners, and providers of low-cost private schooling in "emerging" markets such as India, China, Kenya, Ghana and South Africa. Low-cost services for the world's lowest-income consumers is considered to be an untapped market that can supply multinational corporations with new sources of profitability and business growth. Therefore, a "free-enterprise model of low-cost private schools—schools affordable for many of the poorest" (according to John Fallon, Pearson's Chief Executive Officer) is being pushed in "optimal" contexts throughout the global-South in order to extend the educational franchise to more of the world's poor. In turn, new markets have emerged for education corporations to provide low-cost for-profit services.

Yet, the implications, effects, and ethics of education corporations that provide low-fee private education services for profit, remain largely unknown or overlooked. Pearson's investment and joint partnership with Omega Schools is a paradigmatic case to study the emergence of transnational corporate activity in the low-fee private school sector. The aim of this research is to answer the following questions: what causal determinants and factors have given rise to the Omega Schools Franchise? What is the edu-business model of this low-cost private school company? Are Omega Schools "affordable" for low-income learners in Ghana? And, can we reasonably expect this chain of schools to significantly expand access to basic education among those who remain excluded in Ghana?

This research paper is divided into four main sections. The first section will explore the transnational corporate activity, advocacy networks, partnerships, ideas, and venture capital linked to Pearson and James Tooley, which have facilitated the rise of Omega Schools. An analysis of Omega's edu-business model, that is, its interconnected teaching, learning, and business model, will be the topic of the second section of this paper. It will be demonstrated that Omega's edu-business model is based on: (1) efficiency (serving the largest amount of students at the lowest possible cost); (2) the standardization of services; (3) brand reliability (as a form of quality control); and (4) consumerism ("Pay As You Learn" and the commodification of basic educational services). The third part of this paper will investigate the implications of Omega Schools in relation to access, equity, and affordability. Finally, the notion of Low-Cost Private Banking Schools (LCPBS) will be conceptualized and introduced as an expression that provides greater analytical understanding and interrogation of chains such as Omega Schools, which contests the dominant narrative that these are unproblematic Low-Fee Private Schools (LFPS).

Throughout this paper the methodology relies on primary data collected through in-country field research in the Greater Accra region of Ghana between January and March of 2013. Over the course of this period semi-structured interviews were conducted with 9 schoolteachers and "School Managers" from 6 different Omega Schools, as well as 20 students and 16 parents/guardians of Omega School students. The co-founder of Omega Schools, Ken Donkoh, was interviewed on two occasions. Six interviews were also conducted with ministerial officials from Ghana Education Service. Content and discourse from secondary sources, including education company websites, media releases, as well as on-line interviews, podcasts, and webcasts with key players will be analyzed, as well as secondary research on related topics.

2. Pearson, James Tooley and Omega Schools: Manufacturing Markets for Low-fee Private Education through Venture Capital and Discourse

This section explores the transnational actors, networks, entrepreneurs, ideas, discourses and financial capital that have given rise to Omega Schools Franchise (as well as the low-fee private school sector more-generally). Here the focus is on James Tooley and Pearson. Tooley is the chairman and co-founder of Omega Schools. He also occupies a variety of influential spaces and roles as an academic, businessman, "policy entrepreneur" and "thought-leader" in the low-fee private-school sector (Ball, 2012). Pearson, on the other hand, is the largest multinational education corporation in the world. In 2012, Pearson established the Pearson Affordable Learning Fund (PALF): a commercial investment fund intended to provide venture capital to for-profit companies operating in the low-cost private school sector in "emerging" global markets. Pearson's Affordable Learning Fund made its first investment in Omega Schools Franchise in 2012. Therefore, this section will triangulate between the ideational, discursive, and material power demonstrated by the transnational activities of both James Tooley and Pearson, which have given rise to Omega Schools, and the low-fee private school sector, more-generally.

2.1 James Tooley: Low-fee Private School "Thought-leader"

As professor of Education Policy at Newcastle University, James Tooley's research over the last decade has aimed to show that private companies can help solve educational challenges faced by low-income countries. An underlying argument promoted by Tooley is that low-cost educational services, provided on a for-profit basis by private entities, can improve the quality of, and extend access to, basic education for the world's poor in a sustainable manner. Tooley began to develop his theory whilst conducting research on low-cost education in India where his "study revealed a huge private sector serving poor families in the slums" and that "given the burgeoning of the sector, it was found that running schools, even for low-income families, was potentially a profitable undertaking" (Tooley & Dixon, 2003: 5).

> *[Tooley] argues that private schools were making profit and if invested in or supported financially, for instance, with low-cost innovative technology, they would be a potential area for business expansion. Altogether, for-profit schools aimed at poor communities are presented as the solution to India's problem of access to and quality of education and as a lucrative business opportunity. (Ball, 2012: 44)*

In Tooley's words: "The key relevant finding of the research is that the vast majority of private schools in the poor areas are *businesses*, not charities, dependent more or less entirely on fee income and, very importantly, making a reasonable profit" (Tooley, 2009: 252).

"Pro-market" think tanks, advocacy groups and other organizations working in the field of business and "development" have been keen to support Tooley and his research on low-cost private schools for the poor. With financial backing from pro-market foundations such as the John Templeton Foundation, CATO Institute, and the Institute of Economic Affairs, Tooley has expanded his initial research in India to include studies in China, Kenya, Ghana, Nigeria, and elsewhere. Tooley was the director of a global study on investment opportunities for private education in "developing" countries fittingly titled: *The Global Education Industry* (Tooley, 1999). The "findings" of such studies all definitively point to the need for a low-fee private school industry to expand the educational franchise to more of the world's poor through market-oriented systems.

Tooley is a key actor within a transnational advocacy network, selling the idea that low-cost private schools can universalize access to basic education. Through publications in academic journals, keynote speeches at international conferences, high-ranking consultancy and directorial positions, BBC and PBS documentary appearances and media reports and lectures to parliamentarians and policymakers in the United States, the United Kingdom and India, Tooley has emerged as a leading voice and proponent of the global education services industry. Tooley "operates on a number of levels, to give legitimacy to neo-liberal solutions through research, to persuade and co-opt governments and philanthropists, to construct and animate infrastructures of financial and discursive relations, and to put ideas into practice through start-up enterprises" (Ball, 2012: 143).

Tooley capitalized on an opportunity to put his ideas into practice through a start-up enterprise when he came into contact with low-cost school innovator Ken Donkoh. During a presentation at E.G. West Centre at Newcastle University in 2013 (a research institute directed by James Tooley which focuses on market-based solutions for education), Ken Donkoh explained that whilst completing his MBA at the University of Cape Coast in Ghana he came across Tooley's research on low-fee private education: "I read Professor Tooley's research in business school and I decided to develop a business plan out of it, so I sent a copy of the business plan to him asking if we could create a business out of it and he really believed in it" (Donkoh, 2012). By the time Donkoh had made his pitch to Tooley in 2008, Tooley had already surveyed the viability for private start-up enterprises in Ghanaian education. Beginning in 2003, Tooley led a study which consisted of a school census and survey in the Ga District of Ghana, which was funded by the John Templeton Foundation. The study found that fee-paying private school provision was "mushrooming" in the Ga District of Ghana (Tooley et al., 2007). "Of the total of 779 primary and junior secondary schools in Ga, 75% were private. There were almost as many unregistered private as government schools (23% compared to 25%)" reported Tooley and his colleagues (2007: 409). In Ghana, Tooley found an environment that was conducive to private enterprise as well as a local entrepreneur and partner in Ken Donkoh, which were both necessary for Tooley to implement his for-profit experimentation in low-cost private education.

In the business of low-cost private education "optimal markets" exist where governmental regulatory environments are more "open" to private-sector participation and profit-seeking. In Ghana, for example, this is indicated by the high number of un/registered private schools "found" by Tooley and his colleagues. Even more reflective of Ghana's free-market acquiescence, however, is that low-cost private schools can be registered as for-profit institutions, which is not a common practice in other developing countries.

In a BBC interview, James Tooley explained that in the case of India's marketability for low-fee private schooling, "the regulatory environment is a big problem there. In the business of education, always, the regulatory environment matters. In India it's not conducive to for-profit education. And that's why were focusing for now in Africa where it's much easier to do business" (Davis, 2013). Indeed, neoliberal calculations involve identifying optimal spaces and populations in relation to global market opportunities (Ong, 2007). In Ghana, Tooley found a business partner in Donkoh as well as a geo-political landscape that offered a viable market to carry out his business venture in for-profit private-school provision. Tooley partnered with Donkoh in 2009 to create Omega Schools Franchise, and in the same year they opened their first two schools. However, the venture capital needed to kick-start and scale-up Omega Schools was still missing.

In 2007, Tooley published his essay, "Educating Amaretch: private schools for the poor and the new frontier for investors," which won first prize in the World Bank's International Finance Corporation and *Financial Times'* first annual essay competition entitled "Business and Development: private path to prosperity." In his essay Tooley argues that: "Crucially, because the private schools serving the poor are businesses, making a reasonable profit, they provide a pioneering way forward for investors to get involved too" and that "investing in a chain of schools—either through a dedicated education investment fund or through joint ventures with educational entrepreneurs—could help solve the information problem for poor parents" (Tooley, 2007: 42). Pearson, the world's largest multinational education corporation, bought into the idea being sold by Tooley. That is, that a substantial investment fund with the purpose of providing venture capital to low-cost private school enterprises, in exchange for company equity, could become a profitable business venture.

2.2 Pearson's Affordable Learning Fund: Providing Venture Capital

The Pearson Affordable Learning Fund (PALF) is a commercial investment fund with the purpose of investing venture capital into start-up companies operating in the low-fee private school sector in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Pearson launched PALF in 2012 with $15 million of initial capital and in January 2015 it was announced an additional $50 million would be invested over the next three years, bringing PALF's total assets under management to $80 million ("PALF," 2015). Pearson describes the strategic operation as "a for-profit venture fund, in response to the vital market opportunity and government need for low-cost private education in the developing world" ("PALF," 2014). By 2020, Pearson expects PALF to be helping support provide "millions of the poorest children in the world with a quality education, in a cost-effective, profitable and scalable manner" ("PALF," 2014). By financing private companies committed to "innovative approaches" and "sustainable" business models, PALF is providing financial "investment in private enterprise to meet the Millennium Development Goals," which "underlines Pearson's commitment to experimentation to tackle access to and effectiveness of education where it is now absent" ("New Pearson investment fund," 2012). The objective of PALF, therefore, is twofold. Firstly, it aims to show governments and donors that low-cost private education can help universalize access to basic education in a cost-effective manner. The second objective of PALF is concerned with business growth and profitability. This is expected to result from newly developed markets for low-cost private schooling, which education corporations such as Pearson can profit from. In 2012, PALF made its first investment into Omega Schools.

Private equity investments made by PALF are intended to grow and scale-up commercially viable chains of low-cost private schools in an effort to transform and develop markets for low-cost private education. Michael Barber, chairman of PALF, explained in a *BBC HARDTalk* interview in 2012: "To use economic jargon it's an immature market so there's lots of one or two school little family companies and we think we can find some, take them to scale, get large chains of schools that are consistent, that are higher quality, and still very low-cost" (Montague, 2012). By "providing financial backing, good governance, and operational support to education entrepreneurs—the Fund aims to foster and scale innovation throughout Africa, Asia, and Latin America" ("Pearson makes new investments," 2015). Barber would go on to add that: "It's absolutely for-profit. But get this right—its important to demonstrate profit because we want other investors to come in." Undeveloped and fragmented markets, such as low-cost private schooling, require capital investment in order to grow viable consumer markets. PALF makes strategic investments in low-cost private school franchises which demonstrate the productive power to expand the marketability of services through "scalability" and "efficacy" ("PALF," 2014). Omega Schools received financial investment from PALF since it has "successfully proven a viable model for starting new schools which are profitable and sustainable on opening" ("Omega Schools," 2013). Commercial investments by PALF, therefore, occur in low-cost private school franchises that demonstrate a propensity towards growth and scalability, and which operate in deregulated and liberalized contexts where opportunities for profit are the greatest.

Pearson invested in Omega Schools, at an undisclosed amount, with the purpose of creating "a sustainable large chain of branded low-cost private schools in Ghana" ("Omega Schools," 2013). Pearson's investments have helped "Omega expand from ten schools in greater Accra serving about 6,000 students to a full-service school chain serving tens of thousands of students throughout Ghana" ("New Pearson investment fund," 2012). In an interview with co-founder Ken Donkoh at Omega's newly refurbished head offices in Ghana he explained to me that: "Pearson's investments helped us to grow more rapidly. We got up to ten schools and with Pearson's investments we could then add another ten schools, which brought us to twenty. Now we will be adding twenty more schools, sending us to forty. Then we can add on and on, year after year." Omega has developed an innovative business plan to expand its chain of low-fee private schools, which Pearson has endorsed. It is based on the idea that 500 fee-paying students in each school can cover the operational costs of each school, whilst also generating a surplus. Profits are then pooled together with revenues accumulated from other schools in the franchise to finance the construction of new profit-making schools and/or provide market-returns to company shareholders and investors. Each new school in the franchise is financially sustainable and profitable on account of daily fees paid by customer/learners. This is directly in line with PALF's purpose, which aims to tackle "the educational needs of the world's poorest regions, to experiment with new approaches to low cost learning, and to demonstrate to how a for-profit approach can scale and solve education in developing countries" ("PALF," 2014).

The nature and motivation of the joint venture between Pearson and Omega Schools is further reflected in Ken Donkoh's remarks after I asked him why he though Pearson decided to invest in his company:

> *I think for a couple of reasons. Obviously, it's a very interesting space—the low-fee education space is quite interesting. It's a huge market. It's getting more and more interesting. It's also a way that Pearson can really make an impact by helping the poor and helping low-income communities also get a better education. Previously, Pearson's investments have been in very mid-class to high-end schools and even with the government and all that. I think the low-fee sector has made a very strong statement—that yes, it is possible that the private sector can also educate the poor. I think that Pearson wants to be involved in these things. So I think that's the key thing. There's huge wealth at the "bottom of the pyramid" as they put it. So who knows? Maybe in a few years to come it will be a very viable market. But I think for now they are driven by the fact that they want to be involved in this space, they want to support, they want to bring quality. In a way help achieve, if not even achieve, we get closer to the Millennium Development Goals […] I think that the reason why Pearson set up the Affordable Learning Fund, the Fund that invested in us, is not to make a short-term return, but instead to develop the market, develop the market to maturity, so perhaps one day the low-fee sector will become a viable and profitable market.*

This statement brings to light two key issues. Firstly, Pearson's investments in Omega are identified as a way to expand educational access in low-income communities and work toward Millennium Development Goals including "Education for All." (However, as the findings from a survey across a sample of Omega Schools will demonstrate later on in this paper, there is reason to seriously doubt that Omega Schools are in reality serving pupils who otherwise would not have access to basic education). Secondly, the joint venture between Pearson and Omega Schools is a way to experiment in the low-fee private-school sector and develop a market intended to tap into the "huge wealth at the bottom of the pyramid." The "bottom of the economic pyramid" refers to a business strategy which views the four billion people in the world who earn less than $1500 per year as a huge source of untapped potential revenue whereby multinational corporations can develop markets for low-cost services on a massive scale, such as a large chain of low-fee private schools, which can become a highly lucrative business (Prahalad & Hart, 2002; Prahalad, 2005). As Pearson observes: "There are about 4 billion people around the world who live on less than $2 a day, and this low-income population suffers the most from poor quality education. While there has been progress in meeting the UN Millennium Development Goal of universal primary education, there are still more than 70 million primary-age children not in school." ("New Pearson investment fund," 2012). This is the market Pearson and Omega intend to tap into through their provision low-cost private for-profit schooling services.

Beyond Pearson's investments, Omega Schools has also received funding through donor grants as well. In 2011, Google.org awarded a grant of $250,000 to Omega in order to start a similar chain in Sierra Leone, and in 2013 the UK government's Department for International Development (DFID) awarded a grant to Omega to pilot a chain of Girls High Schools in Ghana ("Omega Schools," 2014). Therefore, the rise of Omega Schools has been the result of a number of transnational actors, entrepreneurs, and financial organizations exercising their material ideas and power in a concerted effort to support the growth of low-cost private education, and in particular, Omega Schools. James Tooley has supplied the intellectual leadership and international advocacy to legitimate the viability of a low-fee private school sector for the poor; whilst Pearson and its Affordable Learning Fund has provided the financial backing and venture capital for Tooley, Donkoh and the Omega Schools Franchise to expand their for-profit experimentation in low-cost private schooling.

3. Omega's Edu-business Model: The "McDonaldization" of Education

This section investigates Omega Schools' interconnected teaching, learning and business model(s), that is, its edu-business model. Drawing inspiration from fast-food conglomerate McDonald's, "where a consistent quality of hamburgers and French fries worldwide results from a deeply understood and standardized chemical process" (Prahalad, 2005: 37 cited in Tooley, 2007: 42). James Tooley believes: "There is, it seems, every reason to think that a similarly 'deeply understood and standardised' learning process could become part of an equally successful model of private school provision, serving huge numbers of the poor" (Tooley, 2007: 42). Representing a "bottom of the pyramid" strategy, Omega's edu-business model is predicated on selling mass produced and standardized learning at the lowest cost possible to serve the highest number of fee-paying customers and maximize profit. This section will analyze the edu-business model of Omega Schools and argue that it represents a re-conceptualized programme of educational service delivery that can be understood as the "McDonaldization" of education (Ritzer, 1993). This is because large-scale chains of low-cost private schools like Omega are based on market-oriented principles of: (1) efficiency (serving the largest amount of students at the lowest possible cost); (2) standardization of services; (3) brand reliability (as a form of quality control); and (4) consumerism ("Pay As You Learn" and the commodification of basic education services).

3.1 Efficiency

For Omega, "efficiency" involves serving the largest number of student/customers at the lowest possible cost. It refers to the cost-effective provision and production of services by a large-scale chain of low-cost private schools, which has the capability to extend mass access to education to low-income learners "at the lowest cost on an unprecedented scale" ("Omega Schools," 2014). Omega claims that it's "business model leverages scale, reducing costs to a level that can dramatically extend access and improve quality" ("Omega Schools," 2014). In a BBC interview, James Tooley explained that:

> *We try to be the lowest price because we see it a mass market. We're a very low-margin, high-volume business in a way. That's what we want to do. We want to serve as many children as we can, so we keep the costs down because our market are parents that wouldn't have previously been able to afford a low cost private school. (Davis, 2013)*

High-volume, low-margin businesses such as Omega Schools can benefit from economies of scale, as they can produce a high volume of goods or services efficiently, and at a low cost, in order to increase profit margins. This "McDonaldization" of education service delivery model, therefore, is based on efficiency, which involves calculated procedures to minimize the productions costs to "educate" each student/customer, whilst still delivering a service of perceived "quality."

However, Omega's main source of cost-saving has come as a result of the exploitation of teachers' labour. Teacher salaries account for the bulk of educational costs, especially in low-income countries (Lewin, 2007), however, Omega has drastically reduced its costs by employing high-school graduates as teachers and paying them a fraction of what professionally trained and qualified teachers receive in the public sector. The monthly wage for an Omega School teacher ranges from ₵130–150 (equivalent to roughly $55–65 per month or about $3 per day). These wage levels are only 15–20% of what teachers in the public sector make in Ghana. Omega has cut costs by avoiding public employment regulations and standards by hiring non-unionized labour.

In addition to low teacher salaries, another way to minimize the per-unit cost of production, and increase margins, has been to fill classrooms beyond the pupil–teacher ratio norm set by the Ghana Education Service at 35:1 and 25:1 for primary- and lower-secondary school classrooms, respectively. This researcher has observed pupil–teacher classroom ratios in Omega Schools upwards of 50:1 on several instances. This combination of inadequately trained teachers and high pupil–teacher ratios brings up obvious questions related to the quality of services provided by Omega Schools.

In a context of diminishing rates of funding committed to education by governments and international donors, low-cost private sector alternatives based on efficiency and the minimization of expenditures, have gained credence. Chains of low-cost private schools, such as Omega, have been increasingly advocated for as a cost-effective and fast solution to universalize basic education through commodified learning for the poor. Too reach the largest number of students at the lowest possible cost, Omega Schools has developed a model of growth and scalability based on standardized services and products: from the construction of school facilities to curriculum materials to teacher lesson plans and assessment.

3.2 Standardization of Services

Interrelated to efficiency (concerned with optimizing educational access whilst minimizing cost) Omega has developed a “school-in-a-box” franchising approach, which is intended to produce uniformity throughout the chain of private schools by replicating and recreating the necessary material inputs and resources required to (re) produce standardized forms of learning. That is, from the construction of the school, to student uniforms, to curriculum, management, assessment, and instructional methods, Omega’s “school-in-a-box” model is intended to guarantee uniformity in the production of standardized outcomes across the chain of schools. A focus on standardization is intended to reduce the per-unit costs of production and, therefore, increase profitability.

Too optimize teaching and learning whilst maintaining ultra-low operating costs, Omega has developed its own uniform curriculum and hired unqualified and poorly paid teachers who are taught how to deliver lesson plans in class and carryout their teacherly duties with support of a two-week teacher-training programme. As Ken Donkoh explains: “Whatever research or whatever things we develop in terms of curriculum can be shared across a number of schools and that can drive down costs. So that’s the second aspect of our model, we’ve developed our own proprietary curriculum and that ensures that even high school graduates can easily deliver the teaching and learning.” Donkoh further explains that the company has:

> *...developed lesson plans for the teachers because ideally it takes a very experienced teacher to be able to structure the lesson and design a lesson plan to be able to deliver the needed effect and we*

> *don't have that luxury. We can't get experienced quality teachers in the schools so what we've done is hired experienced teachers to write out those lesson plans at the head office and then give them to the schools so that our teachers can read them and just deliver them. [...] We do this for all subjects, maths, English, science and social studies.*

In the production of teaching and learning, standardized lesson plans are delivered by low-cost high-school graduates, which represents a form of deskilled teacher labour. The pedagogical autonomy of the teacher is delimited and narrowly structured by teacher lesson plans that must be followed in class.

Therefore, this "McDonaldization" model of education demonstrated by Omega Schools is related to the notion of "predictability" (Ritzer, 1993), which is offered through uniform products (i.e. the standardization of services), replication of settings (i.e. school-in-a-box) and scripting employee behaviours and interaction with customers (i.e. controlled pedagogical processes).

3.3 Brand Reliability

Another dimension of the commercialization of education associated with Omega Schools' model is the importance placed on "brand reliability." This is most notably evident in the research carried out by James Tooley on for-profit education companies working in the low-fee school sector, in which he explains:

> *I was particularly surprised to find the importance of brand name—which many education companies were very keen to promote on billboards and in newspaper, radio and television advertising. From the study, brand name seemed to be particularly important because it helps parents and students overcome the 'information' problem. How do parents know whether they can trust the local entrepreneur who has set up the school? Because he or she is the franchisee for an established educational brand name whose quality control procedures are known and respected throughout the country. (Tooley, 1999: 28)*

Thus, Tooley sees the recognition of brand name in the business of education as a measure of quality control. That is, a brand name resolves the issue of market "information" for poor households caught up in the dilemma of which school to choose. Just as billboards, advertisements, and other forms of marketing inform consumers about the availability and leading assumptions about their products, brand-name recognition provides a similar form of "quality assurance" for educational customers. As Tooley notes in his research: "With the larger education companies it is clear that the brand name works as it does for other consumer goods and services, reassuring parents and students that high quality is being offered and maintained" (1999: 40). Tooley adds that for education companies that intend to increase their profitability they should spend roughly 10% of their income on advertising and promoting its brand name (Tooley, 1999).

However, brand name recognition in the low-fee private school sector can also reflect a form of cultural hegemony. For example, in communities where Omega Schools are located, families have come to know and recognize Omega's "brand" as an "international private" chain of schools—something previously considered only accessible for wealthy and elite students in Ghana. One mother of an Omega student explained to me: "We heard that [Omega] was an international private school, with international standards, where they could learn better English and all that. So this is why I chose to send my child there." In the communities they serve, the common understanding of Omega is that they are "private" "English-speaking" schools with "international standards" and, therefore, superior to other schools, which cost similar or even less. This reveals the cultural hegemony of a "school brand" that has been linked to international actors and organizations such as Pearson and James Tooley, which act as a form of quality assurance for fee-paying customers.

3.4 Pay As You Learn

Since the underlying premise of Omega's edu-business model involves the commodification of basic education for low-income learners, the company has developed a daily-fee payment system to attract low-income customers. Advertised by Omega as "Pay As You Learn," this "innovative all-inclusive no hidden cost daily fee payment system, ensures that we rope in a lot more lower-income families who otherwise may not be able to afford bulk term fees" ("Omega Schools," 2014). Within this "Pay As You Learn" system, families pay a fee of ₵1.50 (or $0.65) per day per child for classroom services, which amounts to ₵315 (or roughly $140) in annual tuition fees over the course of a 210-day school year.

In a seminar at Newcastle University Ken Donkoh explained that Omega's "Pay As You Learn" plan is modelled after "pay as you go" services such as multinational mobile-phone companies operating in sub-Saharan Africa that sell low-cost services on a "pay as you can *afford*" basis. Donkoh explained that if in a low-income country such as Ghana where millions of poor people have become mobile-phone users by purchasing small amounts of credit to gain temporary telecommunication services, before having to pay again, than a similar business model could apply to expand the educational franchise:

> *We saw that the poor people usually earn on a daily basis so trying to save up money to pay for a [school] term fee can be difficult because by the time they go to pay the term fee maybe something else came up, maybe their child gets sick or something and they don't have insurance—they don't have any social protection. So if they try saving up for education they end up using it for other purposes. So we felt that since the poor earn on a daily basis we must develop a payment system that allows them to pay on a daily basis. (Donkoh, 2012)*

However, if low-income families expend daily wages on daily school fees because they can't afford to save up for bulk term fees, where will the savings come from during times of unexpected health or lodging emergencies? A "Pay As You Learn" model further propagates situations of social insecurity and vulnerability for daily wage labourers since earnings go directly to paying for daily school fees. Nevertheless, the daily fee provides Omega students with in-class instruction as well as daily lunches and a scheduled mass deworming. Students are also granted 15 free school days to ensure attendance when households may not be able to pay the daily fee.

Whilst the "Pay As You Learn" model has been credited with much of the success and growth of Omega Schools, it will undoubtedly also have less impressive consequences. For example, the "School Manager" of one Omega School claimed that the "pressure to pay daily fees is the main cause of absenteeism." Several Omega "School Mangers" and teachers reported that on any given school day, up to 20% of the student body is absent. One Omega School student expressed her experiences with the "Pay As You Learn" model by stating: "I sell water on the streets one day so I can go to school the next." This is indicative of the commercialization of social relations represented by Omega Schools "Pay As You Learn" system, in which students are transformed into consumers, and in some case child labourers, who are required to pay for access to commodified education.

4. Access, Affordability, and Equity

Omega Schools Franchise in Ghana is a paradigmatic case to investigate some of the implications of fee-paying for-profit private schools. Issues of access, affordability, and equity will be discussed here in relation to Omega's edu-business model. This section examines whether or not Omega Schools are actually "affordable" for the poorest families in Ghana and whether or not they can be expected to extend initial access to basic education for first-time school goers.

If the aim of Omega is to help achieve universal basic education in Ghana, as it claims, then the franchise will have to extend its reach to the "last 10%" of students in the country who still remain excluded from basic schooling (Akyeampong et al., 2012). To determine whether or not Omega Schools can be expected to significantly expand access to the last 10%, a sample was taken of 437 pupils (from primary 1, 2 and 3 and junior high 1 and 2 classes) across four different Omega Schools. Each student was asked if Omega was the first school they attended, or if they had been enrolled at a different school prior to Omega. 436 out of 437 students questioned said they had already been enrolled in classes at another school prior to Omega. Only 1 out of 437 had not. This finding refutes any suggestion that Omega Schools are significantly extending initial access to basic education through its provision of low-fee private education. This is because fee-paying private schools like Omega are more an elective for those who can already afford to pay their way into public or private school, rather than be a system for universalizing access. Looking at tuition fees in relation to average household income further supports this point.

The majority of Omega Schools are clustered in peri-urban localities in the Greater Accra and Central regions of Ghana. The Greater Accra region has the highest annual household income in the country with an average of ₵1,529 whilst the Central region has the third highest average at ₵1,310 (GSS, 2008). The poorest 5% in Greater Accra and the poorest 7% in Ghana's Central region earn, on average, an annual household income of ₵728 (GSS, 2008). If we were to take an annual household income of ₵728 in relation to school costs of ₵1.50 per day x 210 schools days in a year, it would cost ₵315 or approximately 40% of a household's annual household income to send one child to an Omega School for one year. If we were to make a similar calculation using the average annual household income in all of Ghana (which is ₵1,217), families would have to spend 26% of their household income on education expenditures for one child. Most families in Ghana have more than one child. Low-income households in Ghana, therefore, cannot afford to pay upwards of 40% of their earnings on educational expenditures for only one child, whilst other basic necessities such as food, health, and shelter must also be met.

The allegation that Omega Schools are "low-fee" options for the poor in Ghana is highly misplaced. Srivastava (2007a, 2007b) has defined "low-fee" private schools, at the primary and junior level, as those that charge a monthly fee equivalent to what a daily-wage labourer would earn for one day of work. In Ghana the minimum daily wage is set at ₵5.24, which is approximately six times lower than what Omega students pay over a one-month term. Comparing fee levels to income suggests that Omega Schools are not "low-fee," "budget" or "affordable" options for the poorest families in Ghana. This "low-fee" private school model, therefore, should not be expected to reach the last 10% who still remain out of school in Ghana.

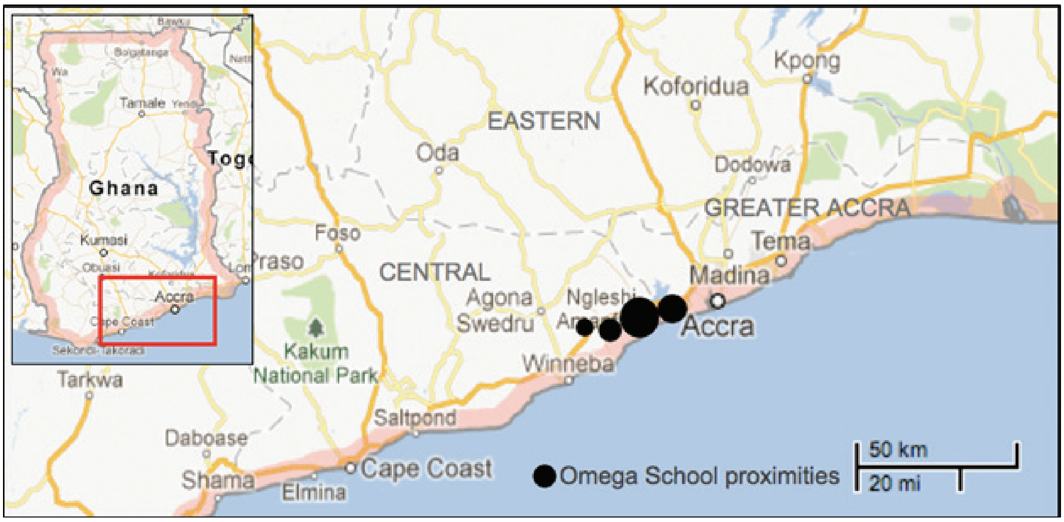
This paper adds to the research on low-cost private schools and their limitations for accommodating the poorest students in low-income countries (Probe, 1999; Watkins, 2004; Rose & Adelabu, 2007; Srivastava & Walford, 2007; Härmä & Rose, 2012). Fee-paying forms of commercialized learning for the poor involve a distinct and unmissable structural inequity, user fees, which deny access to those already marginalized by poverty. It is clear that Omega Schools are not extending access to first-time school goers because of the relatively high cost of tuition fees. The main factor that continues to prevent universal access to education in Ghana is the cost associated with sending children to school, which remains a barrier for those living in poverty (Akyeampong et al., 2012). This structural impediment is apparently unforeseen by Tooley and Donkoh, who maintain that Omega Schools are geared towards "those at the bottom of the economic pyramid" ("Omega Schools," 2014). Findings presented in this paper, however, demonstrate that in its current form, Omega's model of "low-fee" private schools for the poor should not be even remotely expected to expand access to the last 10% who remain out of school in Ghana.

Unsubsidized and for-profit providers like Omega "cannot serve the poor and poorest if they depend on revenue from the communities they serve" (Lewin, 2007: 3). In Ghana, the lowest-income households cannot afford to pay private school companies like Omega up to 40% of their earnings whilst other basic necessities must also be met. A concerned mother of an Omega student explained to me that: "Every Cedi I spend on school fees takes away from the little money I have to feed my family. This is a struggle we face everyday." Private for-profit schools that are dependent upon low-income learners paying user fees to gain access, can further exacerbate socio-economic disparity, inequality, and inequity, even more so than what might already exist in a context like Ghana (Adea-Mensah, 2000; Lewin, 2007).

Beyond the unaffordable user fees charged by Omega School, another systematic barrier that delimits their ability to expand initial access among the most marginalized in Ghana, is the location where schools have been established. Omega schools have not been set up in communities where provision is absent, but rather in communities that can more effectively ensure the economic sustainability of the for-profit institution. For example, in the Ga South District in the Greater Accra region where Omega has established several of its schools in close proximity to one another, an official at the District Assembly Education Office explained to me that in 2009 there were 366 private registered schools in the district and by February 2013 that number rose to 598. So, if Omega intends to expand the educational franchise in areas where it is now absent, why build clusters of schools in communities where competition between schools is already high? This is as much about business planning as it is education planning. As the Director of Private Schooling in Ghana explained:

Unfortunately, the private schools that are coming on board are clustered in urban centres. This is because those low cost or low fee private schools do it as a business enterprise, so they go to communities that can afford to pay. So those children in the villages, in the remote areas—what will be their fate?

Figure 1—*Proximity of Omega Schools in Ghana*



5. Low-cost Private banking Schools

Pearson and Omega's joint venture is at the forefront of an emergent type of Low-Cost Private Banking Schools (LCPBS). Low-cost private banking schools are those financed through private equity investment by financial institutions (such as PALF) in exchange for share ownership in the private company (such as Omega Schools) and market-returns on investment. This form of merchant banking is intended to facilitate and finance the production and consumption of commodities, which in this case is low-cost private education. As a result, low-cost private school franchises expand their services and generate profit from the capital accumulation of school fees paid by customers, which in turn, provides a market-return to investors/shareholders, or can be used to finance new commodity-producing enterprises in the form of for-profit schools. Pearson's investments into low-cost private banking schools involve setting "market-based returns as conditions of continued investment" ("Pearson makes new investments," 2015). Therefore, continued investment by the commercial establishment is conditional upon profit generation and market-based returns.

In an effort to minimize production costs and increase profit margins, low-cost private banking schools also demonstrate a "banking" system of education, in which unqualified, poorly paid, and deskilled teachers are provided standardized lesson plans that are read in class and deposited into students through copy and replication. As Paulo Freire explains, this "banking" system of education reflects how:

> *Education thus becomes an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor. Instead of communicating, the teacher issues communiques and makes deposits which the students patiently receive, memorize, and repeat. This is the "banking" concept of education, in which the scope of action allowed to the students extends only as far as receiving, filing, and storing the deposits. (Freire, 2010: 72)*

Low-cost private banking schools, therefore, involve four types of deposits: (1) commercial investments by financial establishments into low-cost private school enterprises; (2) user fees deposited by customer/students into the school franchise; (3) standardized knowledge deposited by teachers (depositors) into students (depositories), and; (4) reinvestments into new profit-generating schools and/or market-returns on investment provided to shareholders. The "banking" system of low-cost private schools, therefore, more accurately describes low-fee private schools like Omega for what that truly are: profit-driven, low-quality, and oppressive in the Freirean sense.

Low-cost private banking schools such as Omega can become a highly profitable venture for investors such as Pearson. As David Archer, director of program development for ActonAid, an international non-governmental organization, explains:

> *Ken Donkoh told me, when I was asked him about the profit margins (as if I was an investor) at the WISE conference 2014 in Doha, that Omega reckons they can recoup the $80,000 capital investment cost of setting up a school in 5 years—which means that in the following five years they can make $80,000 profit. They have 40 schools (average size of 500 children) and target 200 schools in the coming few years—which works out to a profit for investors (including James Tooley) of more than roughly $3 million a year from 200 schools (after initial capital has been paid off). Even if some of that is reinvested in expansion this is shocking. This could be $15 million in profit*

> *over 5 years extracted from the aspirational / relatively poor population of Ghana. (David Archer, personal communication, January 22, 2015)*

Substantial amounts of profit are expected to be extracted from low-income communities in Ghana where Omega sells its education services. Low-cost private banking schools like Omega, and others invested into by Pearson, therefore, are mercenary private school companies, driven by capital accumulation and profit, rather than ethical concerns for an emancipatory model of education to support low-income learners.

6. Conclusion

Omega Schools claim to be initiating plans to expand its low-cost services beyond Ghana and into West African markets including Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Liberia and the Gambia, with plans to "grow to as many as 340 schools with 200,000 students by 2020" (Donkoh, 2012). At this scale, Omega's chain of private schools will become an immensely profitable venture, which can benefit from economies of scale by providing a high volume of services "at the lowest cost at an unprecedented scale" ("Omega Schools," 2014). This form of low-cost private banking schools is a "bottom of the pyramid" strategy intended to profit from the mass provision of fee-paying services for low-income learners.

Commercial investments by Pearson in Omega Schools has been a way determine the viability and profitability of a chain of low-cost private schools to serve the more affluent poor in West Africa. This for-profit "experimentation" has been largely "configured by the power of transnational capital" (Gill, 1995) supplied by the multinational education corporation, Pearson, which has allowed James Tooley and Ken Donkoh to implement their "Mcdonaldization" of education model based on efficiency, standardization, consumerism, and the exploitation of teachers' labour.

Omega operates on a "Pay As You Learn" system—in which student customers pay ₵1.50 (about $0.65) per day for classroom services. According to Omega's edu-business plan, income generated from daily tuition fees cover the operational costs of each school, including teacher salaries and other material inputs, whilst also turning up a surplus. Profits can then be used to either finance the construction of new schools in the franchise and/or provide capital returns to company shareholders. This model is indicative of an emergent type of low-cost private banking schools (LCPBS), in which a profit-oriented system of "banking" education can have subjugating effects on teachers and students.

Omega's chain of private schools are not "low-fee" options for the most marginalized in Ghana. Findings from this research suggest that the poorest households in Ghana would have to expend upwards of 40% of their income to send one child to an Omega school. Such costs severely compromise their ability to finance other basic necessities such as clean drinking water, food, health and shelter. A 437-student sample conducted across the chain of Omega Schools suggests that these schools are not, to any considerable degree, extending initial access to the most marginalized. This is a direct result of the relatively high cost of user fees that are charged and the fact that these schools have been established in areas where competition among schools already exists.

Omega Schools' fee-paying for-profit venture aimed at serving the "poorest of the poor" represents a case of for-profiteering. Profiteering exists when disproportionately large or grossly unfair profit is generated from the sale of essential goods or services by exploiting situations of vulnerability. And whilst Ken Donkoh proclaims that "education is the first bridge out of poverty," the ironic and harmful failure is that the Omega bridge levies a high toll for all those who wish to pass, which is more likely to reproduce poverty, than it can be expected to alleviate it.

References

Adea-Mensah, I. (2000). *Education in Ghana: A Tool for Social Mobility or Social Stratification?* J. B. Danqah Memorial Lecture, Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences, April 2000.

Akyeampong, K., C. Rolleston, J.G, Ampiah, and K. Lewin. (2012). Access, Transitions and Equity in Education in Ghana: Researching Practice, Problems and Policy. CREATE Pathways to Access Research monograph No. 72. Brighton: University of Sussex.

Ball, S.J. (2012). *Global Education Inc: New Policy Networks and the Neo-liberal Imaginary.* New York: Routledge.

Bhanji, Z. (2008). Transnational Corporations in Education: Filling the Governance Gap through New Social Norms and Market Multilateralism? *Globalisation, Societies and Education* 6 (1): 55–73.

Davis, E. (Presenter). (2013, March 30). The Bottom Line: The Education Business. [Audio podcast]. Retrieved from: http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b01rgmbh

Donkoh, K. (2012, May 5). Pay As You Learn. [Video File]. http://vimeo.com/53508529

Freire, P. (2010). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (30th Anniversary Edition). New York: Continuum.

GGS. (2008). *Ghana Living Standards Survey.* Report of the 5th Round. Ghana Statistical Service.

Gill, S. (2008). *Power and Resistance in the New World Order.* Basingstoke: Palagrave Macmillan.

Gradl, C., S. Sivakumaran and S. Sobhani. (2010). The MDG's: Everyone's Business. New York: United Nations Development Programme.

Härmä, J. and P. Rose. (2012). Is Low-fee Private Primary Schooling Affordable for the Poor? Evidence from Rural India. In *Public Private Partnerships in Education: New Actors and Modes of Governance in a Globalizing World*, eds. SL. Robertson, K. Mundy, A. Verger and F. Menashy. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar. 243–258.

Lewin, K. (2007). The Limits to Growth of Non-Government Private Schooling in Sub Saharan Africa. CREATE Pathways to Access Research Monograph No. 5. DFID.

Montague, S. (Presenter). (2012, August 13). BBC HARDTalk: Sir Michael Barber. [Video file]. www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b01lyz03

New Pearson investment fund to enhance education opportunity among the world's poorest. (2012, July 2). Retrieved from https://www.pearson.com/news/announcements/2012/july/new-pearson-investment-fund-to-enhance-education-opportunity-amo.html

Ong, A. (2007). Neoliberalism As a Mobile Technology. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 32(1): 3–8.

Omega Schools. (2013). Retrieved from http://www.omega-schools.com

Omega Schools. (2014). Retrieved from http://www.omega-schools.com

Pearson Affordable Learning Fund. (2014). Retrieved from https://www.affordable-learning.com

Pearson Affordable Learning Fund. (2015). Retrieved from https://www.affordable-learning.com

Pearson makes new investments to improve learning outcomes in the developing world. (2015, January 20). Retrieved from https://www.pearson.com/news/announcements/2015/january/pearson-makes-new-investments-to-improve-learning-outcomes-in-de.html

Prahalad, C.K. (2005). *The Fortune at the Bottom of the Pyramid—Eradicating Poverty through Profits*. Upper Saddle River: Wharton School Publishing.

Prahalad, C.K. and S. Hart. (2002). The Fortune at the Bottom of the Pyramid. *Strategy and Competition* 26(1): 55–67.

Probe Team, The. (1999). *Public Report on Basic Education in India*, Oxford and New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Ritzer, G. (2009). *The McDonaldization of Society*. Los Angeles: Pine Forge Press.

Rose, P. and M. Adelabu. (2007). Private Sector Contributions to Education for All in Nigeria. In Srivastava, P. and G. Walford (Eds). Private Schooling in Less Economically Developed Countries: Asian and African Perspectives. *Symposium Books*.

Srivastava, P. and G. Walford. (2007). Private Schooling in Less Economically Developed Countries: Asian and African Perspectives. *Symposium Books*.

Tooley, J. (1999). The Global Education Industry—Lessons from Private Education in Developing Countries, Hobart Paper 141, London: Institute of Economic Affairs.

Tooley, J. (2007). Educating Amartech: Private Schools for the Poor and the New Frontier for Investors. *Institute of Economic Affairs*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Tooley, J. and P. Dixon. (2003). *Private Schools for the Poor: A Case Study from India*. Reading: C*f*BT.

Tooley, J., P. Dixon, and I. Amuah. (2007). Private and Public Schooling in Ghana: A Census and Comparative Survey. Review of Education, 53: 389–415.

Verger, A. (2012). Framing and Selling Global Education Policy: The Promotion of Public–Private Partnerships for Education in Low-income Contexts. *Journal of Education Policy* 27(1): 109–130.

Watkins, K. (2004). Private Education and “Education for All”—or How Not to Construct an Evidence-based Argument: A Reply to Tooley. *Economic Affairs* 24 (4), 8–11.

OPEN SOCIETY FOUNDATIONS

EDUCATION SUPPORT PROGRAM

Budapest Office
Október 6. u. 12
H–1051 Budapest, Hungary
Tel: +36 1 882 3100

London Office
7th Floor Millbank Tower, 21–24 Millbank
London SW1P 4QP, United Kingdom
Tel: +44(0)20 7031 0200

New York Office
224 West 57th Street
New York, New York 10019 USA
Tel: +1 212 548 0600