

International Aid and Private Schools for the Poor

Smiles, Miracles and Markets

New Thinking in Political Economy series

Pauline Dixon, Professor of International Development and Education, Newcastle University, UK

This fascinating volume challenges the widely held belief that the state should supply, finance and regulate schooling in developing countries. Using India as an example, Dr. Pauline Dixon examines the ways in which private, for-profit schools might serve as a successful alternative to state-run systems of education in impoverished communities around the world.

'This book is a welcome addition to the limited corpus of literature on policy-oriented education research. . . There is no doubt that the author has passion for her subject, which she pursues through an excellent literature survey, the use of printed and published documents, as well as evidence collected through interviews and observations during her visits to India. . . The joy of reading this book is that Dixon is not afraid to put her arguments bluntly. Much more than this, the book is eloquent, engaging and convincing, and her recommendations are solid and professional.'

– Michael Omolewa, International Journal of Lifelong Learning

'This is a technical study written with passion by an author with a vocation. Unless suppressed by the educational establishment, it will transform its subject.'

– J.C.D. Clark, Times Literary Supplement (Named as one of the 'Books of the Year' by the Times Literary Supplement)

'Dixon's book is a refreshing and inspiring contribution to the debate over how to help the least of these among us. . . That education is the governments job is an article of faith among many. Dixon breathes new life into the case for market-provided education, particularly in very poor countries.'

– Art Carden, Regulation

'Pauline Dixon has intellectual rigour and an openness to new ideas, together with compassion and practicality. A great and unusual combination which I admire enormously.'

– Dame Sally Morgan, Adviser to the Board, Absolute Return for Kids and former chief advisor to Tony Blair, UK

'This fine book has a powerful message for policymakers and donors: the quality of schools matters even in poor countries; hence, the poor are abandoning failed state schools and enrolling their kids in low cost private schools. Instead of trying to close them down, the state and donors would do well to invest in children (through vouchers and cash transfers) and give parents a choice rather than create more atrocious, monopolistic state schools where teachers are absent and unaccountable.'

– Gurcharan Das, commentator and author, India Unbound and former CEO of Proctor and Gamble, Asia

'This is a must-read book for anyone interested in the plight of poor children, particularly for those readers concerned with learning about culturally sensitive and proven ways to reach out and help less fortunate children in developing countries. I was fascinated and outraged by the compelling stories and actual data that Dixon shares in this gem of an exposé. Most readers will similarly be shaken and incensed by the failure of billions of dollars spent on state schooling in Africa and India. Dixon makes a compelling case for the value and contributions of low cost private schools in slums and low income areas in developing countries. After reading this book, I



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– Steven I. Pfeiffer, Professor, Florida State University, US

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