From Social Protection to Social Capital of Children in Poverty: An Argument for Cross-Class Policy Design and Implementation

Tamo Chattopadhay[1] & Enrique Delamonica[2]
DRAFT: August 20, 2013

1. Introduction

Targeting social protection interventions for children in poverty is a well accepted policy paradigm. However, by virtue of their design, targeted policies - focused exclusively on poor children - remain largely disconnected from the domains of educational and social development of non-poor children in the society. This is because, in stratified societies of the world, rich and the poor children follow vastly divergent paths of education, socialization and social mobility. In this paper, we present research findings form an intervention that purposively links the well-being of the most vulnerable children with the educational and social development of more privileged children in the society. We submit that for child-focused social protection policies to truly become a transformative force for social inclusion and social mobility, such policies should be purposively conceived in conjunction with the education and developmental imperatives of children from more privileged backgrounds.

Our analysis is anchored in the theories of social capital, and informed by an interdisciplinary literature on child poverty, children's agency, and design thinking in innovation. We build our argument by first framing social protection in theories of social capital. We elaborate our argument by presenting two vignettes of qualitative research that illuminate the complementary aspects of cross-class design approaches in social protection policies for children. Building upon these theoretical and empirical insights, we develop the core tenets of a child-focused social protection framework that is intentional in its design and transformative in its impact to include both children in poverty and those from more privileged backgrounds.

---

[1] tamo.chattopadhay@gmail.com Corresponding Author, independent consultant, India and USA
[2] edelamonica@unicef.org Regional Advisor, Social Policy, Latin America & Caribbean

2. Social Capital as a Theorizing Lens

There is a growing discourse in the field of social protection that both vulnerabilities and protective measures to overcome them are rooted in human relationships and power-dynamics – as distance from or proximity to power. Indeed, socialization aspects of education remain significant mechanisms of reproducing social inequalities (Apple, 1982; Bourdieu, 1973; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). In particular, lack of access to resource-rich networks represents an important dimension of social inequality for low income adolescents since middle class adolescents are routinely provided with explicit and implicit institutional support within the social networks of their families, schools and other social organizations (Stanton-Salazar 2001).

We argue that the concept of adolescent[3] social capital, anchored in the social capital theories of Pierre Bourdieu, presents a robust theoretical foundation to capture the relational nature of social deprivation and social protection systems.

Bourdieu defined social capital as resources that individuals are able to procure by virtue of their relationships with others, or "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to the possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition" (Bourdieu, 1985, p. 248). Notably, such a framing is distinct from the dominant discourse that considers social capital as norms and networks that create and sustain 'functional communities' through inter-generational and intra-community relational linkages, or closures (Coleman, 1988). As Lareau succinctly observes: "In contrast to Coleman who portrays social relations as intrinsically valuable for helping children comply with dominant standards, Bourdieu critically reflects on the existence of dominant standards (or rules of the game in the field)" (Lareau, 2001, p. 81). Bourdieu's concept of social reproduction introduces notions of power and privilege within the social capital discourse and offers a powerful theory to examine differentiated socialization of adolescents in the context of unequal education in stratified societies (Lareau, 2001; Noguera, 2003; Stanton-Salazar, 1997; Stanton-Salazar, 2010).

---

[3] We use the term children here broadly as per UN / CRC definition of anyone under 18 – thereby including adolescents. In other words, the terms children are adolescents are used in this paper interchangeably.

Building upon these theoretical foundations, a theoretical framework of adolescent social capital can be conceived in three inter-linked domains: Relationships, Resources and Readiness. A fuller discussion on this 3R framework of adolescent social capital, including empirically grounded indicators specific adolescents in school contexts, is available elsewhere (Chattopadhay 2012); here we briefly present the main concepts. In the broadest sense, the Relationships domain can be understood as the networks that adolescents build among themselves, and with external stakeholders (broadly defined) through formal and informal contexts, processes and protocols. Research on adolescent relationships indicates that socio-economically disadvantaged adolescents might form social networks in ways that differ from their middle-class counterparts, and that these differences could inhibit the accumulation and transmission of important resources embedded within social networks (Stanton-Salazar, 1997).

In the concept of social capital, the resources of 'others', or the 'second-order' resources that are potentially available to the 'ego', occupy critical significance. Such resources could be material, informational, or psychosocial among others. Whether explicated as the ''strength of weak ties'' (Granovetter, 1974), ''bridging'' and ''linking'' social capital (Woolcock, 1998), or ''structural holes'' in overlapping networks (Burt, 2001), the notion of relationships formed across resource differentials emphasizes the idea that simply being in a network is not enough; it is important to be in a resource-rich network. These issues are salient in the context of children in poverty for whose benefit social protection policies are to be conceived. Not only are resource-rich social networks critical for social mobility (Maeroff, 1998; DeGraaf and Flap, 1988; Lin, 1999, 2001), but also 'resource-deficit' networks restrict one's ability to break out from intergenerational transfer of poverty (MacLeod, 1987) and may significantly increase adolescents' vulnerabilities to risk factors and life-threatening choices (Fernandez-Kelly, 1995). Indeed, the truncation of social networks across resource differentials remains a key mechanism of maintaining the status quo of disempowerment among communities trapped in concentrated poverty (Wacquant and Wilson, 1989; Wilson, 1987, 1996). Notably, resources might also entail important emotional and psycho-social support (Stanton-Salazar and Spina, 2005), and embody a sense of social connectedness, acceptance, and self-esteem (particularly for socio-economically marginalized adolescents) when networks are formed across social class (Putnam and Feldstein, 2003).

Finally, the concept of Readiness stems from the idea that social networks and the resultant social capital do not emerge on their own. Rather, acquisition of social capital requires deliberate investments of both economic and cultural resources for purposive action (Portes, 1998). Bourdieu himself coined the term 'sociability' to distinguish between social networks and the ability to sustain and utilize them over time (Bourdieu, 1987). While the notion of Readiness is akin to Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital, it is distinctive in its embodiment of a set of socially constructed and contextually defined critical skills that enables one to be effective in identifying, nurturing, and mobilizing relational resources. Similarly, while networking skill or network orientation (Stanton-Salazar, 1997) remains a core element of Readiness, the concept extends to the ability to negotiate with and navigate through structures of power and domination. It is in this wider context of social structures and relationships of power that the notion of Readiness needs to be understood.

These three interlinked domains—Relationship, Resource and Readiness—of the 3R framework provide the conceptual framework to capture and interpret how more privileged children and adolescents could act as conduits of social capital for their less privileged – indeed extremely vulnerable – peers. This conceptual framework foregrounds new possibilities for social protection policies for vulnerable children. For example, under the domain of Relationships, one would consider ways in which middle class adolescents can be inserted as meaningful actors in the social universe of vulnerable children. The Resources domain would signify the actions and mechanisms through which the middle class children could enlarge the pool of critical institutional resources for vulnerable children. Finally, the domain of Readiness could capture the policy induced mechanisms that enable middle class children to enhance the capacities of their less privileged counterparts so that they (latter) become adept in accessing privileged institutional contexts and creating resourceful networks on their own.

While it would be easy to understand how privileged children might have many resources to share with underprivileged children; viewing the former solely as the benefactors and the latter solely as beneficiaries in a social capital exchange would be utterly misguided. Indeed, we argue, and demonstrate through our empirical research, that the flow of resources occurs in both directions and that more privileged children have as much to receive as they give in such structured and sustained interactions.

3. Qualitative Insights on Cross-Class Interventions for Children

The qualitative research presented below was undertaken in the urban context of Kolkata (formerly Calcutta) - a metropolis in the eastern part of India.

While India has made important strides in fighting poverty, a stark reality of child poverty and deprivation continues in the country at alarming levels. Forty two percent of Indian children under five-year age are underweight – almost double the rate of sub-Saharan Africa – despite two decades of rapid economic growth (Naandi Foundation, 2011). Besides unequal income and spatial development (World Bank, 2011), gender and caste remain deep-rooted markers of social exclusion in India (Govinda, 2011).

The urban context of Kolkata is an embodiment of the promises and paradoxes that characterize India today in a globalized world. As India's eastern regional hub, Kolkata remains a vibrant city of 10 million with some of the country's most important educational and cultural institutions. At the same time, the prevalence of slums with inhabitable conditions, and the sheer number of poor and destitute people on its streets signal a city with high levels of poverty and disparities in child well-being. It is in this context of urban inequalities, one should situate the unique social interventions of Loreto Sealdah School in Kolkata (LSK) – an English medium, private, all girls K-12 institution catering traditionally to middle-class children.

We present two interventions from LSK - both involving middle class students from a school whose former leader had the vision of cross-class design of social protection – without naming it in so many words. In the first vignette we demonstrate the important benefits to vulnerable children – specifically child domestic laborers - emanating from the unique design of a cross-class intervention involving students from the school. In the second and more elaborate account, we capture the attitudes, values and perspectives of middle class children who go through a prolonged engagement of supporting the educational and social needs of most vulnerable children of the society. It is not a coincidence that both our intervention examples come from the same institution. This underscores the role of organization leadership and culture in embracing intentional designs for social innovation.

The Hidden Domestic Child Labor Program of Loreto Sealdah Kolkata

The problem of child domestic labor is widespread in urban India. Hidden behind closed doors of private homes, children toil often round the clock – with little comfort or opportunity to improve their lives. By many accounts, hidden domestic child laborers (HDCL) are highly vulnerable to physical and sexual abuse at the hands of their employers, with absolutely no recourse for protection from such violations of their rights and dignity. The restrictive access to the outside world – solely determined and enforced by the will of their employers - makes child domestic laborers the invisible children who remain most vulnerable and least accessible by law enforcement and civic support systems. While there are many laws against child labor in India, they are hard to enforce and the social acceptance of child domestic labor is high in a country with growing inequalities.

To combat these multiple violations faced by domestic child laborers, the visionary Principal of LSK Sister Cyril Mooney (retired since 2011) devised a unique action-based child rights advocacy program in 1995. Called the Hidden Domestic Child Labor program or HDCLP, the intervention enlisted LSK students (grades 5 through 7) to identify and support the HDCL-s in a child-to-child framework. The Loreto students would search about in their own neighborhoods and apartment complexes; and wherever they find a domestic child laborer, they approach the employers for permission to take him / her out for an hour or so a week to play with her. Few employers can withstand the persistence of determined 10 to 12 year olds who have made it their mission to befriend the HDCL-s and if possible even get them into school. By 2000, the intervention had been reaching large number of HDCL, and had become more structured – a daily 2 hour study and play session at two "Drop-In Centers" for the child domestic laborers in the neighborhood / borough.

A Monday afternoon visit to the center introduced the research team to 18 such children, best described as bright-eyed, well-mannered, and eager to learn. Atop a narrow staircase of a government building in one of the most upscale boroughs of the city – Salt Lake – the one-room drop-in center is both haven and place of learning, its sparse white walls punctuated with a partial blackboard and several Bengali teaching posters. Here, under the supervision of a "multi-purpose worker" - social worker cum literacy trainer- children would follow a non-formal educational program, as well as take part in group activities and plays in the local park.

Interviews with the children reveal both the immediacy of their vulnerabilities, and the singularity of the HDCLP intervention in their lives. Four such thumbnail profiles are presented below, the names of the children being altered.

JS is fifteen years old. She has been coming to the center now for almost two years and has received a scholarship to attend beauticians' school in hopes that she will be able to get a respectable job with a higher income. She started doing house work when she was ten years old. She had previously attended school and dropped out to begin working when she was in class three. She began working because her family needed her income, she never wanted to work. She was a live-in maid at the house she was working at, and her employers gave her meals. JS is unsure of how much she earned because her employers paid her parents directly. She reported that the family that she worked for was very nice although they had a daughter who was just older than JS who was very unkind to her. Now JS is living with her own family, her father a vegetable vendor and her mother a domestic. JS felt that her life has changed for the better ever since she first came to the drop-in center.

NK, aged 11, is a Muslim girl – a minority in the Hindu majority city (and country). She was the only child currently attending the drop-in center who had been physically abused by her formal employer. She started washing and cleaning at two homes beginning at age 9. In one home she labored beside her mother, who continues to hold down the job. Together they earned 350 rupees per month (about USD 7 in then exchange rate). Abuse occurred at the other home, where NJ was employed for one month. The man of that household slapped NJ, scared her with a stick, and used his status as a lawyer to threaten NJ about sending her father to jail. Also was made to do unpaid evening work such as watering the plants, dusting the floor, and washing clothes, NJ was eventually accused of theft. During that month her mother asked her to quit that job, but NJ continued since her family needed the money. Finally NJ decided to quit, called the attention of the people of the neighborhood, and requested her employer to pay her. She did get paid, though only 50 rupees when her owed wages totaled 500.

NJ currently works in one family home, and stays with her grandmother. Her mother has left the city and now lives in the village. Her biological father, described by her as wicked, left the family years ago, but her stepfather is a good man working as a mason. NJ has been

attending the drop-in center for a few months and studies in class I at the government school. She cites "studying" as her favorite aspect of school.

SD is about 12 or 13 years old. She has been coming to the drop-in center for two months. She attended school until grade two when she dropped out to start working because her family needed the money for food. She lives with her father who is a mason and her mother (a domestic maid) and younger sister. SD missed school a lot when she first started working. She is currently still working everyday from six to eight o'clock in the morning and four to seven o'clock in the afternoon. She earns 300 rupees (approximately USD 6) per month. All of her earnings go directly to her family. She does not like work, but she thinks she is too old to go to school. She isn't sure what she wants to do when she gets older, but she enjoys learning the crafts at the center.

ML is 10 years old and works in a" nice home" as a maid. She wakes up at 6 am, cleans and dusts the whole house, mops the floors, then cleans the dishes and utensils for breakfast. After the family of four (mother, father, two daughters) eats and heads to work/school, she again cleans the house and kitchen. Around 10 am she has a small lunch and plays with dolls alone on the balcony. She then prepares for the family's noontime meal. After she cleans up, she goes home and then heads to "school" at the drop-in center. She has no idea how much she is paid because her mother collects her wage at the end of each month. When asked how she felt about working in the home, ML simply replied, "I feel bad. I don't like it"

Clearly, the HDCLP program of LSK does not eradicate child domestic labor. However, as these brief sketches of daily lives of child domestic laborers underscore, the program makes a significant contribution to the social protection of children whom the traditional safety nets of social policy have failed to reach. Besides providing immediate benefits of play and study to poor children condemned to domestic servitude, the program is also helping to mobilize a social awareness campaign through middle class children's unique agency a peer campaign that makes it socially unacceptable for adults to tolerate child laborers in their homes and neighborhoods.

HDCLP remains a program whose real strength is derived from its unique design connecting privileged middle class children with the lives of the poorest and most vulnerable children and adolescents. It is this link that makes the rest of the traditional social protection

value chain - drop-in center, non-formal education, social worker cum literacy trainer – applicable and relevant.

The Rainbow Program of Loreto Sealdah School in Kolkata

Among the many school-linked social interventions conceived and implemented by Sister Cyril over four decades as the Principal of LSK, the Rainbow program surely qualifies as the signature project of the school that has inspired replication in other schools in the city and across the country.

It all started in 1979 when LSK broke down a major social barrier by opening its premises to young girls living in abject poverty on the streets of Kolkata. Back in 1979, this was an enormously bold experiment whereby the school's "regular" students from fifth grade onwards would be required to act as "instructors" in non-formal education activities for the underprivileged children or the "Rainbows". This model continues to date.

Beginning in 1996, the school converted its terrace to a night shelter for the approximately 200 Rainbow girls from the streets, providing them with a safe and supportive environment they could call 'home.' Today, the Rainbow program is organically integrated with the regular school day. Once registered into the program, the youngest girls are typically admitted to the kindergarten of LSK. However, the older Rainbows are unable to enroll at Loreto Schools since they lack the basic proficiency in English to attend the English medium program. Instead, the older girls are admitted into schools (government and private) where the instructions are in the languages spoken by them – Bengali, Hindi or Urdu. At the same time, for two hours every morning, before heading out to their respective schools, the Rainbow girls receive individual and group tutoring from the Loreto students themselves, who in turn receive pedagogic support from their classroom teachers. In a society with deep historical roots of class and caste divisions and enduring cultural and social stigmas, the notion of middle class and street children playing and studying together within an English medium private school is nothing short of an extraordinary social experiment and challenge to the status quo.

What follows is the summary of a qualitative study whose locus is the self-reported outlooks and attitudes of the Loreto students who participate in the Rainbow program and interact with the Rainbow children.

Research Question: How the multi-year interaction of Loreto students with the Rainbow children affects the attitudes and values of the former?

Methodology: A qualitative case study that employed a survey all LSK students in grades 6 through 10. The survey instrument contained both close-ended and open-ended questions. The students from these grades were selected due to their mandatory participation in Rainbow activities and their ability to complete written surveys in English.

Key Findings and Discussions: Student responses to both close and open-ended questions in the research instrument revealed that an overwhelming majority of students viewed the Rainbow program favorably. While a more elaborate account of these responses and their analyses are available elsewhere (Chattopadhay 2012), for this article we present highlights from three open-ended questions of the survey that in our opinion speak to the promise and limits of cross-class social protection interventions by and for children.

One of the most authentic measures of Loreto students' self-positioning relative to the Rainbow children whom they serve can be found in their responses to the open ended question on the survey that asked, 'How are you different from the girls that you teach in the Rainbow Program?' Overall, it is remarkable that, in a society of entrenched class, religion and caste divisions, the majority of students from one of India's premier English-medium private Catholic schools affirmed that there were no real differences between them and the children from the lower strata of the society they served.

Some younger girls (6th and 7th graders) found sameness in their shared human identity: "I feel no differences between me and them because we all are human beings" (6th grade). Others noted the shared social identity of being Indian citizens: "There is no difference. We all are children of our motherland India" (7th grade).

Although a minority, some students affirmed their difference from Rainbow children in terms of cultural and intellectual superiority: "I am different from them in culture" (8th grade), or: "Our behavior is not similar to them… we are better" (9th grade).

However, even while noting such differences many 9th and 10th graders and a few 8th graders observed that the Rainbow children differed from Loreto girls in terms of access to opportunities for education.

"We are all equal, but the difference is that we are getting better opportunities than them"

(10th grade).

As such, the majority of responses from the Loreto students demonstrated an authentic spirit of respect and hope with regards to the Rainbow children, notwithstanding the different worlds these two groups of children inhabit:

"We are same, as they need help, we just teach them. After some day, they will be like us only teaching others" (9th grade).

To seek a better understanding of how the Loreto students arrived at their notions of self-identity vis-à-vis children in the Rainbow Program, a second open-ended question asked: 'How have your feelings about the Rainbow Program students changed since your first day of working with them in the Class Five?' Overall, a clear majority of students across all grade levels responded with visible enthusiasm about how they felt more positively about the Rainbow children compared to the time when they stared teaching in 5th grade.

Only a handful of responses fell into the category of 'negative change' – and dealt with the behavioral aspects of the Rainbow children: "They were very good to me in class five but gradually I realized that they are becoming disobedient" (8th grade). One student did not shy away to express her outright disappointment: "Yeah (the feelings have changed)! Because now it has become boring" (10th grade). A handful of students qualified their "no change" response with a positive undertone: "My idea did not change in any way at all. I always thought they were very friendly" (6th grade). However, the favorable or 'positive change' comments spanned a range of issues and emotions: "I've become more attached with them over the years" (9th grade). a greater level of self-confidence and skills gained through the act of teaching was the recurring theme: "At first I felt like 'how can I teach them,' but now it gives me more pleasure to teach them" (9th grade). considerable number of students - both in lower and higher grades – reflected on how teaching the Rainbow children had affected their own values and attitudes: "They had made me a good girl" (8th grade). Older students reported their own growth as a result of their prolonged interactions with the rainbow children: "I have learnt many things from

them as tolerance, being happy with what I have" (10th grade); and: "I have become a genuine person" (10th grade).

Beyond rejecting prevailing stereotypes about poor children in India, and articulating their evolving experience of teaching in the program; many Loreto students indicated their heightened understanding of the hardships of Rainbow children as a key change in their views: "I have realised how difficult it is for them to go through the process of education & hence their attempt makes me respect them" (9th grade). And in emphatic words, a number of Loreto students observed that Rainbow children had potential to be just as good and successful as them:

"After interacting with them I got to know that they are as good as us & are good friends" (9th grade)

"I learnt that those deprived children have a dream and they try their level best to attain it. They know .. how to be happy in such an awful situation" (10th grade).

In India's deeply class-conscious society, it is not unlikely that the messages the Loreto girls are most likely to receive in their middle -class family and social circles is that poor children are not capable of studying and are pathologically different from middle-class children. Consequently, the positive views of the Loreto students speak to the transformative potential of the cross-class design of the Rainbow Program.

The final open-ended question in the research instrument dealt most directly with the perceived benefit of LSK students from their socialization with the Rainbow children. First students were asked to answer (yes or no) to the question: 'Have the Rainbow Children taught you anything?' Then, the follow-up question asked: 'If you answered yes to the question above, please share what the Rainbow Children have taught you.'

Overall, around third of students surveyed indicated that the Rainbow students had not taught them anything. The proportion of students with the 'no' response was highest among the 6th graders and lowest among the 9th and 10th graders – possibly indicating a change in perspective as students mature through the Rainbow program. Analyses of the affirmative responses of Loreto students is revealing in this regard.

For example, most 6th and 7th graders who gave affirmative answers to this question interpreted it in terms of specific skills and knowledge they have gained from the

Rainbow students: "They taught us new games which we don't know" (6th grade). In contrast, the affirmative answers of students in the older grades were rooted much more in critical reflections of their own intellectual growth and social awareness as a consequence of their prolonged interaction with the Rainbow children:

"They have taught us to think wider. They have taught us to mix with everybody in society no matter if they are poor, low caste or anything else" (8th grade), or:

"Humanity, friendliness, and helpfulness does not depend on skin colour, money, or power" (9th grade).

The Loreto students keenly observed that the everyday life of the Rainbow children who called Loreto Sealdah home was marked by a great sense of camaraderie and sharing of resources within a frugal existence. The attributes of this life – in particular relational skills - were important 'lessons learned' by the Loreto students in their socialization with the children of Rainbow program: "They taught us how to stay like a team and share everything with our friends" (6th grade); or: "How to help and protect others" (8th grade); and: "To adjust to the surroundings, to live in a big group and to live without their parents" (9th grade).

Student responses also indicated that the Rainbow program's experiential learning exposed middle-class students to lessons about the hardships of poverty and the dignity:

"They taught us about the hard life which the poor Indians have" (10th grade); and

"They taught that all children in the world have equal rights" (9th grade).

Some of the most poignant responses conveyed a deep self-reflection and awareness of the privileges and opportunity structures that the Loreto students came to discern through their engagement with the Rainbow children:

"I have got an idea that there are children in adverse situations who are fighting back and coping with the situation. Seeing them my own problems seem small" (9th grade)

Most inspiringly, a majority of responses from 9th and 10th grade students conveyed a deep appreciation of the struggles, resilience, and responsibility of the rainbow children:

"They taught us how to face problems in life. How to stay without parents, leading life alone, sacrifice every wish and how to cooperate with others and respect elders. To stand in life" (10th grade).

The fact that middle-class children recognized that they could learn something from the poorest children of the society is itself quite unique in an Indian social context. The emotional depth and intellectual authenticity of the responses of the LSK girls between sixth and tenth grades further speak to the transformational potential of the cross-class design of the social intervention where the conventional benefactor-beneficiary boundaries are blurred through mutual enrichment and growth.

Framing Mutual Enrichment and Growth in 3R-s of Social Capital

It is evident that there are significant benefits and enrichments that both the LSK students and their vulnerable cross-class counterparts – HDCL and Rainbows - derive from the interventions discussed above. We illustrate below that the 3R domains of social capital outlined earlier in the paper – Relationship, Resources and Readiness - provide a powerful conceptual framework to capture the scope and dynamics of these enrichments.

Relationships: As elsewhere in the world, the relatively better-off children in the Indian society do not experience class-based oppression, nor may they notice the intensity of poverty all around them in the city. Often, visible human suffering is internalized and justified in the middle class ethos as an 'unfortunate situation' about which some abstract notion of national development is to be blamed. Against this backdrop, by providing an authentic context for participation and relationships across social class boundaries, the Loreto Rainbow model makes the issues of oppression, human rights and everyday suffering real and relevant to those who are born into relatively privileged circumstances. Their 'near-peer' (Herzog, 2012) mentoring and counseling roles in the Rainbow and HDCLP programs provide LSK students with socialization opportunities to form new and abiding relationships beyond traditional social boundaries.

At the same time, the interventions enrich the relational universe of vulnerable children by socializing them with peers and near peers in middle class – providing new role models, cultural references and critical perspectives. The ingenious aspect of the LSK cross-class design lies in the fact that the interventions find opportunities for better-off children to build relationships with severely disadvantaged children in a manner that is developmentally appropriate.

Resources: Clearly, LSK is a "Myth Challenging" institution where it is possible for rich and poor children to come together, and for the school to function both as a day school and as a night-shelter (Flatt, 2008). The purposive cross-class engagement strategies manifest in the LSK interventions create and sustain multiple relational contexts that are focused on building the intra- and interpersonal assets of all children (Noguera & Boykin, 2011), promoting an ethos of inclusion (Zollers et al 1999) and providing all children an opportunity to thrive (Rodriguez, 2008).

However, it is necessary to recognize that the resources accruing to the child participants of LSK interventions are flowing from an organizational culture of LSK that anchors and provides institutional leadership to these interventions. A trusting, inclusive, and relational school culture enables LSK and its interventions to become a source of social and cultural capital (Noguera, 2003; Stanton-Salazar, 1997; Warren, 2005) for all children who walk through the door of the school or are affiliated with its social interventions.

Readiness: The cross-class interventions of LSK challenge the assumptions adults hold for children and the assumptions children hold about themselves and their futures.

It would be fair to say that interventions such as HDCLP and Rainbow go a long way to enhance the Readiness of the vulnerable children they serve. While the vignettes do not elaborate these aspects in great details; even the brief profiles of children in HDCLP demonstrate how they acquiring important cognitive and psycho-social skills through their engagement with the Drop-in Center activities. Similarly, there are studies that have shown how the Rainbow program benefits the Rainbow children in elevating their self-esteem as well as providing them with new social markers of aspirations and capacity for critical appraisal of their own reality.

It is probably expected that programs intended to truly empower vulnerable children should do so in the realm of Readiness. However, the Readiness premium of cross-class interventions can be also seen with regards to the "benefactors" – the students of LSK.

As evident in the words of LSK girls, participation in the Rainbow program provides them with an opportunity to develop whole new cultural repertoires (Rogoff et al., 2007) and roles to experience the power of their agency. Critical awareness of one's own agency is Readiness at its most profound. As noted by Sister Cyril herself: "It is important that our

children are helped to distinguish between justice and charity and to be engaged in works of justice, and be helped to reflect on why such action is necessary." (Cyril, 2002, as quoted in Flatt, 2008, p.35). This combination of theory and practice, of reflection and "hands-on compassion" (an expression coined by Sister Cyril), offers a vigorous foundation of civic education, democratic citizenship, and human rights (Bajaj, 2012; Banks, 2004; Levinson, 2011) to the students of Loreto Sealdah. Finally, the idea of socializing young girls to become aware of their own agency and to see themselves as change-makers (Flatt, 2008, p. 26) is equally significant in the context of the widespread gender bias against women in India's conservative, patriarchal society.

We revisit the centrality of children's agency in design of cross-class interventions later in the Policy Implications section of the paper.

4. Cross-Class Design – Policy Perspectives for Social Protection of Children

The preceding discussions – both the empirical and analytical segments – demonstrate that a social capital framework helps qualify the value propositions of cross-class social protection interventions involving children. The combined dynamics of intentional relational contexts and purposive exchange of resources lead to a readiness that can be best described as transformation of awareness or conscience (Freire, 2000) for both groups of children across boundaries of social class. This carries great potential for bridging the social divides in unequal societies. At the same time, the wider replication, adaptation and scalability of such cross-class interventions are not self-evident. They would require sustained efforts in and attention to a number of key areas and issues. These are discussed below.

Design as a Purpose

Designing cross-class interventions require a certain of level deliberation – since the forces of social and cultural reproduction can only be met with purposive counter-stratification efforts (Stanton-Salazar 1997). As the vignettes demonstrate, there is a palpable intentionality with which the school scaffolds its interventions in core values of service and compassion.

It should be also noted that resistance to the Rainbow program was formidable at the beginning, particularly from many middle class parents who did not want their children to socialize with children from the streets of Kolkata. However, three decades later, the Rainbow Program – founded on the belief that 'everyone receives to give' – has transformed Loreto Sealdah School into a unique laboratory of educational and social innovation.

The intentionality with which Loreto Sealdah designs its cross-class social interventions, also distinguishes it from more traditional cross-class strategies of reaching out to the vulnerable segments of the population – such as service learning (Cipolle, 2010). At Loreto Sealdah, service and learning are not merely connected; they are embedded in each other through a seamless integration within the regular school day. Teaching Rainbow children is not an activity outside of the Loreto students' schooling; it is an essential part of their education. Such a design gives a whole new meaning to the notion of 'service' in the case of Rainbow program.

Organizational Culture and Capacity

Intentional designs are products of purposeful organizations, and more specifically of purposeful organizational cultures. As one explores the LSK school, shares a cup of tea with the administrative staff, or speaks with the teachers about the Rainbow Program or the HDCLP, it becomes clear that every adult in the school believes in the vision that a school for the privileged few can be transformed to empower the most vulnerable and disenfranchised children of the society. In other words, the cross-class interventions of LSK described here are more than just programs for street children or child labors run by a school; they are the manifestation of an organizational culture of social inclusion and human dignity that defines the very character of LSK as an institution.

Agency of Children

At the core of the cross-class interventions discussed so far, there is recognition of the power of human agency (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998), specifically agency of children. While a growing body of literature celebrates children's agency and adolescents' participation for social justice; the power of that agency in cross-class contexts is rarely explored.

It can be argued that a cross-class intervention like HDCLP could only have been conceived with children – and not adults – as the protagonists. The structural and conceptual nuances of the design –initiated by a child (LSK student) and later complemented by an adult (multi-purpose worker at the Drop in Center) –masterfully builds on the agency of children in the delicate and complex terrain of 'shaming' a middle class norm.

As the vignettes establish, the unlocking of the agency of a child is intertwined with that child's formative identity. For young people, school remains an important site in formulating identities (Eckert, 1989). Adolescents are significantly influenced by their peers (Coleman, 1963) as they negotiate the boundaries of family, school, and community and derive their meanings and understandings of these multiple worlds (Phelan, Davidson & Cao, 1991). For students of Loreto Sealdah, their emerging identities are framed in the discourse of social inclusion and human rights and situated in the micro-context of their Rainbow / HDCL peer relationship within the macro-context of their schooling in a structurally unequal society.

As their own words indicate, the majority of Loreto students participating in the Rainbow program begin to identify and question the "normalcy" of entrenched social injustices, and indeed dare to imagine an alternative to the status quo relationships of power ((Bajaj, 2012; Tibbitts, 2005). Such constitutive processes create the praxis of identity and agency (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998; Holland et al., 1998) that enables Loreto Sealdah to avoid the unintended reinforcement of marginality prevalent in the poor and non-poor normative interactions in India and elsewhere in the world.

The fact that all LSK students – the future female professionals of India – are growing up with a deep appreciation and empathy for the needs of the less privileged in the society is probably the most promising aspect of the cross-class interventions carried out by the school. An equally powerful and promising aspect of the cross-class design is the enrichment of relational universe of vulnerable children for whom a whole new range of "possible" can finally come into existence. In other words, the cross-class interventions are promising for children because they simultaneously transform critical consciousness of the relatively privileged – while "demystifying success" (Noguera) for the relatively underprivileged.

Undoubtedly, in a society with deeply entrenched class, caste and religious structures,

the barriers to motivate and enable middle class and elite children to share their resources for poor children's wellbeing are formidable. Similarly, the internalized oppression (Stanton-Salazar) of vulnerable children remains a powerful deterrent to their aspirations, and help seeking strategies for fulfilling those aspirations. However, the LSK experience shows that there is great promise in developmentally appropriate cross-class interventions as they unlock the intrinsic agency and curiosity of children and young people by transforming their relational identities.

Relevance for Social Protection of Children in Urban Contexts

It can be argued that the urban context – with its proximity of the poor and non-poor – presents the most potent context for conceiving and implementing cross-class design in social protection policies for children.

Rapid urbanization is a hallmark of globalized commerce, culture and movements. The emergence of "global cities" as hubs of economy and politics is transforming the demographic distributions between the rural and the urban spaces around the world. Majority of adolescents in the developing countries live today in urban contexts. At the same time, the urban context today is increasingly unequal around the world – with large proportions of children and adolescents living in absolute and relative disadvantage and deprivations. A recent study (Born et al 2012) from Latin America demonstrates this intra-urban inequality and questions the conventional wisdom of "urban advantage" over rural under-development. According to the classification of that study, almost three out of every ten urban children and adolescents live in highly deprived households. This is significant given that three out of every four adolescents in LAC live in urban areas. In absolute terms, around 45 million children and adolescents live under highly deprived conditions; this is comparable to those living in rural areas of LAC region.

We argue that urban inequality presents the most natural setting for cross-class design of social protection policies towards children. As the LAC study asserts: "It is precisely the fact that their neighbors, i.e. children in not deprived households, are doing so well that the intra-urban disparities are so high." The study goes on to observe that the levels of deprivation are inadmissible given the rest of the urban context. Intra-urban inequality is disempowering to

disadvantaged children not only for the physical deprivations they suffer; but also for the internalized oppression, alienation and 'non-belonging" that result from their co-existence with the rich in the urban space. This disempowerment is aggravated by the social distancing by the middle class in most urban contexts around the world – in some more visibly than others. In their most recent work, Amartya Sen and Jean Dreze discuss the "opting out" of the urban middle class that is destroying the foundations of social development in India.

The intra-urban inequality is precisely the premise and inspiration for design thinking in social innovation in general and for cross-class child intervention design in particular. We argue that the widening gap and worsening vulnerabilities in social context of children require a "solution-based" approach – the hallmark of design thinking in innovation (Brown and Wyatt 2010). Our research from the urban context of India presents one such solution-driven approach to social protection of children. Clearly, the shape of the "solution" and the scope of cross-class design will vary greatly in different socio-cultural contexts.

5. Concluding Remarks

This paper has attempted to present the emergent contours of cross-class design for social protection policies for children. We also affirmed that the cross-class design approach   is situated within the emergent literature of design thinking in innovation. For policy makers and practitioners, below are the conceptual markers that they need to consider in pursuit of such policy solutions:

- Integrate social protection policies for children in poverty with authentic engagement opportunities for non-poor children and adolescents.
- Scaffold the engagement in a developmentally appropriate discourse of children's rights
- Prioritize urban contexts and intra-urban inequality
- Embed such policies in institutional contexts that are normative "sites" for children and adolescents – school, sports, culture, and so forth. The key is to move beyond the dialectic of benefactor-beneficiary, and instead champion the universality of rights and interdependencies of all members of the society

- Find conceptual intersection between the constructs of disparities, adolescent participation and social protection of children.

- Have cross-class policy design informed by the differentiated reward and incentive structures that must be carefully aligned to bring together young people with pronounced disparities reflected in their identities and aspirations.

References

Apple, M. W. (1982). *Cultural and economic reproduction in education: essays on class, ideology, and the state*. London; Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Anand, G. (2011, June 4). Class struggle: India's experiment in schooling tests rich and poor. *Wall Street Journal Asia*. Retrieved January 7, 2012, from http://online.wsj.com/article/SB100014240527487040839045763373737586474 78.html

Bajaj, M. (2012). *Schooling for social change: the rise and impact of human rights education in India*. New York: Continuum International Publishing Group.

Banks, J. (Ed.) (2008). *Diversity and citizenship education.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass

Bourdieu, P. (1973). Cultural reproduction and social reproduction. In Brown R. (Ed.), *Knowledge, Education and Social Change.* London: Tavistock.

Bourdieu, P., & Passeron, J. C. (1977). *Reproduction in education, society and culture.* California: Sage Publications.

Brown, Tim and Jocelyn Wyatt. 2010. Design Thinking for Social Innovation. Stanford Social Innovation Review. Winter 2010

Carnoy, M., & Levin, H. M. (1985). *Schooling and work in the democratic state*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Cipolle, S. (2010). *Service-learning and social justice: engaging students in social change*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield

Coleman, J. S. (1963). *The adolescent society: the social life of the teenager and its impact on education.* New York: Free Press.

Cyril, S. M. (2002). *Identity, Integrity and Interconnectedness.* Keynote address at International Conference of Loreto Educators. Loreto House Kolkata. 5 November, 2002

Eckert, P. (1989). *Jocks and burnouts: social categories and identity in the high school.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Emirbayer, M., & Mische, A. (1998). 'What is agency?' *American Journal of Sociology, 103*(4), 962-1023.

Finnan, C., & Swanson, J. (2000). *Accelerating the learning of all student: cultivating school, classroom and individual change*. Westview Press

Flatt, John. (2008). *Loreto day school Sealdah: meeting the challenges of a changing India.* Lulu Publishers.

Freire, Paulo. 2000. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. London: Continuum. (First published 1970)

Freire, Paulo. 1998. *Pedagogy of Freedom: Ethics, Democracy and Civic Courage*. Lanham,

MD: Lanham, Rowman & Littlefield. (First published 1974)

Govinda, R. (Ed.) (2011). *Who goes to school? Exploring exclusion in Indian education.* New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Herzog. (2012). *Reflecting on Compagnonnage*. Learning In and Out of School: Education Across the Globe Conference. Kellogg Institute for International Studies, University of Notre Dame.

Holland, D., Lachicotte, W. J., Skinner, D., & Cain, C. (1998). *Identity and agency in cultural worlds.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

MHRD - Ministry of Human Resources and Development. (2009). The right of children to free Naandi Foundation. (2011). The HUNGaMA (Hunger and Malnutrition) Survey Report 2011.Retrieved August 31, 2012 from http://hungamaforchange.org/HungamaBKDec11LR.pdf

Noguera, P. (2003). *City schools and the American dream: reclaiming the promise of public education.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Noguera, P. A. and A. Wade Boykin. (2011). *Creating the Opportunity to Learn: Moving from Research to Practice to Close the Achievement Gap*. Washington, ASCD

Nurenberg, D. (2011, March 21). What does injustice have to do with me? A pedagogy of the privileged. *Harvard Educational Review, 81*(1), 50-64.

Phelan, P., Davidson, A. L., & Cao, H. T. (1991). Students' multiple worlds: Negotiating the boundaries of family, peer, and school cultures. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, 22(3), 224–250

Pratham. (2011). *The annual status of education report for 2010*. New Delhi: Pratham

Born, Diego, Colamarco, Delamonica and Minujin. Children, Adolescents and Intra-urban inequalities in Latin America and the Caribbean. 2012. Diego Born, Victoria Colamarco, Enrique Delamónica, and Alberto Minujin

Rogoff, B., Moore, L. C., Najafi, B., Dexter, A., Correa-Chávez, M., & Solís, J. (2007). Children's. In J. Grusec & P. Hastings (Eds.), *Handbook of socialization* (pp. 490–515). New York: Guilford Press.

Stanton-Salazar, R. (1997). A social capital framework for understanding the socialization of racial minority children and youths. *Harvard Educational Review, 67*(1), 1-40.

Tibbitts, F. (2005). Transformative learning and human rights education: taking a closer look. *Intercultural Education, 16*(2), 107-113.

World Bank. (2011). *Perspectives on Poverty in India*. Washington, D.C.: World Bank