Deborah J. Johnson
DeBrenna LaFa Agbényiga
Robert K. Hitchcock
Editors

Vulnerable Children

Global Challenges in Education, Health, Well-Being, and Child Rights

Foreword by
James Garbarino

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Editors
Deborah J. Johnson
Department of Human Development
and Family Studies
Michigan State University
East Lansing, MI, USA

DeBrenna LaFa Agbényiga
School of Social Work and Department of
Human Development and Family Studies
Michigan State University
East Lansing, MI, USA

Robert K. Hitchcock
Department of Geography
Center for Global Change
and Earth Observations
Michigan State University
East Lansing, MI, USA

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Foreword

My mentor, Urie Bronfenbrenner, was fond of quoting a line from the German poet Goethe that translated as "What is most difficult? That which you think is easiest, to see what is before your eyes." I thought of this in connection with this book because one of its principal themes is the "invisibility" of vulnerable children around the world, indeed that the fact of their invisibility contributes to their vulnerability. In one sense, it is hard to imagine that any children are invisible in the face of contemporary globalization and access to information. Yet, these children often are invisible in at least three ways. First, they are hidden away behind doors that few outside can open. I visited Cambodia in 2010, in the company of a couple of professional friends who work for World Vision. We spent some time in a village where the local program had reported, via a house-to-house survey, that there were virtually no children with disabilities. Yet, when we gained access to a few homes and gently persisted in our intrusion, we identified several children who clearly qualified as having disabilities. The local stigma about disabilities made these vulnerable children invisible, and that very invisibility added to their vulnerability (because it made it highly unlikely that they would ever benefit from the educational services that were being made available through World Vision's efforts).

Second, some vulnerable children are hidden "in plain sight," in the sense that they become part of the social background even though they are needy, and thus do not appear on the humanitarian radar screen. Traumatized children in many societies exemplify this kind of invisibility. When I visited Kuwait and Iraq for UNICEF after the first Gulf War (in 1991), I spoke with many children who obviously felt internal and external pressures to "be ok" despite having been traumatized by their experiences with war and political violence. Parents often find it intolerable to stay with the pain of knowing their children have been psychologically wounded, particularly when there are political forces at work around (and perhaps within) them that require a speedy return to normality for everyone.

Third, vulnerable children may be invisible in the sense that they are seen one-dimensionally, only as passive victims rather than as complex and complete human beings with capacities for recovery, resilience, and transcendence. Visiting with young girls who had been rescued from sex trafficking and received trauma-focused

cognitive behavioral therapy, life skills coaching, and protection in Cambodia in 2010, I was impressed with how many of them had marshaled their internal and external resources for a positive life.

Vulnerability and resilience are two sides of the same developmental coin in the lives of children. The first refers to the escalating odds of harm as risk accumulates; the second, to the odds of physical and psychological integrity as developmental assets, social support, and spiritual resources are marshaled. For me, each is linked to three "secrets" that underlie the experience of developmental risks and assets, in the form of trauma, on the one hand, and the three "secrets" that underlie thriving, on the other (Garbarino, 2011).

Three Dark Secrets of Vulnerability

The first of these three secrets is that despite the comforting belief that we are physically strong, the fact of the matter is that the human body can be maimed or destroyed by acts of physical violence. Images of graphic violence demonstrate the reality of this. I call this *Snowden's Secret* after a character in Joseph Heller's 1961 novel "Catch 22," who is grievously wounded during a World War II mission on an American military aircraft. Hit by antiaircraft fire, airman Snowden appears to have suffered only a minor injury when first approached by fellow crewman Yossarian. However, when Snowden complains of feeling cold, Yossarian opens the young man's flak jacket, at which point Snowden's insides spill out onto the floor. This reveals Snowden's Secret: that the human body, which appears so strong and durable, is actually just a fragile bag filled with gooey stuff and lumps, suspended on a brittle skeleton that is no match for steel. Children can learn this secret from their visual exposure to car crashes, shootings, and terrorist attacks, and it is one of the principal sources of trauma for them.

The second dark secret is that the social fabric is as vulnerable as the physical body, that despite all their power, institutions and authority figures cannot necessarily keep you safe when an enemy wishes you harm. Experiences in which parents, teachers, and other adults are present but unable to protect children effectively reveal this to children—and by extension to adults as well. I call it *Dantrell's Secret* in commemoration of a little boy in Chicago who, in 1992, was walked to school by his mother. When they arrived, teachers stood on the steps of the school, and a police car was positioned at the street corner. Nonetheless, as 7-year-old Dantrell Davis walked the 75 ft from his mother to his teacher, he was shot in the head and killed. Learning this secret can turn us away from the structures and values of social authority to fend for ourselves out of a sense of self-defensive adaptation, knowing now that society cannot protect you, that the social fabric of power and authority can be as fragile as the human body.

The third secret is *Milgram's Secret*, the knowledge that anything is possible when it comes to violence; there are no limits to human savagery. Stanley Milgram was the researcher who conducted what was certainly among the most controversial

experiments ever conducted by an American psychologist. He organized a study in which volunteers for an experiment on "memory" were positioned in front of a control board designed to allow them as "teacher" to administer electric shocks to an unseen "learner." The question underlying the study was: Would the "teachers" administer what they knew were painful electric shocks to the "learner" if they were told it was their duty to do so? Before conducting the experiment, Milgram surveyed people as to what they thought would happen in his experiment. Most people said that they thought "normal" people would refuse to inflict such torture and that only a few "crazy" sadists would do so. The results of the study were that although many participants were uncomfortable doing so, 65 % of the "teachers" administered the torture—sometimes cursing the "learner" as they did so. This is Milgram's Secret, that comforting assumptions about what is and what is not possible all disintegrate in the face of the human capacity to commit violence when ordered to do so by an authority figure, particularly "for a good cause."

Milgram's Secret is coming to grips with the fact that any form of violence that can be imagined can be committed. True believers will fly planes into buildings at the cost of their own and thousands of other lives or will strap explosives on their bodies, walk into a school full of children, and detonate the explosives or will spread lethal chemical, biological, and radioactive toxins in the food and water of a community. Fathers and mothers will murder their children. Mobs will beat innocent students to death. Soldiers will burn down houses with their occupants inside. Whatever can be imagined can be done. Learning this secret can drive children and youth to emotional shutdown or hedonistic self-destruction and adults to despair.

Are there three *bright* secrets of resilience to parallel the three *dark* secrets of vulnerability? I believe so.

The Three Bright Secrets of Resilience

Benedict's Secret: Mellen-Thomas Benedict "died" from a brain tumor in 1982, returning to life an hour and a half later. He provided a detailed account of his "near-death experience" and has spent the years since making sense of his experience and its implications for how he lives his life and communicating its implications to others (www.mellen-thomas.com). The core insight he returned with is this: physical experience is just the beginning of human reality. Human beings *are* spiritual beings having a physical experience on this planet, and encounters with the magnificence and beauty of the natural and social worlds can reveal this truth, even if this encounter only comes in death.

The Good Samaritan's Secret: The Parable of the Good Samaritan appears in the biblical book of Luke (Chap. 10: verses 25–37) and has come to represent a compelling message about compassion in the face of adverse social conventions and self-doubts. The Samaritan helps a victimized stranger, who belongs to a group with whom Samaritans share an abiding hostility. The message is this: the human capacity for goodness is amazing, and it offers a path to Heaven. Encounters with altruism

and service can inspire an appreciation for the wondrous positive potential of human life that elevates us and, in so doing, stimulate transformational grace.

Buddha's Secret: After nearly 10 years of searching, the Indian prince Siddhartha realized that enlightenment is possible. He spent the rest of his time on Earth exploring and communicating the practices and beliefs that flowed from this insight. Buddha's Secret is that Heaven is here in every present moment for those who train themselves to know how to see and feel it. Knowing this pushes aside conventional fears, concerns, and suffering and puts our divine opportunities center stage. It is resilience built on the human capacity for finding meaning in life.

As children grow and develop, these three "bright secrets" play a large role in their path, even if at first mostly implicitly and perhaps even "unconsciously." As their minds develop, they more and more come to reflect the fundamentals embodied in these secrets: children know that relationships of love and friendship are paramount, that there is goodness in the world, and that joy and meaningfulness are to be valued. Of course, like adults (and perhaps particularly adolescents), children can be deluded by the social toxins of consumerism, cynicism, and materialism. When they do, it is judgment upon the heads of adults who fail to teach them through example.

As we seek to understand the lives of vulnerable children, we can join the authors of this book in seeking out not only the facts of vulnerability in the lives of children but also the sources of resilience. The dark and bright secrets help us do that. Beyond this list lie the conventional lists of "risk factors" and "developmental assets" or "sources of resilience." No such discussion is complete, however, without attending to the concept of "hardiness."

What are the elements of hardiness? One is commitment rather than alienation. People who do not withdraw from life show greater resistance to the effects of experiencing traumatic events. In the face of war or community violence or personal tragedy, one person says, "No matter what happens I still believe there is goodness in the world," while a second responds with, "I think all you can do is get as far away as you can and just forget about it."

A second element of hardiness is feeling in control rather than feeling powerless. Particularly in Western cultures like our own, people place a high value on feeling powerful and in control, and psychological terms like "agency" and "effectance" speak to this. It is understandable that if people feel totally out of control, they are more likely to succumb to the psychological and philosophical effects of traumatic events. One person responds, "There are things I can do to stay safe," while another says, "I am completely at the mercy of the bad things in the world; there's nothing I can do about it."

A third element of hardiness is seeing the world in terms of challenge rather than threat. One person says, "We can find ways to make things more peaceful and I can be a part of those efforts," while another says, "All I feel is fear; fear that it will happen again and there is nothing I can do about it." Building upon these findings, psychologist Salvatore Maddi and his colleagues have developed a training program to enhance hardiness (the "HardiTraining Program"). Its aim is to increase individual resilience in the face of life's bad things and in the face of trauma.

It is not all this simple, of course. We must be careful not to assume that people who are coping well with trauma in their day-to-day activities ("functional resilience") are necessarily at peace inside ("existential resilience"). Some traumatized people who are very competent and successful on the outside are tormented on the inside. I have a friend who is spectacularly successful as a child psychologist, but whose inner life is tormented, and his intimate relationships often fractured because of his childhood experiences of physical and psychological maltreatment. Any truly positive psychology must go beyond day-to-day functional resilience to consider the core inner psychological virtues of "thriving," "happiness," and "fulfillment." The key is to find ways to harness the human capacity for imagination in order to reprocess traumatic challenge into inspiration.

The Dalai Lama teaches that compassion is more than a feeling dependent upon the sympathetic character of the other. It is the ability to remain fixed on caring for the other person regardless of what that person does, not just out of sympathy for the other person but from the recognition that it is best for ourselves to live in a state of compassion rather than hatred, in part because it stimulates forgiveness. One of the Dalai Lama's most important lessons is this: true compassion is not just an emotional response but a firm commitment founded on reason. That is what we find in this volume: intelligence and knowledge in the service of compassion for vulnerable children. Amen to that.

Chicago, IL, USA James Garbarino, Ph.D.

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Preface

In the summer of 2006, we attended an administrative retreat commensurate with our roles in the college at the time, while also being active scholars with global interests in children. Our collective and interdisciplinary interests somehow became known to one another and Dr. Agbényiga asked Drs. Hitchcock and Johnson to assemble for a discussion around the Global and Area Thematic Initiative (GATI)[1] grants at MSU. We represented the right mix of social science disciplines—social work, human development and families studies, and anthropology—to cover an expanse of global issues of children's development from varying vantage points.[2] By the end of the 2-day meeting, we were a team having settled on writing a grant for a 3-year project that would bring in scholars from across the globe, develop a conference, and end in a research-based product that could be widely disseminated. The great adventure had begun; new relations, exciting ideas, and contacts were being forged.

We conceived a project that would bring together scholars involved in international work who might wish to make mutual contact and learn about varying approaches to conducting global work and solving the problems of invisible and vulnerable children in the world. Indeed we found that the ideas were intriguing and of value to researchers engaged in such work.

There were three layers of goals we wished to achieve. In the initial phase of the university-wide colloquium series, we intended to provide a forum to explore

[1] The original project was sponsored by the Global and Area Thematic Initiative (GATI) at Michigan State University. Funding for GATI is provided by the US Department of Education through MSU's Title VI-funded National Resource Centers including the African Studies Center, Asian Studies Center, Center for Advanced Study of International Development, and Women and International Development Program (WID) as well as the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies and the Office of the Dean of International Studies and Programs with support from the Office of the Provost.

indigenous perspectives on "undefended" and children's issues internationally. We considered the term "Indigenous" knowing that it does not apply to every cultural context and sought to learn more about the contexts in which it was a relevant and meaningful term. National scholars from Ghana and Australia were invited along with one other scholar whose work represented Indigenous views on education and learning in South America. We planned small gatherings with formal presentations and informal discussion afterward to address perspectives and systems of meaning beyond Western thought. And, of course, the most important ingredients for that process of discovery were food and an informal atmosphere.

In the second phase we planned a conference around the broader themes of the grant, *Undefended Children in Global Contexts*, which has now been updated to incorporate the more broadly used term "vulnerable" children. Here the goal was to bring together international and domestic scholars conducting work on unprotected and invisible children globally as a great opportunity for sharing research, fostering collaborations, and providing forums for addressing children's rights issues as well as solving the policy and intervention problems that emerged in the discussion of the research. One of our greatest honors was to have the then Hon. Dr. Judith Mbula Bahemuka, a Kenyan sociologist and recent ambassador to UN as well as High Commissioner to Canada from Kenya, accept our invitation to keynote the conference.

In the third stage we thought it critical to capture the excellent work shared and produced for dissemination to a wider audience, hence this edited volume. Not only is our anticipation that this volume will be used to further a better understanding of vulnerability and child distress for scholarly use, but also to expose child rights issues and provide updated material for classroom teaching.

Despite the great ideas we launched, we did need assistance to make it all this happen. Our efforts might not have come to such successful fruition if it were not for the herculean efforts of graduate students and other staff who supported us at various stages, Yeon Soo Kim, Linda Hancock, Rosa Homa, Lisa Parker, Lynn Lee, Adell Flourry, Nancy Fair, and Shondra Marshall. Special thanks to Dr. Andrea G. Hunter and Rosa Homa who provided vital feedback and editorial assistance. Key administrators in our departments, Karen Wampler and Gary Anderson, made it possible to acquire additional resources and supports. We are most appreciative of the talent and the passion demonstrated by the contributors to this volume. It is their work, their observations that bring the lives of the world's children seemingly effortlessly to the doorstep of the reader.

East Lansing, MI, USA

Deborah J. Johnson
DeBrenna LaFa Agbényiga
Robert K. Hitchcock

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Contributors

Emmanuel K. Adusei Community Development Specialist & Researcher, Osu, Accra, Ghana

DeBrenna LaFa Agbényiga School of Social Work and Department of Human Development and Family Studies, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI, USA

Robert Kwame Ame Tshepo Institute for the Study of Contemporary Africa, Wilfrid Laurier University, Brantford, ON, Canada

Judith Mbula Bahemuka Department of Sociology, University of Nairobi, Nairobi, Kenya

Laura Bates University Outreach and Engagement, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI, USA

Megan Biesele Kalahari Peoples Fund, Austin, TX, USA

Jill Brown Department of Psychology, Creighton University, Omaha, NE, USA

Anne Ferguson Anthropology and Center for Gender in Global Context, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI, USA

Simon Forrest Centre for Aboriginal Studies, Curtin University, Perth, Western Australia

Andrea Freidus James Madison College, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI, USA

Lia B.L. Freitas Institute of Psychology, Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul, Porto Alegre, RS, Brazil

James Garbarino Loyola University Chicago, Chicago, IL, USA

Deborah J. Johnson Department of Human Development and Family Studies, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI, USA

Tom Luster Department of Human Development and Family Studies, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI, USA

Jill R. Gnade-Muñoz Department of Modern Languages and Literatures, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Lincoln, NE, USA

Robert K. Hitchcock Department of Geography, Center for Global Change and Earth Observations, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI, USA

Guofang Li Department of Teacher Education, College of Education, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI, USA

Rita S. Lopes Institute of Psychology, Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul, Porto Alegre, RS, Brazil

A. Bame Nsamenang University Cooperation Division, University of Bamenda (UBa), Bamenda, North West Region, Cameroon

Human Development Resource Centre (HDRC), Bamenda, North West Region, Cameroon

Dolphine Odero-Wanga Applied Community Development Studies, Egerton University, Njoro, Kenya

Cesar A. Piccinini Institute of Psychology, Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul, Porto Alegre, RS, Brazil

Desiree Baolian Qin Department of Human Development and Family Studies, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI, USA

Meenal Rana Department of Education, Brown University, Providence, RI, USA

Joanne Riebschleger School of Social Work, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI, USA

Beverly C. Sealey Simmons College, School of Social Work, Boston, MA, USA

Arvind Singhal Department of Communication, University of Texas @ El Paso, El Paso, TX, USA

Tania M. Sperb Institute of Psychology, Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul, Porto Alegre, RS, Brazil

Jonathan R.H. Tudge Department of Human Development and Family Studies, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, Greensboro, NC, USA

Chapter 1
Vulnerable Childhood in a Global Context: Embracing the Sacred Trust

Deborah J. Johnson, DeBrenna LaFa Agbényiga, and Judith Mbula Bahemuka

> *There is no trust more sacred than the one the world holds with children. There is no duty more important than ensuring that their rights are respected, that their welfare is protected, that their lives are free from fear and want and that they can grow up in peace.*
>
> (Kofi Annan)

Vulnerable Child: Invisible, Unprotected, and Undefended

Globally we have departed from the sacred trust. Many of today's children exist as invisible, undefended, and unprotected members of society, in essence, vulnerable, (Human Rights Watch 1999). For millions of children, the main cause of their vulnerability is due to violations to their human rights. These violations are encapsulated in issues of (1) invisibility due to family secrecy and abuse, mobility within and across national and international borders, poor government oversight, etc;

D.J. Johnson, Ph.D. (✉)
Department of Human Development and Family Studies,
Michigan State University, 552 W. Circle Drive, East Lansing,
MI 48824, USA
e-mail: john1442@msu.edu

D.L. Agbényiga, Ph.D. LMSW
School of Social Work and Department of Human Development and Family Studies,
Michigan State University, 201 F Berkey Hall, 509 E. Circle Drive, East Lansing,
MI 48824-1118, USA
e-mail: agbenyi1@msu.edu

J.M. Bahemuka, Ph.D.
Department of Sociology, University of Nairobi, Nairobi, Kenya
e-mail: judithbahemuka@yahoo.com

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(2) protections that are either poor or nonexistent, families weakened by war, disease and poverty, inadequate or absent laws, policies, supports, or interventions UNICEF, 2005a; (3) and "undefendedness", the inability or lack of will by adults, communities, or governments to be the advocates ensuring basic needs and the betterment of children's lives. The incidences of threats trauma and exploitation are numerous, indeed, what does it mean to be a vulnerable child today?

Threats to child security come in many forms, among the most devastating are war and disease that leave children without parents for long periods of time or permanently. Children are losing their parents in record numbers; 132 million children are orphaned in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean (UNICEF, 2005a, 2005b, 2012). Unaccompanied minors and orphans defined as having lost one or both parents are highly vulnerable to abuses by family and strangers UNICEF 2006d. One surviving parent or grandparents may not be adequate to guarantee the child's right to protection. Among orphaned youth, are refugee children and youth, numbering as many as 15 million (UNICEF, 2012). Refugee children are crossing national and international borders to flee prosecution, seek asylum, and end long-term displacement. The experience of parental loss (Luster, Qin, Bates, Johnson, & Rana, 2009) reverberates throughout life, and among the challenges facing young survivors is the unexpected need to take on adult responsibilities.

Exploitation and stigma add to the burden of orphaned children and children in fosterage. The vulnerability that arises from health related stigma, like HIV/AIDS, can cause them to disappear from view of other living relatives and their communities. The risk is compounded when feelings of shame and parental loss are used to recruit them as child soldiers (HRW, 1994a). The exploitation is complete when the child soldier is then exposed to torture and maltreatment during training to force his compliance (HRW, 1992; Wessells, 2010).

Child laborers in industry or on farms are also invisible and extremely difficult to defend. It is estimated by the International Labor Organization (ILO) (IPEC, 2011) that 215 million of the world's children are caught up in labor of various kinds. In 2012, 115 million children were engaged in what has been reported as some of the worst forms of child labor (Agbényiga, 2006; IPEC, 2011; UNICEF, 2012), including thousands of child slaves (Lee-Wright, 1990; Seabrook, 2001). Undefended children are recruited by adults because they are cheap, often submissive, and more easily trained than adults. Children not paid for their labor are also the unseen victims of some of the most hazardous forms of labor (IPEC, 2011).

Another 100 million children are engaged in work for pay in support of families or other child relatives (HRW, 2000; UNICEF, 2012). Children work because they may be the sole source of support to themselves or their families. Critical distinctions are made among harsh, unsafe, involuntary practices, that create vulnerability, and safer family, community-based, graduated apprenticeship approaches, mutually valued by the child and the family (Agbényiga, 2006, 2011). Irrespective of the distinctions among the contexts of children's labor, millions of children continue to be engaged in these activities at early ages. Even these safe forms of work can be disruptive to educational attainment for boys and especially for girls.

While child labor can be a short-term fix to the immediate needs of the child and the family, education is an important pathway to escaping the long term constraints

of poverty, race, and gender. These opportunities for children's futures and their development are not well protected. Yet, 115 million children are not in school, and two thirds of them are girls (IPEC, 2011; World Bank, 2011). The supports that children need to ensure educational opportunity involve multiple challenges. Education is disrupted when the care of parents, perhaps ill from HIV/AIDS, falls to young girls (HRW, 2000; UNICEF, 2006c) as with other household duties. Given current trends like these, even with extensive efforts in expanding education and training, by 2015, there will still be more than 70 million children who are not attending school, most of them in Africa. Children encounter many obstacles that interfere with their educational attainment or effective schooling experiences; labor and gender are among the most common, but there are others. Ethnic and racial discrimination accounts for a number of systemic interactions between families, communities, and schools, leading to overt exclusion from school, significant deterrents to attendance, and early exit. A UNICEF report (2008) found that disproportionately, 101 million children currently out of school were ethnic minority or indigenous children. So one consequence of discrimination is limited or complete lack of access to school.

Even when children attend school, they may be plagued with cultural, religious, or racial discrimination that disrupt attendance and threaten their educational attainment and economic empowerment through adulthood (UNICEF, 2005a, 2006a). Discriminatory treatment in school can push children and youth out of school before they complete their educational goals. Educational inequality of schools globally may exist not only as poor quality education and resources but more insidiously as cultural domination in schools and school systems. In this process the identities and cultures of children are subjugated to a singular set of ethnocentric values reinforced by policy, curriculum, and transactions with school personnel (Biesele & Hitchcock, 2000). Under these circumstances, the child's right to agency (Nsamenang, 2012), cultural identity, and self-determination are undermined and sometimes arrested. This oppression drives the child toward further invisibility increasing educational exclusion while blocking access to social and economic success (UNICEF, 2005a).

Mental Health and Well-Being

Children's vulnerabilities are interwoven by the commons threads of oppression, poverty, lack of cultural security, family stability, child labor, and the many faces of discrimination. Undefended status, not only limits educational opportunities and quality of life but threatens physical and mental health both in childhood and later in adulthood. Long-term psychological trauma is a problem for children who experience war, those with backgrounds as child soldiers, and those who have been denied their religious or cultural freedoms (HRW, 1994b, 1996; UNICEF, 2006d). Reintegration into society or into healthier families occurs eventually after demobilization but is then fraught with emotional and psychological

difficulty as are other forms of reentry (HRW, 1992, 1994b, 1994c, 1996; UNICEF, 2006b). For example, Sudanese refugee youth entering the USA and living with American foster families suffer ongoing effects of PTSD (e.g., sleep disturbance, depression, alcoholism) (Bates et al., 2005; Luster, Johnson, & Bates, 2008) but are also resilient (e.g., completion of high school and college, maintenance of job and family, development of bridging organizations for Sudan) (Luster, Johnson, et al., 2008). Their resilience is bolstered by a range of supports, including family, and institutional services. Their example show us how the course of children's lives can be changed, perhaps even saved through mental health and other support services. However, globally, mental health services are highly underdeveloped for children (Saxena, 2005).

Child as Entity: Culturally Bound and Centered Development

Considerations of perspective and voice are central when addressing themes in global context. Indigenous voices and cultural variation must not be ignored in our discourse and assessment of common problems, and problems across contexts. Nuances associated with cultural perspective, practice, or social history should not lose our attention in the discussion and development of strategies or policies (Johnson, 2000; Johnson, Dyanda-Marira, & Dzvimbo, 1997). These issues are especially important when applied to the often eclipsed voices of children.

Agbényiga (2011) and others (Bahemuka & Mutie, 2008; Giovannoni, 1995) have described how Western conceptualizations of adulthood have shifted to accommodate industrial, economic, and social change and how these factors may differ in whole or in part for children in various parts of Africa and elsewhere. Developmental researchers and theorists (Nsamenang, 1993; Super & Harkness, 1986) have identified culturally bound features of development and child agency (Nsamenang, 2012). For instance, in understanding child development outside of Western cultural contexts, Nsamenang (1993) argues for additional stages in human development that families and community members might consider and that could have importance in the development of practice for problems such as early infant death or the meaning ascribed to child play vs. child work. These differences in context and perspectives on development shape expectations and define what is normal and healthy for children where they live.

In this volume we want to respect and be inclusive of these diverse world views but also strongly engage UNCRC (1989) that bind disparate cultures and world views together. Western values have often set the tone for child rights standards and as such may be at odds with other global child rights norms centered in the child's own circumstance and culture (Myers, 2001). The work of authors in this volume will highlight how those places of conflict may have arisen, and they will also provide perspective on the best paths toward elevating child-centered, context-relevant research, intervention, and programming.

Layered Vulnerability and the Approach

What is essential in understanding vulnerability and the plight of children, is the complex and layered nature of that existence. Vulnerability is rarely a single issue. Violations to children's rights and the issues they face are experienced as multiple risks or embedded layers of risk. For instance, to address fosterage or mental health or race as separate experiences is a false discussion of the problem. The problem for children is that they live at the intersection of many of these problems. This point is also the challenge of this book; we have created sections that fit topical matters but we readily recognize that children of war are also orphans, that school grounds interface with battle grounds (HRW/A, 1996; HRW, 2011), that gender suppression in education interfaces with labor, and that little or no access to health care, lack of cultural security, and child abuse can be imbedded in problems associated with parenting and parental loss (Luster, Qin, Bates, Johnson, & Rana, 2008). Agencies accustomed to serving American mainstream groups are ill-prepared and rarely anticipate the previous experience or the consequences in the short- and long-term futures of immigrant and disadvantaged youth. These are just a few examples demonstrating how intertwined the connection is between the problems and circumstances of children that challenge communities, social agencies, and governments.

An interdisciplinary systems approach (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) is used to explore the intersections of child vulnerability, child rights, and child well-being within a global perspective and linking the works in this volume together (Garbarino, 2008; Nsamenang, 1993). Transactional, developmental, and structural challenges facing minority, refugee, and indigenous children are the central focus of this volume. Highlighting research on children's vulnerabilities as produced by national and international research scholars whose work is linked to child rights perspectives is vital to this focus. Specifically, we are interested in schooling, health, child security, identity and self-determinism, child well-being, and policy. This book reflects collaboration among scholars emphasizing child development in context and across disciplines. The bridging of these areas will provide knowledge for understanding other underlying factors that are significant to a global appreciation for and resolution of the problems faced by the unseen, the often unprotected, and undefended children (UNICEF, 2006a). Significant contributions are made by the authors and through the organization of the book. It provides a critical forum to address these concerns and to work through the complexities of varied cultural contexts, toward greater sharing of information and of problem solving. If we can detail the problems, we can better detail the responses and be the adults/parents we need to be at the levels of the family, community, and government.

The paradox in discussions of child rights and disadvantagement from a global perspective is that child rights standards are predominantly centered in Western thought (Kent, 1995), but the discourse around child rights issues tends to exclude discussion of risk and vulnerability in the lives of Western children. A strength of this volume is to reverse this trend. We de-emphasize Western views of child rights and provide greater inclusiveness of children lives with research that traverses

Western and non-Western contexts, sometime within the same study. We consider it critical that these problems be presented in tandem. We reasoned that refugee and immigrant experiences, for instance, are transnational experiences, and we must follow the movements of children to understand their experiences. That indeed, global issues of child vulnerability and protection also emerge in the Western society or can be tracked into the west given the mobile nature of children in previous to current national contexts.

Garbarino's vast experience in the global world of the child sets a critical tone for centering on children's vulnerability. Contributors to this volume have addressed both the "dark and bright secrets" of a vulnerable childhood as Garbarino suggests in the Foreword. Authors presenting research on hardships and the unseen and inhuman sides of childhood provide us with the dark secrets. The bright secrets are shared through information policy and program development and through the discussions of child agency and voice. Contributing scholars' chapters are organized by their critical and unique perspectives on the themes of cultural empowerment, education, health and well-being, child security, and child rights policy.

In the first section on *cultural empowerment and self-determination*, each author takes on the questions of "in whose voice?" and "by what standard?" The chapters emphasize the importance of cultural meanings associated with children's development and how those meanings can be preserved against regular assaults or direct efforts to diminish or eliminate core culture such as language. Nsamenang (Chap. 2) describes the subjugation of African interpretations of child development to Western concepts of the developing child and healthy activity and then links them to tensions of the standard of rights of the child; he offers a framework for an appropriate African world view of children developing in that context. Elevation of a culturally centered developmental process can better differentiate what is normative across contexts from what is problematic. Both Gnade-Munoz (Chap. 3) and Biesele (Chap. 4) provide examples of the importance of preserving indigenous language and thereby preserving both culture and the people. Language, education, and resistance are intertwined in the work of these authors. Gnade-Munoz focuses on the indigenous Maya-Tojolabal of Mexico where education is being used to "standardize" all groups to mainstream Mexican language and culture and the resistance of this homogenization in school. Biesele acknowledges similar contexts of oppression among the !Kung Bushman or Ju/'hoan San of the Kalahari of Namibia. Her focus is on the efforts to preserve language and in so doing culture. She provides a key example of an inclusive school-based curriculum.

Community-centered education and the daily lives of schoolchildren and their families are emphasized in the section on *education and school experiences*. How does one negotiate refugee status, newcomer status, mistaken race and caste, and the dominant cultures of mainstream America as well as the foreign culture of American schools? Sudanese refugee families and their children in Li's research (Chap. 5) must successfully manage the multidimensional and complex characteristics of their statuses, ties to the homeland origins, and establishment of ties to the new homeland while addressing race and class. Li's discussion is timely as the immigrant experience represents the challenges of childhood and parenting in the context

of one of the fastest-growing American experiences. In the recent documentary film, Waiting for Superman (2011), poor schools may perpetuate poor communities, a by-product of which is crime and incarceration among disillusioned youth. Hope resides in the desperation of some parents to extricate their children from this devastating path to nowhere. In Sealey's research (Chap. 7), she creatively globalizes these connections by looking at youth in the African diaspora (Caribbean, Ghanaian, and African-American) with common destinies. The buffer between the negative outcomes of poor school attitudes and delinquency among these youth seems to be good relations with and monitoring by their parents. Indeed families are protective when they function properly irrespective of their resources. Exclusion from educational opportunity and the "fix" for this kind of discrimination are the topics of Forrest's (Chap. 7) "Boodja Marr Karl" that reflects the idea of a community-focused educational environment. Forrest lays out a model for integrative culturally centered education that incorporates the needs of both children and adults and is grounded in the values and the world view of Australian Aboriginal or indigenous communities.

Health and well-being is a broadly defined section of this volume encompassing physical mental health, risk, and endangerment. Children labor the inadequacies of services for children's mental health (Saxena, 2005; Saxena, Thornicroft, Knapp, & Whiteford, 2007). The other question about health and well-being is asked as a question of world view and cultural context: what is normative and what are the indicators for child outcomes of concern? Both Agbényiga (Chap. 8) and Adusei (Chap. 10) address the controversial issue of child labor. Agbényiga provides a foundation for differentiating the labor experiences and risks for children. The finer points of risk in the worst forms of child labor have only recently moved from the policy arena to the research arena. Having done that, Adusei's chapter describes a work context for children in a Ghanaian fishing village where the physical dangers may be better managed to some extent but are also more complex given consequences such as school disruption. Through the research, Adusei weaves into the discussion the child's own agency and the needs of the family against issues of safety and risk. What happens when our parents can't protect us? In Riebschlegers' Chap. (11), she discusses the impact of psychiatric illness of parents on children. In particular, she reviews mental health programs and services to highlight the underserved needs of children. The need for integrated health for families is underscored in her systematic review of programs. Tudge, Piccinini, Sperb, Odero-Wanga, Lopes, and Freitas (Chap. 9) use play behavior as a focal point to emphasize variation across several countries, Brazil, Kenya, and Europe, and the appropriateness of context for again understanding what is normative. Unique in this work is not only cross-cultural diversity but also socioeconomic diversity.

The vast and rising number of children growing up without their parents has been a concern given poor and partial solutions that are increasingly inadequate to support their needs. In this section on *orphans and fosterage*, the authors take up the challenges and contexts of these children's experiences as orphans or in various forms of foster care. Understanding their own lack of protection, some youth have developed strategies for self-reliance, for better or worse. In the discussion of Sudanese youth,

Bates, Luster, Johnson, Qin, and Rana (Chap. 12) find that there is significant evidence of resilience but also conflicts in being and attempting to foster self-reliant postwar youth. In the Namibian circumstance described by Brown (Chap. 13), children are orphaned due largely to HIV/AIDS parental debilitation and death. Socially distributed care or kinship care take center-stage as risks to the child that arise from the tensions around familial duty, burden, and the stigma of losing a parent to AIDS that follows the child. These themes are shared in the study of fosterage in Malawi explored by Freidus and Ferguson (Chap. 14). The work is deepened through the discussion of what transpires in the larger community and beyond the family to the organizational contexts and the supporting activities of those communities.

Contexts for *children's rights* and policy examples are raised in the final section of the volume. The "trokosi child" tradition highlights a disturbing conflict between child rights, ethno-religious tradition, and a society that has evolved beyond this narrow slice of culture. Ame (Chap. 16) attempts to share a very difficult lens of embedded layers of transactions between the trokosi system and Ghanaian society and policy, Ghanaian government, and the rights of young girls globally as represented by the UNCRC (1989). At the center of all these layers is the question of "whose life" may be determined and whose "voice" silenced by tradition and cultural beliefs about collective morality. Though murky, in the end we must serve the needs of the child. Hitchcock (Chap. 15) has blended history and the discussions of self-determination from earlier in the book with the broader issues of education involving indigenous peoples. Solutions for evading what can be or has been oppression in education are at the center of this fluid demonstration of child rights. Singhal (Chap. 17) highlights the efforts of UNICEF in strategic communication approaches that have ultimately been successful in bringing the plight of countless numbers of children to the world community. He underscores the critical nature of these programs and methods for initiating change and enhancing the pace of change. Where they flourish, these types of communicative approaches also provide the opportunity for children's agency to be activated and their voices heard.

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