

Comparative and Cultural Perspectives on Educational Reform

David Stephens*

ABSTRACT

Attempt is made to review study on “A comparative survey of Commonwealth experience of efforts to improve the quality of Basic Education” presented in conference held in 1991 by the Commonwealth Secretariat in London for the Commonwealth Ministers of Education Conference in Barbados. It seems opportune now to review the comparative landscape of educational reform since then with a view to identifying models of good practice and challenges that face us all. Immediate aim is to raise a number of issues – and in hope controversies – that will contribute to a lively and informative conference. The paper is in three parts: In the first it reviews the milestones along the road of educational reform since the 1990s with a particular focus upon issues of school quality, effectiveness and improvement. In the second it discusses – with examples from a range of countries in which I have worked – six key challenges we now face. The third part looks briefly at methodological developments and in particular the increasing importance attached to culturally appropriate approaches to researching and evaluating educational reform. It also outlines the case for making greater use to two research methods; life history and narrative enquiry in the quest for more meaningful evidence-gathering and analysis.

JEL. Classification: I21; I22; I23; I28; I31; O15

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1. INTRODUCTION

In 1991 I was asked by the Commonwealth Secretariat in London to produce for the Commonwealth Ministers of Education Conference in Barbados a comparative survey of Commonwealth experience

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* Professor David Stephens, Education Research Centre, University of Brighton. Corresponding author's e-mail: d.stephens@brighton.ac.uk

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of efforts to improve the quality of Basic Education. It seems opportune now to review the comparative landscape of educational reform since then with a view to identifying models of good practice and challenges that face us all. Main aim is to raise a number of issues – and in hope controversies – that will contribute to a lively and informative conference. The paper is systematic literature review and it consists of three parts in the section 2 of literature review and in section 3 conclusions are given.

In the first part it reviews the milestones along the road of educational reform since the 1990s with a particular focus upon issues of school quality, effectiveness and improvement.

In the second part it discusses – with examples from a range of countries in which I have worked – six key challenges we now face: the relationship between education quality and economic growth; the move from universal primary education to universal secondary education; the role of learning outcomes in educational development; the status of teacher and higher education in capacity building; the importance of secular and religious values in educational reform; and lastly the call for greater attention to be paid to the role of culture in international educational reform.

The third part looks briefly at methodological developments and in particular the increasing importance attached to culturally appropriate approaches to researching and evaluating educational reform. It also outlines the case for making greater use to two research methods; life history and narrative enquiry in the quest for more meaningful evidence-gathering and analysis and for more details and thoughts of the author, book is available (Stephens 2007).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Part One: The Milestones of Educational Reform since 1990

1990 was a memorable year for me, the notable event being the birth of my first child, Benjamin who is now about to enter tertiary education. Globally much has changed during his 18 years. Educational reform does not occur within a vacuum and it is possible to summarize major global changes since 1990 as follows (Stephens 2008).

2.1.1 The Collapse of Soviet Union and Its Subsequent Results.

Globalization and shrinking of the public sector threaten the middle class and make it feel insecure and uncertain. Risk and uncertainty have become common in all aspects of life, but mainly in the domains of employment, certain economic branches, and family constellations. Citizens cannot trust any more that the state will favor certain interests (e.g. trade union interests) within society. The sector of economy mostly involved in global processes requires flexible companies, and a flexible labor force. Companies and workplaces in this sector have to a large extent been restructured, but for large sections of the economies, work places are not very different from before.

National economic policies have been undermined and economic nationalism abolished. Such policies have been replaced by economic policies adapted to the global conditions, especially among smaller countries.

Technology seems to have acquired a new function; it is no longer linked merely to production or to consumptions they are traditionally defined.

The emergence of three loci or motives of driving forces, rationalities or ideals: (a) the state (command and equality); (b) the market (technical rationality, efficiency, egoism); and (c) the civil society (network, community, idealism).

Transformation or trivialization of strategic concepts: differences in power and class inequalities have become a matter of equity; class is being trivialized “to the point where it becomes parental attitude”; values have become an issue of preferences; culture and life styles tend to become a matter of individual tastes and preferences; work tasks are becoming skills and socialization and recurrent education have become life-long learning. Cultural issues, human rights, values education, etc. have become an important theme in educational discourse and policies. We will pay particular attention to this later in the paper.

A renewed optimism concerning education; it is seen as the key to progress. Education is perceived to be able to create greater efficiency, economic growth, peace, democracy, greater freedom, and so forth, for both individuals and societies. Several of these features are linked to or caused by globalization while other is not. Let us now narrow the focus and review the major educational challenges I identified back in 1990. How many are still with us? I identified following six major areas of concern in the Commonwealth’s drive to improve the quality of Basic Education (Commonwealth 1991):

The structure and organization of the Education System: issues of physical infrastructure, diversification of the system e.g. balance between academic and vocational education, extending access to marginalized groups.

Curricular, learning materials and assessment: issues of relevance and balance again, new areas of environment and distance learning, local production of text books, moves towards more criterion-referenced tests.

Teachers – shortages and issues of continuing Professional Development (CPD) and in-service provision

Management, Administration and Planning, and issues of decentralization and improvement in supervision and inspection.

Relationship of the school to community and issues of community-financing, gender disparities in terms of access, provision of schooling in rural areas.

Finance and Resources – issues of educational expenditure as a proportion of national budget, issues of debt servicing, more resources pent on secondary and tertiary rather than primary sectors and increases in expenditure on defense as opposed to educational needs.

We remind two of the three conference objectives:

- To provide a forum for dissemination of educational research on quality of educational reform, its impact and related issues;
- To enable discussion on issues of quality with reference to the conference themes;

Quality therefore still matters. And I would suggest, along with school effectiveness and school improvement, it reminds at the heart of all efforts to raise educational standards worldwide.

2.1.2 Quality at the Heart of Global Educational Reform

According to Hawes and Stephens (1990) and Stephens (2003) defining the concept of quality is a little like trying to define 'motherhood' – it is clearly 'good thing' but elusive and likely to be dependent on the perspective of the person attempting the definition. For many parents, for example, it may well relate to the learning outcomes, particularly end of cycle examination results, for their respective child; for the school manager or inspector quality may well embrace improved general standards for reading, or hard writing, or mathematics; for the class room teacher are definition of quality linking closely to improved conditions of services.

What is clear, how ever, is that there is now a board concerns in the international committee on two points. First, challenges to quality have gone hand-in-hand with the repaired expansion of primary school system in many parts of the world. Second, girls and boys in the same class room do not typically receive the same education. Throughout the world, boys consistently receive more (and more challenging) instruction from teachers. Curricula typically feature strong role models for boys but few or weak models for girls. In mixed-sex class room, girls often suffer harassment. In the UK this week, for example, I read for a disturbing rise in homophobia in schools and play grounds.

The reason for this state of affairs is complex, through it is generally agreed that whereas class rooms are important venue for change, very often what occur their mirrors and reinforce external, social values. We shall return to this issue of values and schooling in part two of the paper.

Quality is therefore directly related to what occurs into educational contexts: firstly in the more focused environment of the class room; secondly in the wider context of the school system and social context in which the class room is embedded. Both environments have a reciprocal relationship with each other.

In book Stephen (1990) I and a colleague attempted a definition of the quality of basic Education which focused largely on the former, more focused context of the class room. Quality, for me, meant,

- *Relevance* to context, to needs (both 'needs now' and 'needs later') and to humanity.
- *Efficiency* in setting standards, in meeting standards set and in improving standards.
- And as *something special*...which goes beyond normal expectations of a school (Hawes and Stephens 1990; Stephens 1990; Hawes2003).

Reviewing the concept 18 years on I would argue that, for us, a working definition of quality is still fundamentally concerned with this three pillars but that a fourth be added – quality of *inclusion*. A relevant, *efficient* and '*special*' education must, in other words, be available to all children irrespective of gender, ability or wealth. Combining 'more-with-better' and not 'more-with-worse' is perhaps the single most critical challenge facing us all.

School and class room is also the focus of two other complementary definition of quality which, though, like us, acknowledge the importance of the external world on the class room, stress the importance of key class room variables e.g. the relationship between the teacher and the student,

time on task, the quality of the class room milieu, and effective school management (Heneveld 1994)

As we strive to improve the delivery of education, particularly in the context of decentralization, these characteristics of quality learning environment will change over time, and as such will pose challenges in the development of indicators of quality and the monitoring of school improvement. Here is a working definition of quality education provided by my Norwegian colleague Nagel (2003).

'Quality education is a learning situation which vibrates with positive energy and where the learner and the learned both are eagerly absorbed in understanding and communicating through a knowledge construction process. The emphasis lies with the learner'

When we shift our focus away from the classroom and out towards the school system and the broadly social context of schooling it is equally clear that quality is also concerned with a vision of the kind of society we want.

Such visions implicitly address the question 'what is education for?' here the bigger issues of society such as democracy, freedom, equality and human rights or conversely, exploitation, oppression and inequality are embraced along with good classroom results and the personal and social development of the child. I am reminded of these bigger issues as we see political events unfurling here in Pakistan and await post-election developments in Zimbabwe.

The Save the Children Alliance, which – a little like the AKDN – is an umbrella organization – bringing together all the various constitutions of the Save the Children movement world-wide – define quality as education characterized by, 'relevance; participation; flexibility; appropriacy; and inclusiveness' with 'inclusion' as the central 'cementing' goal for the raising quality in education (Williams 2003; Kissack and Meyer 1996), researching in South Africa (1996), share these aspirations extending the notion of quality as empowering or transforming, introducing the concept of 'empowering agency'.

These broader, holistic definitions of quality are echoed by UNICEF in their call for 'rights-based, child-friendly' schools in which 'five dimensions of quality': learners, content, processes, environments; and outcomes are pursued (Pigozzi 2001).

It must be stressed, however, that whatever vision or definition of 'quality' we subscribe to, as educators we would argue that it is the minute-to-minute processes of education in the classroom context that is the most critical element (O'Gara 1999). In other words we believe that by working to make classrooms and schools 'better' in terms of relevant, efficient, creative and inclusive learning environments we are, in turn, contributing to broader, social effects to improve the quality of life.

To some extent this interest in quality as improved classroom teaching-learning processes is mirrored in the shift from a general focus upon school *effectiveness* to a more institutional focus upon school *improvement*.

What is required, therefore, is a holistic model which stresses the reciprocal relationship of the classroom and society, balancing concerns for equity in society with quality in the classroom, rather than making them mutually exclusive.

Two major frameworks for studying quality and school effectiveness have evolved since the early 1990s: the *policy mechanics* approaches which puts the emphasis upon universal determinants of effective schools, and the *classroom culturalists*, who stress definitions of quality and effectiveness in relation to particular national and institutional cultures.

These two approaches – which are not mutually exclusive – also differentiate the level at which *quality, effectiveness* or *improvement* is described and evaluated: the first viewing the national educational system as the unit of analysis, the latter tending to focus at the level of the school and individual classroom, where it is argued the twin aspects of culture and context are more strongly felt.

The first approach, which is characterized by a more technical-mechanical definition of effectiveness, identifies specific factors or indicators,

‘The ‘technical efficiency’ orientation focuses on the provision of basic school inputs (especially teacher, educational materials and learning time), their effect on academic achievement and the consequent priorities for investment. This orientation is characterized by positivist assumptions and by attempts to measure production functions through large-scale surveys’ (Urwick and Junaidu 1991).

Such surveys by the International Associations for the evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA), the Educational testing Service’s International Assessment of Educational Progress (IAEP), and the OECD’s Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) contain information that is useful for the development of a set of internationally comparative indicators, especially with respect to outcomes, inputs, and process indicators such as time and opportunity (Creemers 1994; Reynolds, Creemers, Nesselrodt, Schaffer, Stringfield and Teddlie (Eds.) 1996.). Quality here is seen less in terms of place or context and more in terms of comparable disaggregated variables.

The problem with this approach is that it tends to focus almost exclusively upon cognitive outcomes of schooling with a neglect of the affective and social outcomes of the schooling process, and secondly to ignore possible variation in factors associated with learning within different cultural contexts within countries, preferring instead to use ‘whole sample’ analyses which aggregate and look at relationships across schools.

A notable example of this kind of analysis is provided by Fuller and Heyneman (1989) who attempted to identify effective and ineffective factors that influence school achievement, reducing an initial list of 27 factors to 1 more manageable:

If quality is concerned with qualities such as relevance and efficiency then, we would argue, such qualities are only meaningful when interpreted in a particular context. ‘Year of Teaching Training’ and ‘reduced class size’ may well provide us with general ideas about desirable inputs to an education

Table-1: Effective and Ineffective Factors That Influences School Achievement	
<i>Effective parameters</i>	<i>% of Studies showing Positive effects</i>
<i>Length of instructional Programme</i>	86
<i>Pupil Feeding Programmes</i>	83
<i>School Library Activity</i>	83
<i>Years of Teacher Training</i>	71
<i>Textbooks and Instructional Materials</i>	67
<i>Ineffective Parameters</i>	<i>% of Studies showing Positive effects</i>
<i>Pupil Grade repetition</i>	20
<i>Reduced Class size</i>	24
<i>Teachers Salaries</i>	36
<i>Science Laboratories</i>	36

Source: Fuller and Heynemea 1989.

My own and colleagues multi-site research on teacher education in five national settings shows clearly that it is not the quantity of teachers education that matters but its quality and the relationship between pre- and in-service teacher training that has a positive impact upon learning outcomes. Similarly, there is a great deal of evidence to suggest that although class size has a limited affect on the learning outcomes of the majority of pupils, it does have an effect on levels of literacy and numeracy of pupils with particular learning needs. The primary and secondary pupil-teacher ratios in Norway – where I worked from 1999 to 2004 – for example, of 12:1 and 10:1 respectively have contributed significantly to their high positions in international comparisons of performance in reading mathematics. A significant milestone on the relationship between quality and educational reform since the 1990s has been the focus upon effectiveness and school improvement.

2.1.3 Quality and School Effectiveness

More recent educational effectiveness models (Scheerens 1992) have attempted to provide a more sophisticated approach and have integrated the factors at school and classroom levels into multilevel models that provide a theoretical basis and might enhance the explanatory power of research into educational effectiveness (Riddell, A. 1989). Here a distinction is often made between ‘general’ and ‘differential’ effectiveness. The first concept refers to the achievement of all pupils in a school, the second to the achievements of specific groups of pupils, such as girls or boys (Van der Werf, Creemers, Jong, and Klaver 2000). Though it *is* useful to have some general idea of what parameters are worth considering in efforts to raise quality, there is a strong case to be made for multi-level models to be much more rooted in the recognizable realities of classroom life. It is here where most, though not all, learning takes place.

The *classroom culturalist* approach, with its stress upon the classroom or learning environment as the unit of analysis, attempts to understand quality in terms of the ‘black box’ educational processes

at the school and, importantly, classroom level. Here quality and effectiveness are viewed holistically with indicators 'joined up' and analyzed qualitatively and *in situ*. Quality here is viewed through the lens of the local and particular learning environment and nuanced in terms of culture and context. Examples of this approach include the District Primary Education Project (DPEP) in India and the work of the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC). I look forward this week to learning more about similar projects supported by AKDN.

The relationship between school effectiveness and school improvement approaches to issues of quality, to some extent mirror the shift in focus from a technical-efficiency approach to a more culturalist perspective in which the focus is placed on the school and individual classroom.

2.1.4 From School Effectiveness to School Improvement

Of significance since the early 1990s is the emerging school improvement movement which attempts to understand quality through reviewing the processes of teaching and learning in the school context. Developing the school effectiveness approach, which reviews the key elements of 'good' schools and 'best' practices, the school improvement approach aims to understand particular classroom processes within the school which lead to improved student outcomes (Motala 2001).

The term 'school improvement', then, is used as shorthand for an international body of research and an associated approach to school development, concerned with raising the quality of education in all schools (Hillman and Stoll 1994).

School improvement in England and Wales and elsewhere (Black, H. et al. (1993) has recently started to draw on the school effectiveness research base. School Effectiveness research provides a 'vision more desirable place for schools to be but little insight as to how to make the journey to that place' (Lezole 1989).

A current feature of the 'School Improvement' approach is to focus on the relationships between children and teachers, classroom decision-making by teachers and children, and the development of critical thinking skills. Here *relevance* and *efficiency* as qualities, for example, are translated into the following questions: 'what *relevant* knowledge do we bring to this learning task?', 'Is this the most *efficient* way of going about solving this problem?', and 'What *relevance* does this activity have for us now ... and in the future?'

The OECD-sponsored International School Improvement Project defined school improvement as,

'a systematic, sustained effort aimed at a change in learning conditions in one or more schools, with the ultimate aim of accomplishing educational goals more effectively' (Van Velzen, Miles, Ekholm, Hameyer and Robin 1985).

Quality can therefore be viewed as both an understanding of what is *effective* and a variety of approaches or strategies to achieve *improvement* in the quality of education provided.

If we accept the view that is at the level of school and classroom where we are to determine the quality of education, then we are faced with two or further problems: first, how can we assess the relative quality of one school over another given that all schools differ in terms of context, pupil

intake, etc. and secondly how can we gain some sort of measure of how well a school or particular classroom has improved over time?

One strategy for addressing the comparative strengths and weaknesses of schools is to examine and quantify the differences which seem to exist between successful and unsuccessful school environments. Such assessments' common place in United Kingdom, might well focus on a range of commonly agreed indicators of quality e.g. the relationship of educational resources to learning outcomes, time on task in the classroom, the relative involvement of girls and boys in different class activities, the quantity of quality of in-service training provided for a school's staff. Turning these desirable aspects of the school environment into guides for the monitoring and sustainability of quality is something we will return to later when discussing best indicators of quality.

In terms of gaining an understanding of how a school has improved over time, the concept of *value added* has been developed since 1990s to provide ways to investigate the relationship between measures of school performance and the conditions that appear to enhance or hinder school effectiveness in different types of school context.

A major challenge in the development of value-added measures has been the problem of developing models which allow the statistical analysis to separate out the effect of the school experience on individual pupil outcomes (what pupils achieve) and the extent to which pupil intake characteristics (those things pupils arrive at school with e.g. the level of attainment they have already reached when they enter school) affect pupil outcomes (Goldstein 1995).

One more practical level such an approach to assessing change *within* a school's life will require accurate baseline information about pupil's prior attainment in order to calculate the value added component.

A modest way forward in operationalising such an approach to assessing change over time would be for schools to pilot schemes in which baseline data on selected new entrants to the school is built up over the child's career in the school. Such data might include an initial diagnostic test to measure literacy and numeracy, internal class-based assignment scores, and teacher assessments of the changing strengths and weaknesses of the selected pupils.

Quality then is a matter of identifying:

- a) the systemic factors or variables that generally seem to make one school more or less *effective* than another e.g. relevant resources, levels of reading, writing and numeracy;
- b) the manner in which these factors or variables are played out in relation to each other in a particular learning environment with a view to *improving* that environment; and
- c) the *value-added* dimension which represents changes in quality between and within schools over a particular period of time (Thomas, Sammons, and Street 1997).

2.2 Part Two: Six Key Challenges

The relationship between quality, school effectiveness and school improvement provide us with important conceptual markers that shape the global landscape of educational reform. Within that landscape are, I believe, six major challenges that face us as we look forward 18 years.

Let us now look briefly at these *six* key challenges: the relationship between education quality and economic growth; the move from Universal Primary Education (UPE) to Universal Secondary Education (USE); the role of learning outcomes in educational development; the status of teacher and higher education in capacity building; the importance of secular and religious values in educational reform; and lastly the call for greater attention to be paid to the role of culture in international educational reform. Wherever possible I have tried to use examples taken from both global and Pakistan contexts.

2.2. 1 Education Quality and Economic Growth

We need little reminding of the relationship between economics and education, be it couched in the optimistic language of economic growth or the more pessimistic of poverty. What is clear is that two sides of this coin are bound up in a complex weave of cause and effect; chicken and egg.

Research evidence has recently confirmed that there is a positive relationship between education quality and economic growth (especially in countries within the EFA Programme), and in particular that improvements in cognitive skills results in increases the likelihood of employment, individual earnings and economic contributions to society (Hanushek and Wossman 2007). Drawing upon evidence from Morocco, Pakistan, Tanzania, Ghana, Kenya, and South Africa the study suggests strong economic returns for a country if quantity and quality issues in schooling are tackled - particularly within poor developing countries. The evidence suggests that cognitive skills developments are influenced by interventions at classroom level and are concerned with movement away from predominance of traditional practices of learning.

Another way of looking at the relationship between economics and schooling is to take a more holistic approach and relate education to other social indicators of well-being. The Human Development Index – going beyond income.

Each year since 1990 the U.N. Human Development Report has published the human development index (HDI) which looks beyond GDP to a broader definition of well-being. The HDI provides a composite measure of three dimensions of human development: living a long and healthy life (measured by life expectancy), being educated (measured by adult literacy and enrolment at the primary, secondary and tertiary level) and having a decent standard of living (measured by purchasing power parity, PPP, income). The index is not in any sense a comprehensive measure of human development. It does not, for example, include important indicators such as gender or income inequality and more difficult to measure indicators like respect for human rights and political freedoms. What it does provide is a broadened prism from viewing human progress and the complex relationship between income and well-being.

Let's examine the situation of Pakistan in relation to global trends and the HDI. First a national snapshot:

- The population is 160 million, with 65% living in rural areas
- 24% - around 38 million people – were below the national poverty line in 04/05
- GDP per capita is around US \$9251
- Life Expectancy is 65 years
- 50% of the adult population is illiterate
- One in ten children die before their fifth birthday

- Primary school enrolment rates have improved recently. There are now 3 million more children in primary school compared to 2001
- In 2005/06 53% of 5-9 year olds were in primary school, up from 42% in 2001. Poor quality of education, resulting in poor educational outcomes, remains a key constraint to progress.
- This is still low compared to South Asia as a whole, where net primary enrolment is 86%.

Source: DFID 2007

Second, a glance at how the country fares with regard to its place within the HDI and other developed models. The HDI for Pakistan is 0.551, which gives the country a rank of 136th out of 177 countries with data (Table2)

Table- 2: Pakistan’s Human Development Index 2005

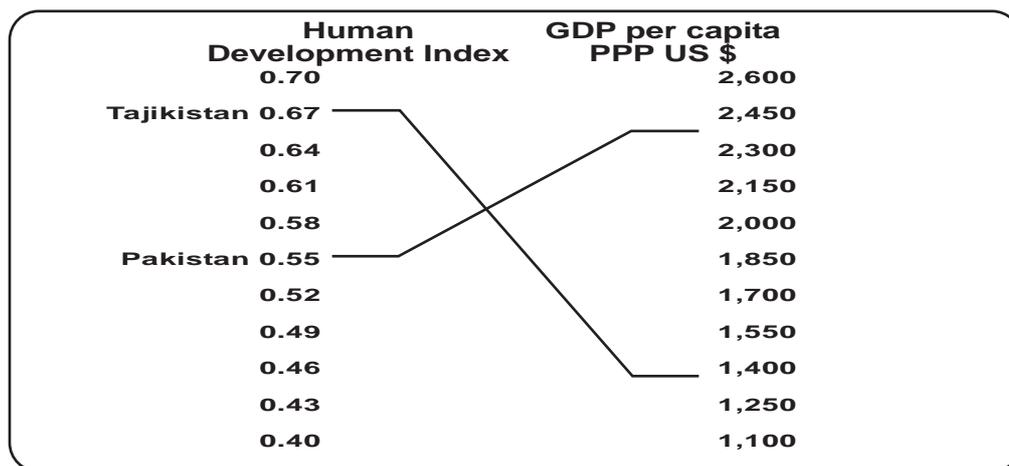
HDI Value	Life Expectancy at Birth (years)	Adult Literacy Rate (% ages 15 and older)	Combined Primary, secondary & tertiary gross enrolment ratio (%)	GDP per capita (PP P US\$)
1. Iceland (0.968)	1. Japan (82.3)	1. Georgia (100.0)	1. Australia (113.0)	1. Luxembourg (60,228)
134. Comoros (0.561)	121. Bhutan (64.7)	122. Mauritania (51.2)	156. Ethiopia (42.1)	125. Papua New Guinea (2,563)
135. Ghana (0.553)	122. Bolivia (64.7)	123. Timor- Leste (50.1)	157. Papua New Guinea (40.7)	126. Ghana (2,480)
136. Pakistan (0.551)	123. Pakistan (64.6)	124. Pakistan (49.9)	158. Pakistan (40.0)	127. Pakistan (2,370)
137. Mauritania (0.550)	124. Comoros (64.1)	125. Côte d’Ivoire (48.7)	159. Senegal (39.6)	128. Angola (2,335)
138. Lesotho (0.549)	125. India (63.7)	126. Nepal (48.6)	160. Côte d’Ivoire (39.6)	129. Guinea (2,316)
177. Sierra Leone (0.336)	177. Zambia (40.5)	139. Burkina Faso (23.6)	172. Niger (22.7)	174. Malawi (667)

This year’s HDI, which refers to 2005, highlights the very large gaps in well-being and life chances that continue to divide our increasingly interconnected world. By looking at some of the most fundamental aspects of people’s lives and opportunities it provides a much more complete picture of a country’s development than other indicators, such as GDP per capita.

Of the components of the HDI, only income and gross enrolment are somewhat responsive to short term policy changes. For that reason, it is important to examine changes in the human development index over time.

The Human Development Index trends tell an important story in that aspect. Since the mid-1970s almost all regions have been progressively increasing their HDI score (Figure 2). East Asia and South Asia have accelerated progress since 1990. Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), following a catastrophic decline in the first half of the 1990s, has also recovered to the level before reversal. The major exception is sub-Saharan Africa.

Since 1990 it has stagnated, partly because of economic reversal but principally because of the catastrophic effect of HIV/AIDS on life expectancy.



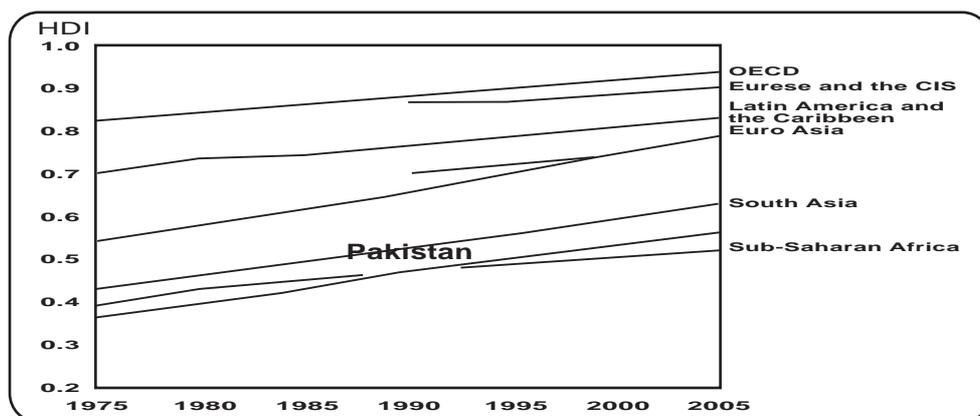
HDI and GDP data refers to 2005 as reported in the 2007/2008 Report.

2.2.2 Human Poverty in Pakistan: Focusing On the Most Deprived In Multiple Dimensions of Poverty

The HDI measures the average progress of a country in human development. The Human Poverty Index for developing countries (HPI-1) focuses on the proportion of people below a threshold level in the same dimensions of human development as the human development index – living a long and healthy life, having access to education, and a decent standard of living. By looking beyond income deprivation, the HPI-1 represents a multi-dimensional alternative to the \$1 a day (PPP US\$) poverty measure.

The HPI-1 value of 36.2 for Pakistan, ranks 77th among 108 developing countries for which the index has been calculated.

The HPI-1 measures severe deprivation in health by the proportion of people who are not expected to survive age 40. Education is measured by the adult illiteracy rate. And a decent standard of living is measured by the un-weighted average if people without access to an improved water source and the proportion of children under age 5 who are underweight for their age. Table 3 shows the values for these variables for Pakistan and compares them to other countries.



Source : Indicator Table 2 - HCR 2007/2008

Table 3: Selected Indicators of Human Poverty for Pakistan

Human Poverty Index (HPI-1) 2004	Probability of not surviving past age 40 (%) 2004	Adult Illiteracy rate (%ages 15 and older) 2004	People without access to an improved water source (%)2004	Children underweight for age (%ages 0-5) 2004
1. Chad (56.9)	1. Zimbabwe (57.4)	1. Burkina Faso (76.4)	1. Ethiopia (78)	1. Nepal (48)
30. Malawi (36.7)	54. Solomon Islands (16.1)	14. Nepal (51.4)	86. Nepal (10)	13. Ethiopia (38)
31. Rwanda (36.5)	55 Bolivia (15.5)	15. Côte d'Ivoire (51.3)	87. Cuba (9)	14. Burkina Faso (38)
32. Pakistan (36.2)	56. Pakistan (15.4)	16. Pakistan (50.1)	88. Pakistan (9)	15. Pakistan (38)
33. Eritrea (36.0)	57. Comoros (15.3)	17. Timor-Leste (49.9)	89. Trinidad and Tobago (9)	16. Chad (37)
34. Madagascar (35.8)	58. Sao Tome and Principe (15.1)	18. Mauritania (48.8)	90. Belize (9)	17. Papua New Guinea (35)
108. Barbados (3.0)	173. Iceland (1.4)	164. Estonia (0.2))	125. Hungary (1)	135. Chile (1)

2.2.3 Building the Capabilities of Women

The HDI measures average achievements in a country, but it does not incorporate the degree of gender imbalances in these achievements. The gender-related development index (GDI), introduced to Human Development Report 1995, measures achievements in the same dimensions using the same indicators as the HDI but captures inequalities in achievement between women and men. It is simply the HDI adjusted downward for gender inequality. The greater the gender disparity in basic human development, the lower is a country's GDI relative to its HDI.

Pakistan's GDI value, 0.525 should be compared to its HDI value 0.551. Its GDI value is 95.3% of its HDI value. Out of the 156 countries with both HDI and GDI values, 151 countries have a better ratio than Pakistan's.

Table 4 shows how Pakistan's ratio of GDI to HDI compares to other countries, and also shows its values for selected underlying values in the calculation of the GDI.

The gender empowerment measure (GEM) reveals whether women take an active part in economic and political life. It tracks the share of seats in parliament held by women; of female legislators, senior officials and managers; and of female professional and technical workers – and the gender disparity in earned income, reflecting economic independence. Differing from the GDI, the GEM exposes inequality in opportunities in selected areas. Pakistan ranks 82nd out of 93 countries in the GEM, with a value of 0.377.

Table 4: The GDI Compared to the HDI – A Measure of Gender Disparity

GDI as % of HDI	Life expectancy at birth (years) 2004	Adult literacy rate (% ages 15 and older) 2004	Combined primary, secondary and tertiary gross enrolment ratio 2004
	Female as % male	Female as % male	Female as % male
1. Maldives (100.4%)	1. Russian Federation (123.1%)	1. Lesotho (122.5%)	1. United Arab Emirates (126%)
150. Sudan (95.5%)	188. Ghana (101.4%)	138. Togo (56.0%)	176. Ethiopia (76.4%)
151. Côte d'Ivoire (95.4%)	189. Nepal (101.3%)	139. Nepal (55.7%)	177. Iraq (76.2%)
152. Pakistan (95.3%)	190. Pakistan (100.8%)	140. Pakistan (55.2%)	178. Pakistan (75.5%)
153. Sierra (95.2%)	191. Zambia (100.6%)	141. Burkina Faso (52.9%)	179. Djibouti (75.3%)
154. Guinea – Bissau (95.1%)	192. Afghanistan (99.7%)	142. Sierra Leone (51.8%)	180. Mali (74.7%)
156. Yemen (92.7%)	194. Niger (96.9%)	152. Afghanistan (29.2%)	194. Afghanistan (55.3%)

Though these statistical models provide us with insightful evidence of what has been achieved how much more needs to be done, a word of caution needs to be said with regard to the evidence we use, in particular, to assess school improvement. HDI is helpful in telling us where we stand in relation to another nation at a given point in time; but to assess school improvement we also need good *qualitative* data generated from *within* the education system.

2.2.4 Expanding From Universal Primary Education to Universal Secondary Education

According to Benavot (2006) since 1990 many education system have made impressive progress with regard to universal primary education. This now poses a new challenge: expansion of the system with an aim of universal secondary education.

The transition from primary education as a terminal level of education from most students to world widespread completion of junior secondary education and gradual expansion of senior secondary education is well underway in much of the developing world, but has begun only recently in sub-Saharan Africa. Secondary education participation rate in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) are lower than in any other region (Table 5); with access highly biased against the poor. This construction the ability of government to presume development strategies that promotes equitable sharing of the benefit associate with economic growth and social cohesion.

A key education reform challenging therefore is the management of the expanded lower or junior secondary school system. At a same time consideration needs to be given to what will happen to the future graduate of this expansion, namely a comparable expansion of upper primary provision with built – in diversification of curricular to meet the need of children suited to either an academic or vocationally – oriented career.

2.2.5 Lower Secondary Education Growing Faster Than Upper Secondary

Considerable evidence suggest that in much of SSA secondary education face severe problems, precluding progress towards the education development objectives that countries have set for themselves. Virtually all countries need to addresses the triple challenge of expanding access, improving quality and ensuring equity. Few systems are ready to respond effectively to the major challenges that are around the corner. There is little doubt that countries in SSA can no longer afford what Hernes has characterized as the “quiet neglect” of secondary education which has often prevailed in policy analysis and strategy formulation (Lewin and Caillods 2001).

Table. 5: Gross Enrolment Ratios in Lower and Upper Secondary Education, 1999-2004, Region Of World

	Lower secondary 1998/99	Lower secondary 2003/04	Upper secondary 1998/99	Upper secondary 2003/04
World	72.1	78.1	47.4	51.2
N. America & West. European	102.5	103.1	108.4	99.3
Central and eastern Europe	92.4	92.3	78.0	88.1
Central Asia	89.5	94.5	76.6	78.4
Latin America and Caribbean	95.4	99.7	62.0	68.7
<i>Latin America</i>	<i>96.3</i>	<i>100.4</i>	<i>62.8</i>	<i>70.1</i>
<i>Caribbean</i>	<i>67.4</i>	<i>74.6</i>	<i>41.3</i>	<i>41.9</i>
East Asia and the Pacific	80.2	93.4	46.1	51.2
Arab States	72.1	79.4	44.7	52.3
South and West Asia	59.4	63.8	33.8	40.0
Sub Saharan Africa	28.3	36.5	19.0	22.6

Source: Benavot 2006

I am currently leading Uganda's effort to develop a teacher education strategy to manage its recent announcement of Universal Secondary Education for All.

At the heart of this country's strategy are three core principles in its intentions to arise the quality of learning and teaching in expanded secondary school system : firstly that what matter are the *learning outcomes* of secondary school graduate; secondly that their need to be *Synergy between* the work of *secondary teacher education institution* and *secondary schools* ; thirdly that greater prevision needs to be made for the *continuing professional development* (CPD) of teacher – and teacher educator (STDM. 2008).

As secondary education around the world expands to meet the challenging posed by UPE it is clear that issue of quality – relevance, efficiency and balance – will require that the some potential will be demonstrated in the past.

2.2.6 Prioritizing Learning Outcomes in Educational Development

My third educational reform challenge concerns increasing recognition that we need to shift our focus from an inputs-objectives model of educational change to one that prioritizes learner outcomes and achievement.

An outcomes approach means identifying what students should achieve and focusing on ensuring that they do achieve. It means shifting away from an emphasis on what is to be taught and how and when, to an emphasis on what is actually learnt by each student. Outcomes Based Education (OBE) has appropriated themes from both movements in an attempt to shift current educational practices to include objectives tied to “learner outcomes, core and extended curriculum development, mastery learning, accountability via an information management system, and criterion referenced assessment” (Capper and Jamison 1993: 431-432). This represents a major paradigm shift from a content-driven to an outcomes-driven curriculum. The attraction of OBE for South African, for example, is the claim that is a learner-centered, results-oriented design based on the belief that all individuals can learn.

However, what is clear from many recent documents on the topic produced by both national and provincial and pedagogical principles underpinning the OBE initiative. Absent in these discussions is a sense among proponents of this initiative regarding the discursive modalities of the OBE process. One way forward is for policy-makers to know much more about what goes on within classrooms with respect to actual learning. Education Management Information System (EMIS) need good quality data on not only inputs to the system but also learning outcomes.

2.2.7 Promoting the Status of Teacher and Higher Education in Capacity Building

As we progress through a new century, there is an unprecedented demand for and a great diversification in higher education, as well as an increased awareness of its vital importance for socio-cultural and economic development, and for building the future, for which the younger generations will need to be equipped with new skills, knowledge and ideals.

Everywhere higher education is faced with great challenges and difficulties related to financing, equity of conditions at access into and during the course of studies, improved staff development, skills-bases training, enhancement and preservation of quality in teaching, research and services,

relevance of programmes, employability of graduates, establishment of efficient co-operation. At the same time, higher education is being challenged by new opportunities relating to technologies that are improving the ways in which knowledge can be produced, managed, disseminated, accessed and controlled. Equitable access to these technologies should be ensured at all levels of education systems. Globally higher education is also being increasingly privatized, raising questions about the motivation of private providers and consumers to become involved in communal and national capacity building.

The second half of the last century will go down in the history of higher education as the period of its most spectacular expansion: an over six –fold increase in student enrolments worldwide, from 13 million in 1960 to 82 million in 1995. But it is also the period which has seen the gap between industrially developed the developing countries and in particular the least developed countries with regard to education access and resources for higher learning and research, already enormous, becoming even wider.

It has also been a period of increased socio-economic stratification and greater difference in educational opportunity within countries, including in some of the most developed and wealthiest nations. Without adequate higher education and research institutions providing a critical mass of skilled and educated people, no country can ensure genuine endogenous and sustainable development and, in particular, developing countries and least developed countries cannot reduce the gap separating them from the industrially developed ones. Sharing knowledge, international co-operation and new technologies can offer new opportunities to reduce this gap.

2.2.8 According Importance to Secular and Religious Values in Educational Reform

Since World War Two there have been two broad approaches towards schooling and Third World development:

The first has been that education, formal and non- formal, should be concerned with the development of local languages and literacy, and with the preservation of cultural and spiritual values in communities. This has been the stance of UNESO and many leading non-governmental organizations.

This is in contrast to a second perspective which has dominated development discourse since 1945, namely the dominance of human capital and modernization theories. We are somewhat critical of this approach in that we believe that there is more to educational development than a faith in the market, a pre-occupation with economic growth, and the implementation of universal, imposed ‘solutions’ that take little if any account of cultural and contextual realities.

Equally, the much heralded, Jomtien Conference on Education for All in 1990 offered much at the level of rhetoric, and though there is evidence that governments and donor agencies are according a higher priority to Basic education, there is little use being made of research evidence of what is happening on the ground to inform and bolster policy.

In terms of policy implications for those of us concerned with global education Reform there seem to be three issues involved:

- There is mounting evidence that research, consultancy and reform policy-making needs to broaden its analytical perspective and transcend the purely economic and adopt an approach that incorporates the socio-cultural, historic and ideological. Cultural values provide a useful theoretical concept for bringing together such strands in a holistic and purposeful manner.
- Governments and donor agencies are increasingly concerned at the lack of 'fit' between education and developmental policies on such matters as poverty elimination and improving the education of girls at basic education level, at the level of implementation, namely the classroom.
- The focus upon values also presents us with an opportunity to stand back and ask the 'big' questions that should direct and influence policy-making.

Such evidence is sorely needed to sharpen the debate about the kind of education needed for the new century and to bridge the gap between the rhetoric of the donor agency and the realities faced by teachers and learners in some of the poorest areas of the world.

Since 9/11 it is clear that we need to understand much more clearly the positive role religious values can – and do- a play in shaping educational reform. It is my humble hope, given the expertise at this conference, that we can discuss this challenge during the week to come.

2.2. 9 Paying Greater Attention to the Role of Culture in International Educational Reform

For a comprehensive discussion of the role of culture in education and development see latest book of Stephens (2007).

The United Nations World Decade for Cultural Development (1988-97) had four aims: to acknowledge the cultural dimensions of development; to enrich cultural identities; to broaden participation in cultural life; and to promote international cultural co-operation. For the purposes of this section I am also suggesting that a fifth aim: acknowledgement of the importance culture can play in improving education reform quality in the developing world is also seriously undervalued.

The purpose of this section is to argue this case, albeit acknowledging the 'harness of the task' and specifically to address two questions:

First, in terms of critique, a fundamental question concerns the philosophical traditions upon which reform traditions are based. Is reform, in other words, an essentially Western form of intellectual activity or it is possible to carry out such reform in the South which perhaps draws upon Western and /or non-Western intellectual and epistemological research and policy bases?

Second, in terms of possibility, how can we practically improve the quality of such reform by incorporating the cultural dimension?

Let us begin in critical mode and briefly address the first question before going on to look in more detail at the more practical issues concerning the nuts and bolts of the reform process.

2.2.10 Is Educational Reform an Essentially Western Activity?

Smith (1999, Reviewed: Malsbary 2008) puts it bluntly,

... to a large extent theories about research are underpinned by a cultural system of classification and systems of representation, by views about human nature, human morality and virtue, by conceptions of space and time and by conceptions of gender and race. Ideas about these things help determine what counts as real.

The Western cultural system rests, to a large extent, upon technological-scientific form and ideas shaped, since the Reformation, by the transformative forces of scientific rationalism and industrialization. The link between science and industrialization was asserted by Max Scheler in 1926 (Stehr 1994) when he argued that of the three ideal types of knowledge: ‘(knowledge of salvation, cultural knowledge, and knowledge of domination), it is only the last type of knowledge, the ability to control and produce effects, that has, ‘ever more exclusively been cultivated for the purpose of ‘changing the world’ in the West while knowledge of culture and knowledge of salvation have been successfully relegated to the background (Scheler 1926 cited in Stehr 1994)

The Western techno-rational scientific tradition, accompanied by a Rostovian model of development, have prevented – so it is argued by Odora Hoppers (2002) – the development of endogenous, context-specific knowledge.

Stehr (1994) takes a more balanced perspective when he suggests that we must not fall into trap of overstating the hegemony of scientific rationalism.

A more balanced perspective would be aware of the limits of the power of scientific knowledge in modern society and would not commit the fallacy of an over-reliance on rationalization or tradition. (Stehr 1994)

Perhaps it is not only an epistemological question not an ideological and political one involving questions of ownership and purpose? For Tuhiwai Smith (1999) research in the South is certainly about two issues: ‘frustrations in dealing with various Western paradigms and the reclaiming of control over indigenous ways of knowing and being (Smith 1999).

For Edwards (1989) the dichotomy is less to do with Western or indigenous form of knowledge and more to do with dominant and alternative form of research. Echoing ideas espoused by Paolo Freire, he calls for international development research to be based upon participatory, empowering traditions in which local knowledge and local research agenda-setting are the norm (Edwards 1989). The employment of qualitative research methods, particularly by the NGO community working in the South, is a step in this direction.

If we take up Stehr’s *balanced perspective* it should be possible to steer a course that is both critical – of Western and other epistemological stances – and practical, in that it allows something *actionable* to occur. Harry Pickett and Scott support this approach when they suggest that the way to future is one towards political and epistemological co-determination and *rapprochement*, an integrative coming together of world-views that is not just one of pluralistic tolerance but one that affects the emergence of a new synthesis that incorporates the new diversity (Odora Hoppers 2002).

2.3 Part Three: Methodological Developments

Some of the ideas for this section have their roots in my book based upon my doctoral research in Northern Nigeria published in 1990 (Vulliamy, Lewin, and Stephen 1990).

During the past few years the international research community, particularly again those employed within the NGO sector, have paid significant attention to the development of research techniques and strategies (clusters of methods if you like operating under a particular methodological umbrella) that are sensitive to the research cultural context.

It may be useful at this stage briefly to look at two research methods – life-history and narrative enquiry – which seems well-suited for use in culturally-sensitive contexts.

2.3.1 Life History and Narrative Enquiry

“The most admirable thinkers within the scholarly community ... do not split their work from their lives. They seem to take both too seriously to allow such disassociation, and they want to use each for the enrichment of others” (Goodson 1993).

The importance and value of life history and narrative as research methods is now well established in educational research, particularly in the Western, so-called developed world. Life history and narrative have been used to good effect for example in an understanding of ‘individual –collective praxis and socio-historical change’ (Bertaux 1981), in the organization of individual life data (Mandelbaum 1973), and more specifically in the interplay between the teachers individual identities and the socio-historical context in which they work (Ball and Goodson 1985).

Essentially life history research concerns the relationship between two inter-dependant words: that of the individual with their unique life story and that of the past, present and future contextual world through which individual travels. Life story is ‘the story we tell about our life’ (Goodson 1992; Goodson 2001) whilst life history is that life story ‘located within historical context’ (Goodson 2001). Given the emergence of these methods over the past decade or so it is surprising to discover how little impact they have had on educational research in the developing world. There seems, however, to be stirrings of interesting, applying these approaches in third World settings (Osler 1997). Let us start by looking a little closer at a nature of life history as a method and then its potential application to Third World settings.

What defines a life history has been a matter of some debate (Hatch and Wisniewski 1995) though it seems possible now to identify a broadly accepted set of characteristics:-

- It is a qualitative research method similar to the closely allied method, narrative enquiry, and focus on, 'the individual, the personal nature of a research process are practical orientation and an emphasis on subjectivity' (Hatch and Wisniewski 1995).
- It is a mix of 'life story' as told by individual to the researcher and, what Goodson (1992), calls 'genealogies of context' which in turn becomes a 'life history'.
- It is essentially a personal type of research enquiry with priority for success being given to the establishment of rapport between researched and researcher. The dialogical, discursive nature of life history and narrative work raises a number of questions, both ethical and ideological particularly when involving outside researchers investigating problems in the developing world.

- It is concerned with 'voice' and 'ownership'; emphasis is given throughout from design to publication to what the individual researched has to say, how it is said, and the meaning made by the speaker to what has been said. As such it has great potential for imbuing the research process with a liberating, democratic ethos.

These characteristics, in turn, give rise to two parallel sets of tensions:

- First in the balance that needs to be struck between the individual and the contextually situated nature of their individual experience. Recognizing that 'no individual is an island' means that a major 'talk in' carrying out life history research is to present a view of larger, macro-issues through the lens of an individual's life experiences. Educationist suggests that each individual does not totalize directly a whole society; he totalizes it by way of the meditation of his immediate social context, the small group of which he is part.

If one, therefore, views individual life experience's as always in relation to the immediate social environment (which is particularly so in the developing world) and in relation to comparative experiences of those in similar situations, it is possible to present an analysis which is both particular and universal.

- Second is balance between the subjective and objective. In many ways life history and narrative enquiry methods reveal both the strengths and challenges of these forms of qualitative enquiry. Those who use life history have no problems with extolling its strengths.
- Life history and narrative approaches are person centered, unapologetically subjective. Far from a weakness, the voice of the person, the subject's own account represents a singular strength. Life history and narrative are ancient approaches to understanding human affairs – they are found in history, folklore, psychiatry, medicine, music, sociology economics and of course, anthropology. Their relative newness to us is a reminder of how often we trail behind.

Challenges to these methods are those addressed by all qualitative research: validity and generalizability. In terms of validity Hitchcock and Hughes (1989) provide a useful checklist for intending life history researchers:

- Note the circumstances surrounding the recording and collection of the data
- Consider the relationship between researcher and subject
- Are there any 'facts' in the accounts, which are easily checked on?
- Compare statements in one section of a life history with statements in another section of the same life history
- Compare the statements in one life history with those in other life histories from different people within the same setting
- Compare the statements in the life history with data from other sources within the same setting
- Compare the statements in the life history with other statements in published life histories of teachers and pupils.
- If possible get a second opinion on the material by showing them to colleagues.

The problem of generalizability takes us back to Goodson's (1992) idea of developing 'genealogies of context' with the emphasis placed firmly upon the teacher or pupil in situ. There is an argument too for asking not 'how generalizable life histories?' but 'how useful are they?' in coming to an understanding of how broad macro issues effect the individual 'on the ground'. We need to ask questions of our data that go beyond the standardized notions of reliability, validity and generalizability: how useful are the data? How authentic is it? How persuasive are they (Hatch and Wisniewski 1995) and of course how culturally sound are they?

Thematic analysis has been suggested as a useful way to analyze life history data. Mandelbaum (1973) takes three aspects to focus upon:

- Dimensions of life that include the individual's general social, cultural, psychological experience organized in a chronological fashion.
- Turning point that refer to moments of change, for example departure from one level of schooling to another, promotion and marriage.
- Adaptations that involve experiences of coping with change, accommodation and assimilation of new experiences and circumstances.

Mandelbaum's schema – used in his life history of Gandhi – seems to have merit when considering, for example, the lives of teachers and pupils in circumstances of rapid change.

Life history has a potentially valuable role to play in the study of teachers' lives and at the broader level of policy reform. Education, after all, is essentially concerned with what happens to people. Remembering this fact can guide us in making decisions about how to collect educational data and the purposes to which research should be put. There is a strong case to be made for research should be put. There is strong case to be made for research into policy and curriculum for example to take much greater cognizance of voices of teacher and pupils who daily experience the effects of decisions usually taken at a distance and by individuals at least once removed from the chalk-face.

Looking at the literature on life history I am stuck by how little has been carried out in Southern settings. There are a number for this: the predominance of traditional empirical forms of research, the establishment of large teaching universities with little opportunities for research, and the recruitment of indigenous researchers by development agencies concerned only with macro, survey style evaluation seem to be three. Though some good qualitative research is now being carried out by doctoral students around the world, little serious effort is being made to promote the incorporation of small scale, qualitative studies into the political and financial agendas of Ministries of Education and donor organizations.

One exception is the fascinating research by Serpell (1993) into 'the significance of schooling' in one Zambia community. Significantly, sub-titled, 'Life-journeys in an African Society'. Serpell well illustrates the interface between life history research and cultural life.

In his collection and analysis of the life histories or 'life journeys' of students from his Zambian community, Serpell sets out to explain the significance of schooling held by those represented in his reflexive triangle. He makes the important point that he is not only trying to explain how the author views the educational values of his subjects i.e. school children, but how the various parties to the explanation view their own values, perceptions, attitudes. This reflexive approach to the gathering of data means that 'culture' applies equally to the framing of the Zambian data as it does to experiences, knowledge and insights brought to the research from outside.

Let us look for a moment at a rationale for using teacher biography as a culturally appropriate research method.

Firstly, by focusing on the lives and stories of teachers we are providing an antidote to dominance of educational change by the manager and administrator. For a number of reasons, notably those of power, access to funds, and prestige it is the 'voice' of the ministerial bureaucrat and 'expert consultant' which predominates. A result is that we hear a great deal about prescription and very little about the implementation (or attempt to) at the chalk-face.

Secondly there is an important body of literature (Lortie 1975) which suggests that by understanding the socialization of the teacher throughout their career, but particularly during the early training period and experiences during their own schooling, we will have a much better idea of what influences teacher decision-making in the classroom.

A third rationale concerns the marginalization of teachers' experiences in the writing of 'public histories'. It is suggested that in educational development little is heard from the perspective of the female teacher, the beginner teacher or those working in the non-formal sector. Given the fact that more time these days seems to be spent on project evaluation than research of any kind, it is not surprising that when research is done it tends to focus on the project or the system rather than lives of those engaged in teaching.

Finally, as Goodson (1992) argues in his book, 'Studying Teachers Lives' a focus on teachers-in-situ will generate much needed research into the relationship between 'school life' and 'whole life', it will provide us with important insights to the rewards and problems teachers face; and, maybe, tell us something about the impact upon teachers of educational cuts and changes in public esteem. For researchers in the developing world such information would seem vital for improving the quality of the system at a time of austerity. In raising the profile of this approach it is now worth considering some of the inherent dangers.

In taking up this approach we are emphasizing two dimensions of cultural importance: that the teachers' stories and narratives are told in their own words and in their own terms; and that these stories or narratives be embedded in genealogies of context.

3. CONCLUSIONS

Time present and time past Are both perhaps present in time future, And time future contained in time past. (Eliot. T.S. Burnt Norton. No. 1 of 'Four Quartets')

In this paper I have stressed the importance of looking both backwards and forwards in the hope of understanding a little more clearly where we stand at the present moment with regard to educational reform.

It is clear to me at least that many of the reform issues I identifies 18 years ago remain perennial challenges. We seem better equipped I would argue now with the landscape of educational reform structured more clearly around concepts of quality, school effectiveness and school improvement. Within this landscape challenges to quality and improvement remain how ever, the most daunting being the impact of poverty and lack of opportunities for many of our fellow citizens.

Finally it is not only what we do but the ways or methods we employ that can make a difference to our endeavors. In the last part of this paper I have suggested that more innovative – and I would suggest culturally appropriate methods, such as life history and narrative enquiry – need to be given consideration. They are also exciting and imaginative – another two dimensions of quality we must not lose sight of in the next 18 years.

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