



What does “quality” look like for post-2015 education provision in low-income countries? An exploration of stakeholders’ perspectives of school benefits in village LEAP schools, rural Sindh, Pakistan



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ABSTRACT

The provision of quality education for the poor and marginalized is intertwined with addressing social justice concerns. Parents need convincing that the cost of sending their children to school is offset by tangible benefits. This article draws on a study of perceptions of school benefits and the factors and processes shaping them, in rural Sindh, Pakistan. It responds to the strategies advocated in the Global Monitoring Report 2013–2014 for solving the “quality” crisis and to the widespread struggle in low-income countries to recruit sufficient, trained teachers to achieve EFA and provide education that becomes a catalyst for social change.

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1. Introduction

The Global Monitoring Report (GMR) 2005 admitted that quality as compared to access has been relatively ignored in the Education for All (EFA) agenda. Nearly a decade later, GMR 2013–2014 underscores its importance, reporting that in 21 out of 85 countries with available data, half the children are not learning the “basics” (UNESCO, 2014). Furthermore, it reports huge urban/rural inequalities in learning. Specific reports from low-income countries indicate that standards in rural areas are “tumbling” across rural Pakistan (ASER survey 2013, 2014) and have declined since 2009 in India (Agrawal, 2014). “The learning crisis” has led to powerful voices arguing for prioritizing the measurement of learning outcomes as a path to quality improvement (Filmer et al., 2006; Barber and Mourshed, 2007; World Bank, 2010). The Learning Metrics Task Force (UNESCO, 2013) has made recommendations for tracking learning outcomes globally. In addition, teachers are seen as critical to delivering quality education and overcoming the ‘learning crises’ (UNESCO, 2014). Attracting the best teachers, getting them where they are most needed and providing incentives to retain them are recommended to deal with issues of quality.

While these strategies are significant, their achievement is problematic, given the vastness of the challenge in a financially constrained global environment. Moreover, they provide too narrow a focus since contextual factors also impact quality education, which have not been given sufficient consideration. Furthermore, researchers have argued that there has been insufficient debate on what quality entails and that its conceptualization has been limited to product and classroom activity with the attendant narrowing of educational goals (Alexander, 2008; Nikel and Lowe, 2010; Barrett, 2011; Le Fanu, 2014). Therefore, new theoretical models for understanding quality in education have been developed to assist governments and international development agencies in formulating policies and strategies for educational development that will especially benefit disadvantaged learners (Unterhalter and Brighouse, 2007; Nikel and Lowe, 2010; Barrett, 2011; Sayed and Ahmed, 2011; Tikly, 2011; Tikly and Barrett, 2011).

There has been very little empirical research undertaken that demonstrates how the above theoretical frameworks are being “fleshed out” in specific contexts. My research utilizes the various theoretical components that a range of researchers have developed by synergistically synthesizing them and building on them by subjecting them to empirical investigation in a specific context to generate new knowledge. I took the opportunity afforded by my position as the director of a programme working with marginalized communities in rural Sindh, Pakistan to explore how “quality”

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education is constructed for communities who are hard to reach and find it difficult to achieve learning outcomes that are relevant to their social justice concerns.

Additionally, the longitudinal nature of my study covering a period of 10 years, allows me to understand the dynamics of social change by incorporating the seminal theories of Bourdieu. Previous researchers within the social justice approach have emphasized the iterative nature of “quality” and my enhanced theoretical framework facilitates the investigation of adaptive processes that promote the sustainability of quality. It also assists the interrogation of socio-cultural barriers that are integral to a study of quality education within a context of poverty and marginalization.

I utilized an exploration of school benefits as a lens through which to engage with perceptions of “quality” education within a social justice framework. Communities who are the most economically and socially disadvantaged are the least likely to access good education as indicated by low literacy and numeracy skills among primary school children in such communities across the global South (GMR 2013–2014). Engaging with stakeholders’ perceptions of “quality” is vital for educational sustainability in these communities since international funding or government policies to attract enrolment will have short-term impact if the benefits of the education being offered are not clearly identified and acknowledged by the stakeholders. Even if there are no tuition fees, there are always opportunity and other costs to sending children to school. Poor parents will not utilize their few precious resources for their children’s education unless the benefits of doing so are obvious to them. An important contribution that this research makes is to identify the elements of ‘quality’ that are important to marginalized communities but have largely been absent in the discourse on “quality” education.

The article engages with current quality concerns – the critical role of the teacher, the recruitment of an adequate number of teachers, especially female teachers, through innovative initiatives. My research reports on the implementation of solutions that engage with these concerns. It shows the effectiveness of recruiting local teachers from marginalized rural communities accompanied by *contextualized* teacher education, school curriculum and pedagogy for delivering sustainable “quality” education to achieve valued outcomes. These achieved outcomes facilitate social change, which is the declared aim of EFA.

2. Research context

This research is based on a study of four communities within the Primary Education Project (PEP), rural Sindh, Pakistan. Village LEAP (Literacy, Education Awareness Programme) has been developed by PEP in the diocese of Hyderabad in response to requests for opening schools in villages in the four rural districts of Sindh, namely Badin, Mirpur Khas, Sanghar and Tando Allahyar. It seeks “to provide sustainable, quality education, especially for girls, without discrimination in unreached marginalized communities, developing the skills of teachers and creating a network of effective leaders through wide ranging training programmes” (PEP Mission Statement, p. 1). It seeks to contribute to the government’s declared aim of achieving 86% literacy by 2015. PEP has therefore progressively opened 84 schools in villages where there is no functional government school, in which case permission has been sought for use of the government building. These requests are located in districts of rural Sindh where educational access and learning outcomes are very low compared to national and provincial averages.

Pakistan is categorized as a country of low human development, being placed 146 out of 186 countries.¹ The World Economic

Forum’s Global Gender Gap Index Report 2013, places Pakistan 135 out of 136 participating countries in gender equality in political empowerment, health, education attainment and economic participation. The number of illiterate adults is estimated at 55.24 million, with a literacy rate of 58%, for over 10 years age population (UNESCO, 2012) with a female, living in a rural area, as a member of an ethnic minority in an agrarian community, as the most disadvantaged citizen. Pakistan has the world’s second largest number of out of school children aged between 5 and 9 years, estimated at least 5.1 million (HRCP, 2013), two thirds of them being girls (UNICEF, 2012). The projected literacy and net enrolment rates (15 years and above) for 2015 are 59% and 63% respectively, the lowest in South and West Asia (UNESCO, 2011). In the Sindh province, the site of this research, 1.8 million primary age children are out of school and 35% schools have no building (HRCP, 2013). The Gender Parity Index (GPI) of the Gender Enrolment Rate for primary education in Sindh is 0.82 with a 44% enrolment rate and 62% completion rate at primary level for female students.² Female literacy in the province overall is 47% while for rural female it is 22% (UNESCO, 2012).

Lack of political will and low investment in education compounded by environmental challenges has resulted in the public system being under huge constraints in the provision of quality education in Pakistan. This is reflected in the burgeoning private sector alongside the growth of non-formal education (Andrabi et al., 2008). However until recently there has been no public acknowledgement of the complementary role of non-state education and even where this public–private strategy has been successfully adopted in the Punjab, it fell short of delivering education in hard to reach areas and considered unworkable in Sindh (Barber, 2013).

Schools opened through Village LEAP are in villages largely defined by the feudal system of socio-economic organization. Agriculture employs an estimated 45% of Pakistan’s work force, but its productivity is reduced through exploitative practices, in particular that of bonded labour, which is especially prevalent amongst socially excluded minority groups. National laws abolishing the practice have not been enforced nor those defining a more just relationship between landlord and tenant. Since these landless farmers have to rely on the landlord for access to the land and even provide their own agricultural inputs, their resultant poverty frequently obligates them to take loans at times of marriage, death and religious festivals which can put them in generational debt to these landlords. Villagers who have opened a school within Village LEAP are mainly from three tribal groups (Bheel, Kohli and Menghwar³), some of whom work as bonded agricultural labourers for the landlord whose permission is required before opening a school. They are also communities that in recent years have experienced a higher annual incidence of rainfall with catastrophic flooding in 2006 and 2011.

The teachers working within Village LEAP have all been selected by the local community. They enrolled in ITEP (Initial Teacher Education Programme), which is a research-based programme that has been externally funded by Tearfund UK and TEAR Australia. It was created by PEP out of the recognition that the teachers concerned often lacked the appropriate entry qualifications for government training institutions. Moreover, the latter did not offer contextualized teacher education, which I consider vital if teachers with low qualifications, rooted in a feudal culture, would be able to become change agents for their communities.

When the first village school was opened, teachers were trained to implement the government curriculum, which included the

¹ Human Development Index (HDI) 2012 = 0.515 (Academy of Education Planning and Management annual figures).

² AEPM Education Statistics 2011–2012.

³ Castes into which pre-independence Indian Hindus divided their people. They are amongst the lowest and poorest in the hierarchy.

teaching of English, so that as requested by the communities, children would receive a government qualification. Children sit government exams each year. However, since 2002, the curriculum has expanded to encompass now a substantial supplementary curriculum to facilitate the attainment of learning outcomes and address local needs. This is prepared by PEP, whose training department has produced resources to accompany the curriculum, including teacher training modules. It has several components. An extended multi-sensory English language curriculum to develop the four language skills is introduced through in-service teacher training. A child-to-child health curriculum was started to help improve the health of the community. Provision of hand pumps to facilitate access to clean water and a community-led total sanitation (CLTS) programme has been launched, aimed at motivating communities to construct their own simple latrines, further contributing to community health. Given the increasing ethnic and religious tensions within the country, PEP networked with an NGO to introduce a peace curriculum, facilitating role play, art work and discussion on conflict resolution and building peaceful communities, both within the family and outside in the wider society. Similarly, with the severe flooding experienced by these communities in 2006 and 2011, a disaster risk reduction curriculum has been incorporated, which includes an understanding of global climate change and its impact in Pakistan; strategies for minimizing risk of flooding and practical awareness raising for both children and parents of measures that can be taken annually prior to the monsoon season, to help preserve their animals, food supplies and personal belongings against flood damage. Finally, with awareness that school graduates are the potential future leaders of their communities, those who will exercise agency to bring change (Stromquist and Fischman, 2009), PEP has introduced a social and financial education programme, linking with Aflatoun International, using their resources to create a modified curriculum. The five modules: personal understanding and exploration, rights and responsibilities, saving and spending, budgeting and planning and social and financial enterprise, aim to develop self-worth, capacity for agency, recognition of the inter-relationship between rights and responsibilities, decision-making skills and small business skills. The curriculum has facilitated children to start saving clubs and small enterprises. It has enabled them to provide uniform, new clothes for special festivals, basic school materials and medicines for their family members.

3. Literature review/theoretical framework

EFA targets are unlikely to be met by 2015. This has led to an increasing awareness to refocus energies, since while the *quality* of education is so poor for the disadvantaged, these targets are not going to be met. Researchers are concerned that the proposed initiatives ignore pedagogy and socio-cultural realities outside the classroom. Both are critical to address the social justice concerns of the poor and the marginalized. My theoretical framework is presented below.

My research emerges from the social justice approach to education which emphasizes the role of education in developing basic freedoms to develop the life people have reason to value. It acknowledges that quality in education is contextually constructed and privileges indigenous voice and participation of stakeholders in deciding what their valued educational outcomes are and therefore what quality looks like. Through the capability approach with its key concepts of “capabilities” (opportunities to achieve valued outcomes) and “functionings” (achieved valued outcomes), it highlights the factors and processes that may prevent individuals and communities from achieving their desired outcomes (Sen, 1993; Walker, 2006; Walker and Unterhalter, 2007). These core values underpin my research and hence are placed centrally in my

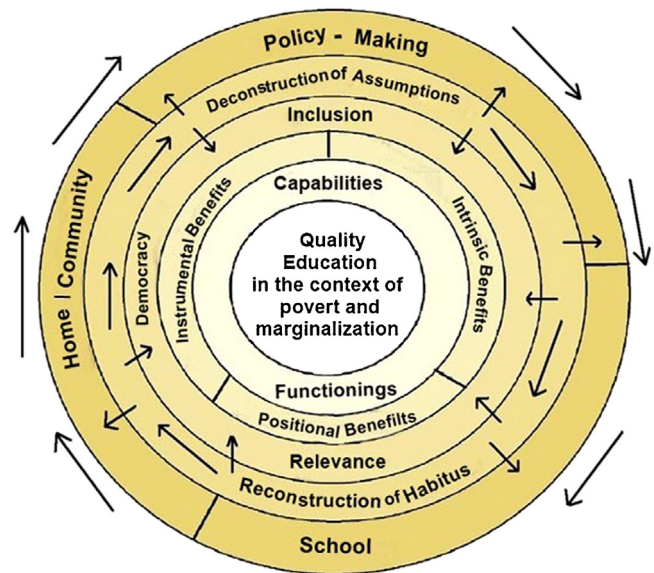


Fig. 1. Theoretical framework: quality education.

theoretical framework (Fig. 1). Unterhalter and Brighouse's (2007) typology of benefits is used, namely instrumental, positional and intrinsic benefits, which has emerged from within the capabilities approach. Instrumental benefits include qualifications and skills for future life and better job opportunities that increase the economic capital of an individual or community. Positional benefits increase the status and reputation of a person or community, and may develop new understandings of gender, race or class, helping to redress these sources of inequality, providing cultural capital. Intrinsic benefits are those that enhance agency and well-being, for example having a more rewarding and complex mental life, regardless of whether it results in gaining employment or enhancing status.

Unterhalter and Brighouse's typology draws attention to a wide range of benefits that are pertinent to disadvantaged communities. The study aims to discover the gendered outcomes that individuals and communities value and whether the education that is being provided in the schools opened through Village LEAP is perceived as achieving these outcomes.

At the heart of this investigation are Tikly and Barrett's (2011) three social justice dimensions of *inclusion*, *relevance* and *democracy*. Central to *inclusion* is the understanding that quality education does not require one globalized set of inputs. Communities in low-income countries are addressing a range of injustices for complex reasons and therefore the choice of inputs must be efficient, given the limited resources available, and effective in facilitating the development of capabilities that individuals and communities value. Monitoring of these educational outcomes is implicitly important. If the outcomes are not being realized, it is critical to engage with the socio-economic and cultural barriers to learning that are preventing capabilities from being achieved.

The principle of *relevance* interrogates quality's relationship with curriculum content, environment and processes that takes account of the priorities of different socio-economic and cultural groups, in particular those of marginalized communities. Nickel and Lowe (2010) provide further theoretical understanding by highlighting that educational needs and priorities change over time. They identify reflexivity and sustainability crucial to foregrounding coping strategies in a rapidly changing world and the implications of longer-term global and local environmental changes. This connected with my research goal in accessing

perceptions of school benefits, within the context of changing community and national needs, given the situated nature of emerging crises and their impact. It informed my decision to use photographs (see Section 4) as an initial vehicle for discussion with respondents comparing the lives of parents and school graduates.

Tikly and Barrett's third principle of *democracy* draws attention to the importance of public debate and accountability, especially "downward accountability" (Chambers, 1997). The principle emerges from Fraser's (2008, p. 16) definition of justice as "parity of participation". It informs my research aim, emerging from my positionality as the PEP Director, to demonstrate accountability to villagers who have opened a school through Village LEAP and be part of the on-going process of engagement with them, nurturing participation and community ownership of the school. My research, through its engagement with local communities, aims to both provide empirical data on the concerns which researchers have raised about quality debates, investigating the extent to which inclusion, relevance and democratic participation are being achieved in these community schools; and in asking communities to practice participation, encourage the third principle of democracy in addressing the injustices that poor and marginalized communities face.

This research engages with the socio-cultural barriers that limit agency for the poor and marginalized. Bourdieu's (2004) work assists the investigation of disabling factors and processes since it acknowledges agential constraints and the necessity for assumptions held by individuals and communities that subordinate them to the powerful to be challenged to promote social change. Bourdieu argues that there are both inherited and innovative aspects to "habitus" which can generate both constraining and transformative courses of action (Bourdieu, 1989, 1990; Reay, 2004). An integral part of my research was an analysis of the "habitus" of my respondents in each of the four villages and its development over time. The study explores whether community respondents identified a process of deconstruction and reconstruction of "habitus" that had shaped perceptions of inclusion and relevance and facilitated democratic participation.

The enquiry – as shown in the diagram – is bounded by the three interactive sites of policy-making, school and home/community since these have been recognized as being the critical environments from which a "quality education" can emerge (Tikly, 2013).

Finally, the theoretical framework is presented as a wheel in motion to emphasize the iterative nature of "quality" education, a core understanding of several key researchers working within a social justice framework. This research is not conceptualized as reaching an "end game" but part of an on-going process of adapting educational provision to global, national and local challenges, to enable communities to achieve their valued outcomes over time. This conceptual understanding of "quality" is vital to its sustainability. Earlier research indicates that sustainability is perceived as having two important aspects: firstly, achieving long-term benefits to individuals and communities and secondly, the motivation and capacity of a community to give on-going attention to the problem being addressed (Johnson et al., 2004). Five key factors have been identified that influence the extent of programme sustainability and by implication the sustainability of quality: modification over time, existence of a "champion", alignment with the organization's mission and procedures, achievement of readily perceived long-term benefits and support from stakeholders in other organizations. These findings inform my research study and are interrogated by my research findings (Scheirer, 2005).

4. Methodology

To uncover the discourses about school benefits and assist my engagement with a wide range of discourses, I used purposive

Table 1
Participant village communities.

	School that opened 2002	School that opened 2007	Total
Community own land	1 (Tabdeeli)	1 (Aman)	2
Landless community	1 (Rehmat)	1 (Noor)	2
Total	2	2	4

sampling, to select the four communities (Table 1). I considered two variables, land ownership and time since the school was established, important in enabling me to investigate the significance of different social and geographical contexts and to provide maximum data heterogeneity. Within Village LEAP 35% of the 84 schools are in villages where people have their own land, 65% where they do not, with many working for a feudal landlord, some as bonded labourers. The challenges in each of these two contexts are different. Land ownership by community leaders provides greater freedom for decision-making within their own community and is usually accompanied by a higher level of education and wider experience of critical thinking. In addition, the recognition of benefits develops over time. Therefore research was conducted in four villages: two villages where the community leaders and school management committee have their own land, two where they do not, with the community working under a feudal landlord. Within these two categories, one school was selected that opened in 2002, the other in 2007. Two of the villages (Tabdeeli and Rehmat) were originally one community. Having opened a school in 2002, in 2005 fifteen families moved and created a new village – Tabdeeli – opening a new school. Three of the villages – Tabdeeli, Aman and Noor – are in close proximity to a town. Rehmat is in an isolated location where villagers are in a bonded relationship with the landlord. This provided a wider range of contextualized knowledge from communities who may have different understandings of their school's benefits, different barriers to and opportunities for participation, and for whom the research process provides a range of experiences and potential benefits that can promote the sustainability of their school. Nkansa and Chapman (2006) identified strong leadership and social cohesion as two critical factors in sustaining community participation and therefore these characteristics were considered in the sampling criteria. All villages were ones identified by field leaders as having strong school leadership and social cohesion in the sense of having a history of members working together to establish and maintain their school. They are also villages where the teacher is recognized by PEP monitoring staff as effectively delivering "quality" education.

Within each village, the participants included the community leader(s), school management committee members, parents, and teachers and, where the school opened in 2002-Tabdeeli and Rehmat villages – school graduates.⁴

4.1. Research methods and instruments

Semi-structured interviews and focus groups were conducted as indicated in Table 2. Photographs taken by school graduates, of the daily lives of villagers, were used to frame the discussion in the graduates' focus groups, which were the starting point for the research. The photographs were then used as a facilitating tool for the group interviews with community members. In each village these were followed by individual interviews with community leaders. Finally interviews and focus groups were conducted with teachers.

⁴ Pseudonyms have been used to protect the identity of schools and communities. There has been insufficient time elapsed in Aman and Noor villages to include school graduates as research participants.

Table 2
Research participants.

Research participants	No. per village	Research methods	Research instruments
Graduates (from schools opened in 2002), Tabdeeli and Rehmat village where sufficient time has elapsed	10 (5 male, 5 female)	Focus groups	Photographs Key topics for discussion
Community members (SMC members and parents)	20 (10 male, 10 female)	Single sex group interviews	Semi-structured interview. Photos used as a facilitating tool
Community leader	1 (2 in Tabdeeli and Noor villages)	Individual interview	Semi-structured interview
Teachers	All teachers interviewed (1–3 per village)	Individual interviews Focus group (8 teachers: 5 male, 3 female)	Semi-structured interview Key topics for discussion

4.2. Data collection and analysis

First, the perceived differences and similarities in the students' lives as compared to their parents and grandparents were explored. The contribution of the school to these differences and similarities, as well as the contribution of other supporting and inhibiting factors was investigated. Through all these discussions I conducted an iterative process to create a map of school benefits, utilizing [Unterhalter and Brighouse's \(2007\)](#) typology of intrinsic, positional and instrumental benefits.

The next stage involved more in-depth analysis based on further components of my theoretical framework, utilizing Bourdieu's theories and the interactive sites of policy-making, school and home/community. As this was a longitudinal study I compared the transformative and constraining aspects of each habitus over five or ten years: the social change that had taken place through enhanced agency and the processes involved; the social change that had been denied through limited agency and the micro-political environment reported by the respondents. I considered whether habitus or socio-cultural factors appeared to exercise the more significant influence over perceptions of agency. From this process emerged one of the main findings related to the factors and processes shaping perceptions of benefits, namely community leadership. During and after my interviews with the teachers I particularly considered whether the teachers identified themselves as change agents and were creating a new habitus within the new "field" of school. My reflections led me to two key factors shaping perceptions of school benefits, namely teacher training and pedagogy.

Finally, my data was integrated into the wider frame of the three dimensions of quality education identified by [Tikly and Barrett \(2011\)](#); namely inclusion, relevance and democracy.

4.3. Researcher positionality

I am the PEP Director and conducted this research as an integral part of my doctoral studies to assist the school sustainability of Village LEAP. I sought to utilize the advantages of my insider-outsider positionality. Being an insider I had easy access to the villages and there was a sense of them being honoured since they were the four communities chosen out of the possible 84 villages. With the women and female graduates I used my gendered identity and my insider "mother" role to create a relaxed and open atmosphere. I was able to minimize the asymmetries of power especially with the community leaders, since I could approach the interviews as my opportunity to gain new knowledge: their perspectives on the school and how it contributed to their wider goals of overcoming social injustices and building a better future for their children. I adopted different strategies in each village to encourage the construction of rich data. In Rehmat and Noor villages I utilized my outsider Western status by positioning myself as an "honorary male" with the *kamdar*⁵ and landlord/social

activist, but also using my insider positionality to be culturally sensitive. This enabled me to ask critical and at times challenging questions in order to engage with their core beliefs. My outsider position assisted me in formulating these questions since as a Western trained educationalist and doctoral student I had engaged with the work of other researchers and experts in the field relevant to this study.

As well as capitalizing on both positions, I also aimed to circumvent the disadvantages. The use of photos was one of my main strategies to minimize the power differentials with graduates and to create a relaxed and affirming environment with community members. Their use also offered a more oblique way of engaging with perceptions of benefits to minimize the likelihood of people saying what they thought I wanted to hear. Ethical clearance for the study was given by the Social Sciences and Arts Cross-School Research Ethics Committee, University of Sussex.

In the sections below, I present and discuss key findings before reflecting on the conclusions and implications of the findings for policy and quality debates.

5. Findings

I provide a brief overview of school benefits as perceived by the respondents. As these benefits were subsumed into the larger framework of inclusion, relevance and democracy as a lens through which to engage with the communities' conceptualization of "quality" in education. I report the findings within these three dimensions including the factors and processes that are shaping these perceptions.

5.1. Perceptions of inclusion

Inclusion can be defined as the provision of a basic education being available to all and the opportunity to achieve desired capabilities.

5.1.1. Access to inputs

Respondents from the four villages described their school as providing "education on the doorstep". They regard the education as accessible and therefore inclusive since they consider their village school safe and secure. The proximity of the school was seen as particularly significant for the enrolment of girls, since cultural norms regarding female mobility prevent them from travelling out of their village to attend school. The school was also inclusive since it was regarded as affordable although in the Rehmat village where respondents are in a bonded labour relationship, financial contributions are more difficult to achieve. "There may be some delay in paying the fees but we are committed to pay" (male parent, Rehmat village). Parents consider the fees low given the quality of the education their children are receiving as compared to other town schools where the fees are higher and the standard of education provided may not be as good.

⁵ Landlord's representative.

... a retired headmaster... when he comes to the school in our village... often says that I am paying higher fees for my grandchildren but their performance is not as good as these children (SMC chairperson, Tabdeeli village)

There is also awareness that although there are free schools, to achieve an education for their children that provides capabilities that they value, financial contributions are necessary.

In government schools there are no fees but there is no education either (male graduates' focus group).

Nevertheless, in Rehmat village, the most marginalized socially and economically of all four communities, some parents are not sending their children.

Some are not coming due to poverty... and some just don't understand the value of education (SMC chairperson, Rehmat village)

A key question for such communities is whether education is perceived as having intrinsic benefits, that is, whether it has intrinsic worth as a capability in its own right. Those families who do not recognize intrinsic benefits to education are less likely to send their children to school and so those children will not have access to the inputs in their community school that facilitate the development of capabilities. Perceptions of intrinsic benefits shape respondent perceptions of inclusion in their community school.

The intrinsic benefits recognized by the respondents are those that are part of a broader concern for agency and empowerment that give a sense of well-being. They include the capacity to access a range of opinions through the media, participate in discussions, make decisions and be regarded as an informed and educated person. Educated people have "more awareness", can "go out and see the world, grow and develop" and "make decisions", whereas uneducated people "have to remain in their homes and suffer" (female parents focus group). Community leaders who own land and have completed their own education, were more articulate in expressing education as a capability in its own right, a "unique thing that can neither be lost nor stolen" (SMC chairperson, Tabdeeli⁶ village). They recognize its impact on all aspects of life.

Teachers in all four villages are shaping understandings of intrinsic benefits. Since these villages are extended family networks, the lives of these teachers are clearly observable to all community members. The teachers, mostly sons of farmers reported significant life changes. They felt happiness and satisfaction in teaching the children, using the skills they have acquired through training and teaching experience. Through running a successful school and being able to help community members with other needs, especially in times of crisis when their villages were flooded, they recognized an inner process of personal transformation, which they expressed as positive feelings of self-worth. Their elevation to the profession of teaching was regarded by all of them as a change that has brought a deeper awareness of the difference between an educated and uneducated person. They have therefore become greater advocates for the importance of education, demonstrating to parents its intrinsic benefits.

There is huge difference between an educated and uneducated person... it is like the difference between day and night... I feel very happy and now I can see and understand the qualities of an educated and uneducated person (male teacher, son of a farmer, Rehmat village).

Becoming a teacher had reintroduced them to the world of learning and expanded the horizons of their life experience.

Previously I had to leave my studies when my father died after matriculation, but now through being a teacher, I have had the opportunity to start learning again. Now I am inspired and have confidence to further my education... I have become acquainted with different situations in society, for example, the police station, government offices, how they work. I have to interact with more people and keep learning now that I am a teacher (male teacher, son of a farmer, Aman village).

In an environment of social and economic marginalization, if children are not going to attend the village school, it is more likely that it will be girls who will not be enrolled. While the SMC members in three of the case study villages report that all primary age girls are now enrolled, by contrast female enrolment at primary level is low in Rehmat village. Given the realities of early marriage, any education is perceived to have been wasted, since their daughters are likely to still have to work in the fields after marriage and parents prioritize instrumental benefits.

This is false when they say we are poor and we can't (afford to) get them (girls) educated. They say what is the benefit... what will they do... they can't get any job (female parent, Rehmat village).

By contrast, parents and community leaders in Tabdeeli and Aman village encourage female enrolment with some female graduates becoming teachers or working as facilitators for women's empowerment groups. These achievements have motivated other parents to enrol their girls in school, since they observe that these daughters have brought benefits to their families and local communities.

... they must have education... at least Inter (college level)... if there is a school near then she ought to be a teacher... She (their village female graduate) has established her life as well as her parents' life... she is a role model for our girls... she has benefited us all... we have built our home... girls have found guidance from her... environment has changed (community leader, Aman village).

By contrast, in Noor community which opened in 2007, there are no such role models. Although parents appear to be committed to primary education, they regard it as "enough" to enable them to "manage" their lives and "have cleanliness". The PEP Sustainability Coordinator commented that practical arrangements do exist for parents to send their daughters safely to middle school. They therefore could challenge the cultural norm without harm to their daughters. However, male habitus in this village still presents a powerful constraint.

5.1.2. Opportunity to achieve desired capabilities

The fact that so many parents are willing with limited resources to pay school fees so that their children can be educated indicates that parents perceive that their children are being given an opportunity to develop capabilities that they value. Parents report that primary school graduates on transfer to government middle and high schools are considered "very intelligent", and are "respected and valued" for their "excellent performance". There has been much debate on curricular inclusion so that pupils can develop according to their potential appropriate for their local context. This has led to "learner-centred" curriculum and "child-friendly" methodology. However, it is reported that teachers often lack the capacity to deliver such methodologies and are epistemologically unwilling to implement them (Le Fanu, 2013). However Village LEAP teachers, having been trained through a contextually constructed teacher education curriculum delivered through learner-centred methods, rooted in teachers' initial beliefs, have been given a foundation for shared values that can be built upon. They have recognized their own transformation

⁶ A pseudonym.

process and so come to understand the benefits of child-friendly methodology. My study has shown that if pedagogy is integral to valued outcomes, the habitus of teachers can be changed and effective learning promoted.

To be inclusive the school curriculum must keep reflecting the changing needs of communities. PEP has shown commitment to the iterative development of the school curriculum as described above. All these initiatives in the supplementary curriculum have shaped the communities' perceptions of school benefits as being inclusive, promoting sustainability of quality.

Tabdeeli, Aman and Noor Village LEAP schools are perceived as inclusive since the participant identified them as accessible, affordable, safe and secure. Furthermore, the provided good standard of education is regarded as a capability that makes a difference to every aspect of a person's life. Land ownership is significant since it is accompanied by a higher level of educational attainment from which a greater awareness of intrinsic school benefits for both boys and girls emerges. Proximity to a town and the greater time period since the school opening are also critical factors especially for female inclusion: girls who have completed their education to college level in a nearby town have been able to demonstrate their achievement of valued outcomes and encouraged further girls' enrolment. Land ownership however seems to be the most critical factor since in Noor village – where participants despite living close to a town do not own land – inclusion is less evident. The conclusions regarding these demographics are supported by the findings from Rehmat village: participants, living in an isolated location and not owning land did not recognize intrinsic benefits as significant since instrumental benefits are prioritized. Their school is less inclusive especially for girls due to low female enrolment: girls' education is perceived as unable to provide valued outcomes, since the bonded labour relationship and the societal norm of early marriage prevail, with their implications for continuing poverty and very limited female agency. The longer time period since the school opened only confirmed this perception.

5.2. Perceptions of relevance

Relevance is concerned with whether the education being provided becomes a tool for meeting social and economic needs in the local context and for addressing injustices. I explored whether the benefits that have been recognized by the respondents as "capabilities" are being converted into "functionings" and therefore if the education being provided is perceived as relevant. I report perceptions of school benefits within four key areas of relevance: employment and sustainable livelihoods for sons/men, prospects of an educated husband for daughters/women, marginalization and minority status and coping with crises in a changing global environment.

Benefits regarding employment are largely the subject of intended benefits. In all four villages parent respondents were clear that they wanted their sons to have higher status jobs than they were able to access. However, there were important differences in perceptions of relevance according to land ownership and proximity to a town. In Tabdeeli and Aman villages where members own land and in Noor village where they do not, parents are already engaged in a range of occupations other than farming due to their proximity to a town. Nevertheless, this is a more recent transition in Tabdeeli village, having only moved from a more isolated location and out from bonded labour in 2005. Therefore the dominant response from Tabdeeli village parents was that their sons should not be farmers. They as fathers had "suffered under cruel landlords" and their sons' education would be relevant if their sons emerged from the "poverty and depression" they had experienced and access "good jobs... so that they will have money"

(parents' group interview, Tabdeeli village). In Rehmat village, where parents are in bonded labour, these instrumental benefits have failed to emerge since their sons are still working as farmers. "There has not been any benefit... my son has not been able to get any job" (male parent leader, Rehmat village). These parents do not doubt the intrinsic benefits of education, but unjust structures and power elites constrain their agency. This is compounded by their isolated location since there are no nearby middle or high schools and few alternative sources of employment. Nevertheless, male graduates, who are working as farmers, indicated that their education had relevance for them.

... An uneducated farmer ... is afraid of the landlord... while an educated one knows about things... about the bills... what is written... so the landlord hesitates to mistreat an educated farmer. When there is an uneducated farmer he doesn't write accounts, only the landlord does... so the landlord can misappropriate the record (male graduates' focus group, Rehmat village).

These graduates demonstrated their awareness of their legal rights as farmers and of those NGOs assisting them to access their rights through the courts.

In Tabdeeli and Aman villages, where leaders and SMC members own land, and are in close proximity to a town, parent respondents are already sending their sons to middle and high schools. They have a sense of agency: the SMC chairperson in Tabdeeli village reported that students are "showing good performance" and have an inner desire to succeed. Male graduates reported that they are enrolling for a degree course or using their existing qualifications to apply for jobs. Having learnt from the bitter experience of other young men, they want to delay marriage until they have secured a job that provides them with an adequate income. Ten years have elapsed since the opening of their school and they have attained a level of education that gives greater confidence that the intended benefits will be realized. They are aware that their nearest town is called "the city of NGOs" and regard them as being open to employ suitably qualified members of marginalized communities.

For females, the primary intended instrumental benefit is to marry an educated man, so that their lives will be better than their mothers, facilitating social change.

If we get our girls educated and then get them married with uneducated men... all our efforts are useless... because uneducated men will tell them to work in the fields (female parent, Tabdeeli village)

Five of the six female graduates in the Tabdeeli village participated in the focus group. All regard their intermediate examination certificate as their "passport" to an educated husband and a better life. One of these graduates while completing her college education, taught for two years in her village school before marrying an educated man in 2012. She stated that due to the quality education she has received, her in-laws respect her, recognizing that she has better English and is more confident in public speaking than her husband. This has given her some space for negotiated gender relations within the marital home and resulted in her taking up employment as a local teacher.

In our community women are abused and beaten... but my husband is educated... he has a job and he understands that a woman has rights... so my life is not as difficult as for other women in the past (female graduates focus group).

In contrast, a female graduate from Rehmat village who married aged 12 was not perceived as having benefited from her education.

She is educated but her in-laws are uneducated... they are not supporting her to continue her education... they are telling her to

work in the fields... and they are not allowing her to take a job (female parent 1, Rehmat village).

Supportive social networks and changes in habitus of these family members are essential if schooling is to have a major impact on women's lives (Bhatti and Jeffery, 2012; DeJaeghere and Lee, 2011). Change of habitus may be encouraged when women, living with limited agency, nevertheless can demonstrate the impact of their education. The female graduate from Rehmat village, now aged eighteen with two children, still regards her seven years of education positively. She spoke confidently and explained how she had been able to marry a building supervisor – primary-level educated – and was regarded as a leader amongst the other uneducated women in the village where she now lives. As the male graduates in both Tabdeeli and Rehmat village asserted, an educated wife will manage the household affairs in a better way, will know how to keep her children clean and healthy and in later years provide them with better training and instruction. These are all capabilities that can have a positive influence on other women. As the female graduate from Tabdeeli village explained:

First I want to educate the children of my family and then I want to work for the people in the village... I want to show the difference between an educated daughter in-law and uneducated one... my first goal is to bring awareness.

Unterhalter and Brighouse's (2007) category of positional benefits has an obvious relationship with marginalization. Respondents identified three key positional benefits: cleanliness, social skills and communicative English. Cleanliness is an intended school benefit since it provides social and symbolic capital: physical cleanliness, smart clothes and clean home is your "uniform" that tells everyone that you are not a farmer, under bondage to landlords, marginalized in society, with little control over your life, but an educated person. "If we are clean, nobody will have a discriminatory attitude against us" (male graduate, Tabdeeli village). Female graduates associated their cleanliness with their role as future mothers "Girls can look after their babies more appropriately" (female graduate, Aman village). Parents recognized that teachers focus on cleanliness. "They say wash hands, change clothes every day" and so perceive that the school is "good" (female parent, Tabdeeli village). They have recognized that the children "remain neat and clean" (male parent, Aman village).

By comparison, in Rehmat village, where members do not own land and therefore are in greater poverty, cleanliness is perceived as a more fragile emerging benefit:

... the people are poor and sometimes it is difficult for them to achieve these things but I feel that it has made some impact in the community about cleanliness (male teacher, Rehmat village).

Therefore, if graduates achieve social and symbolic capital by demonstrating personal cleanliness and a clean home environment, they have the foundation from which to generate further social capital.

Social skills are the second benefit the respondents value. Uneducated people in these rural villages indicate that they do not have the skills to go out from their village, meet others and engage effectively in dialogue. They perceive in their children's progress in school a growing capacity to relate to other people, to speak well and appropriately "with young and old" and in different contexts and that this gives them positional advantage since "nobody listens to uneducated people" (male parents, Tabdeeli village). Male and female graduates themselves reported that people particularly comment on their social skills: their behaviour, their manners and confidence, which they perceive will bring them out from their marginalization and enable them to access their rights and fulfil societal responsibilities. The landlord of Noor village also noted

these skills "bring confidence in the personality" and remove the "feelings of inferiority" which are normally associated with poverty.

The third benefit that these communities value is the ability to talk in English. With cleanliness and social skills that enable graduates to utilize social capital, further linguistic cultural capital can be acquired through competence in English. Although a sizeable minority of Sindhi adults can read and write in English to some level, it is an even greater source of capital to be able to speak confidently in different forums and a means of substantial positional benefit. They will be able to "meet a government officer" who will "respond to them properly" (male parents group, Noor village), "taking note of their requests, getting their identity cards, otherwise they discard them" (landlord, Noor village). This capability will help them facilitate improvements in their village and is particularly vital during times of crisis to enable communities to access the help they need.

These perceptions of positional benefits are being shaped and reinforced by the transformation of village LEAP teachers, since they, mainly sons of farmers, recognized that their increased cleanliness, social skills and facility in English necessary for them to become effective teachers have resulted in their greater standing within and outside the community.

Before... I was different in status, manners, cleanliness everything. And after I became a teacher, I feel that there has been a big change in the way I speak... and meet with people and the way people treat me now... there is a huge difference (male teacher, Rehmat village).

I have learnt social skills... A teacher enjoys a lot of importance in the village... people often come running to him... if I can't do anything myself, I guide them how and where to get it done. (male teacher, Aman village)

The teachers reported how important the teacher training provided by PEP was for the development and realization of these positional benefits.

The first benefit that I had from the training was the social skills... like meeting, interacting with people and elders because in our village we don't have that type of environment... (female teacher, Aman village)

I used to have hesitation in speaking with important people but now I don't have that problem... I have developed confidence... and I have been able to motivate people in the community for education (male teacher, Aman village).

A fourth important aspect of relevant education is its capacity to enable people to cope with an ever-changing global society and to be able to deal with unexpected crises. Climate change is a great challenge for Pakistan with its recent increased incidence of flooding. Critical thinking and confidence to make decisions in such situations is important for these rural communities.

Parent respondents in all four villages recognized the knowledge and skills that the teachers have gained through their education, training and experience which enabled them to advocate for their communities during the disastrous flooding in rural Sindh in 2011. Teachers themselves perceived that "if we were uneducated, we would just sit and watch", but "we visited the landlord, the MPA⁷... we helped... each family... receive Rs 20,000" (teacher, Aman village). Community members realized that they could maximize their decision-making opportunities emerging from land ownership to improve their homes and facilities to reduce risk of damage in future disasters. Their proximity to the town also facilitated their involvement of the media to assist the process of rehabilitation and risk reduction.

⁷ Member of the Provincial Assembly.

In conclusion, when considering the three variables of land ownership, time since the school opened and proximity to a town, Tabdeeli and Aman villagers, where participants own land and are in close proximity to a town, recognized the most school benefits and perceived their school to be relevant. Positional benefits were dominant: personal dress and hygiene, social skills and the capacity to speak in English were regarded by the respondents as being the key factors that influenced their societal relationships and gave them increased agency to pursue social justice concerns. The longer period elapsed since the opening of the school is perhaps significant for Tabdeeli village since its members had very recently come out from bonded labour: the awareness that one girl had already married an educated man and was able to work as a teacher after marriage and some sons were already in college education, strengthened their perceptions of school benefits. In Aman village, where the school was only opened in 2007, residence close to a town and the availability of middle and high schools, facilitated parents to access a wider range of occupations and the community leader's oldest daughters are already married to educated men. These factors make the time-scale less important. In Noor village, where people do not own land and parents are less educated, while positional benefits are recognized there is less evidence of perceived relevance for females: the male habitus regarding girls' education has not been sufficiently impacted in the five years by the teacher's habitus and his creating of the school as a new "field". In Rehmat village lack of both land ownership and close proximity to a town are critical factors. Parents are not convinced of their school's relevance to their social justice concerns since male graduates are still farmers under bonded labour and the education of females is perceived as wasted if following early marriage, in-laws still require their daughters to work in the fields. Graduates however did recognize their school's relevance since they identified positional benefits from their education. The greater time period since the school opened confirmed both parental and graduate perceptions.

5.3. Perceptions of democracy

In this section I focus on the respondents' perceptions of participation in determining the valued outcomes of their community school. Bray's (2000) eleven dimensions of community participation in education were utilized to explore a range of school functionalities: setting policy; curriculum development; hiring and firing of teachers and payment of salaries; teacher training; supervision; building and maintenance. However, limited space does not permit me to report in this article all that emerged from the richness of the data.

Tabdeeli and Aman respondents who own land and live near a town reported their "genuine" (Rose, 2005) participation in a range of school functionalities determining the valued outcomes of their community school. Time since the opening of the school is serving to nurture and sustain the factors and processes that are encouraging democratic participation in these two communities. Two critical factors are the intrinsic motivations of the community leaders and teachers and the prevailing socio-economic structures. In Rehmat village where the leadership is feudal with community members in bonded relationship with the landlord, participation is "pseudo" with the SMC being a vehicle for maintaining the status quo and not facilitating the implementation of valued outcomes for the majority of its members. Women in Rehmat village expressed their feelings of frustration and powerlessness:

They (Rehmat village men) are just sitting here because of the landlord. . .they don't understand the value of education. They have no vision for the future. Those who left this village (Tabdeeli village families), they knew the importance of education. . .and

they are having a good life there. . .We very much want to go there but . . .there are many barriers. . .therefore we are helpless. These men (living in this village) have no skills, no business. . .they are just doing labour and spoiling the lives of everyone (female parents, group interview, Rehmat village).

However, in creating Tabdeeli village in 2005, the two leaders, through the use of their accumulated social capital, were able to facilitate the community's agency. Over the last few years the composition of the village has changed with more educated families and those in professions settling in the village. This has created a new *baraderi*,⁸ not based on blood lines, but on a vision for education to address their social justice concerns. Although in both Tabdeeli and Aman villages the social capital of the leaders is being utilized to mobilize genuine participation, the radical process of deconstruction and reconstruction of Tabdeeli village is releasing wider indicators of community participation and parental respondents reported a broad range of school functionalities. Graduates, as the potential future leaders, reflect a changed habitus that recognizes the benefit of greater consultation and participation to more effectively achieve valued outcomes. They are providing a role model of emerging democracy: in particular, there has been a changed habitus on *female* participation.

People felt that we (female teachers) could not play our role effectively in the SMC because we were women and very young, but we proved them wrong.

The community has demonstrated a high level of ownership since it achieved private registration of the school with the SMC chairperson reporting it is "my routine" to visit the school two or three times a week to provide "check and balance", supervising the attendance and performance of the teachers, encouraging the teachers that "these children are from your own community and even if your salary is less compared to a government school. . .it is for your benefit. . .it is your future".

In Noor village where, although members do not own land and have few educated SMC members, *teachers* are exercising leadership in the creation of a new "field", there is evidence of a partnership relationship with parents in some school decisions.

In summary, the longer time since school opening, has encouraged the factors that are sustaining democratic participation in Tabdeeli village and provided opportunity for both a deconstruction and reconstruction process to be realized through the creation of a new *baraderi* and for graduates, convinced of the value of community participation in achieving valued outcomes, to participate effectively in their school management committee. Time is less of a factor in Aman village where a longer period of land ownership and therefore the greater opportunity for decision making, has with the higher level of education achieved, encouraged democracy. The feudal socio-economic structure with the bonded labour relationship in Rehmat village has constrained democracy. In Noor village, with its wider exposure to civil society through close proximity to a town, teachers, emerging from their own personal transformation despite lack of land ownership, have the confidence to encourage small shoots of democracy.

6. Conclusions and implications

This article presents the perceptions of inclusion, relevance and to a lesser extent democracy, held by the respondents in the four villages. The key variables that seem to influence these perceptions are land ownership, proximity to a town and time since the school opened. Land ownership accompanied by a higher

⁸ From the Persian root "barader" meaning brotherhood, an extended family network, where all members are related.

level of education creates a greater recognition of the gendered intrinsic benefits of education that encourages physical inclusion. Proximity to a town provides access to post-primary education and a wider range of employment opportunities, which if supported by the community leadership is especially significant for female enrolment, “capabilities” and “functionings”. These factors generate increased agency through more opportunities for decision-making and availability of a supportive network, such as through development NGOs and local media. Perceptions of inclusion and relevance are further shaped by the advocacy of the teachers, which emerges from their training, teaching experience and opportunities to access other benefits for their community members. Inclusion, relevance and democracy are limited by lack of land ownership, when accompanied by a bonded relationship with the landlord in a location far from a town. These socio-economic factors and their attendant male habitus act as powerful constraints which can be mitigated if other factors are present: strong community and/or school leadership and close proximity to a town. The longer time period affirms perceptions of inclusion and relevance either positively or negatively: positively if sufficient time has passed for graduates to achieve benefits and become role models to encourage enrolment and achievement of “capabilities” and “functionings”; negatively if socio-economic constraints prevent the emergence of intended benefits since parents with very limited resources will not invest them in their children’s education when benefits do not appear to outweigh costs.

In addition to these factors, when considering relevance for females, change of habitus is vitally important. Tabdeeli village parents are those who were prepared to take risks and relocate since they were convinced of their potential agency to achieve the goals for their daughters which were in opposition to traditional cultural norms: they were convinced that girls as well as boys should complete their basic education and even succeed at college level in order to marry an educated man who would facilitate their future life of enhanced agency and well-being. The wider achievements of female graduates are starting to change the habitus of community members regarding expected female “capabilities” and “functionings” and further change is anticipated as married graduates demonstrate the benefits of education to other women in their new communities. These would include functional literacy and numeracy, improved health and cleanliness for both the women and their children and a well-organized home. In villages where such role models have not yet emerged and male habitus has not changed, female “capabilities” and “functionings” are likely to be constrained.

Underlying these perceptions of benefits are two factors that pertain to relevance as well as inclusion: the contextualized teacher training and curriculum, especially the supplementary curriculum. These are significant since the processes involved in developing and implementing them have created a close relationship between pedagogy and benefits. This relationship has been identified by teachers, the people most closely involved in this process, but also by both educated and uneducated community leaders. The three sites of policy, school and home/community are generating mutually reinforcing factors and processes. In these marginalized communities where a *relevant* education is so critical for addressing social justice concerns, this synergy of pedagogy and benefits when played out in the iterative development of the village LEAP schools, has become increasingly important. PEP policy reflects the importance of both a child-friendly school environment and a contextualized curriculum. Building from the ITEP base which created the initial opportunity for a transformational process leading to perceived benefits, the longer time period has brought additions to the curriculum based on locally emerging needs and the changing global environment

which have better equipped local communities to address these challenges. Local trainers and teachers, with now considerable experience, have played their part alongside parents in developing a contextualized pedagogy for the implementation of the curriculum.

The findings have both local and wider implications. Since this study is part of an iterative process, PEP has introduced new interventions in consultation with the communities since the conclusion of the research to address factors that the findings indicated are inhibiting agency and to promote further agency. Women’s empowerment groups have been established to respond to the frustrations expressed by the women in Rehmat village during their group interview. This has included a range of trainings from project staff to generate new opportunities for agency. The group in Rehmat village decided at the beginning of 2014 to begin regular savings which they utilized to enable ten new girls to be enrolled in the school for the academic year which began in April 2014. In 2015 an extension to the social and financial education programme will be piloted amongst school graduates. This aims to support the sustainability of the school benefits that male graduates recognized and to strengthen their capacity for future leadership, with knowledge and skills to impact community habitus and demonstrate their effectiveness as change agents.

The findings also have four key implications for international policy and quality debates.

6.1. *Employ local teachers*

The findings demonstrate the benefits of employing local teachers. Given the chronic shortage of teachers, especially female teachers and in rural areas and the huge future demand in order for low-income countries to achieve EFA, this is important.

6.2. *Address teacher motivation*

Critical to increasing teacher numbers is teacher motivation. The research found that teachers recognized personal benefits in addition to salary that created motivation. They all reported that their salary was less than a government teacher would receive and many as a result generated additional accompanying sources of income. However, they asserted that becoming a teacher had given them both intrinsic and positional benefits which compensated for the reduced salary. In the existing and likely post-2015 environment of declining international donor funding (GMR 2013–2014) local non-pecuniary solutions that engage with teachers’ self-worth, status within the community and opportunity to benefit the community are needed to enhance teacher motivation.

6.3. *Contextualized teacher training and pedagogy*

Although increasing teacher supply and motivation are important, on their own they will not ensure quality education in the sense of achieving “capabilities” that can generate “functionings”. In the GMR 2013–2014 foreword, the Director-General reminds us that “an education system is as good as its teachers”. Citing evidence from 45 countries it concludes “the better the teacher the less the incidence of low achievement” (p. 233). Similarly, the background paper for the Oslo Summit on Education for Development to be held in July 2015, “Investing in Teachers is Investing in Learning”, highlights the need to effectively train teachers, both in subject and pedagogic content knowledge.

Alexander (2008) argues that pedagogy has been the “missing ingredient” (p. 22) in debates about quality education which is a vital omission since it is critically linked to learning outcomes. He asserts that pedagogy is a “cultural artefact which manifests the sedimented values and habits of a nation’s history” (p. 22). My

findings build on these insights and indicate the importance of contextualized teacher education in low-income countries to equip teachers to adopt pedagogic practices that promote children's learning. Critically, my research indicated a key dual relationship between pedagogy and benefits. Pedagogy has both shaped benefits and been constructed by benefits. In this study, pedagogy has shaped benefits since the child-centred pedagogy implemented in the school has been observed by some community members to be in sharp contrast to the rote-learning methodology observed in government schools. This pedagogy has been observed as creating many benefits: confidence, self-esteem, joyful and effective learning, presentation and social skills amongst the children and been a key factor in the respect given to them by visitors. Pedagogy has also shaped benefits since over the last ten years PEP has emphasized even more those aspects of pedagogy that have proved effective for children's learning and recognized as important by teachers, parents and community leaders and which reflect the teachers' cultural values.

A specific aspect of contextualizing the teacher training, curriculum and pedagogy is the development of social skills since these are highly valued by the communities and therefore should be intentionally addressed as part of the educational process in community schools. Colclough (2012) argues that job prospects are closely related to social networks. Therefore social skills are important for both instrumental and, as my findings show, for positional benefits.

6.4. Integrate non-government schools into EFA strategy

The GMR 2013–2014 recommends a four-part strategy to solve the quality crisis: (a) attract the best teachers; (b) improve teacher education; (c) get teachers where they are most needed and (d) provide incentives to retain the best teachers. However, there are many contextual constraints to attracting teachers into hard to reach areas and the costs involved in providing incentives are considerable in a financially constrained global environment, despite the recommended government and donor 20% budget allocation for education. Sending teachers to marginalized communities if they are unfamiliar with the local language and culture may also fail to achieve the learning outcomes desired. However, the findings indicate that inclusive and relevant and democratic education can be provided in hard to reach areas if contextual factors are placed at the core of policy decisions. Heyneman and Stern (2014) argue that non-government schools for the poor in low-income countries should be integrated into the government's strategy for achieving EFA, since already 20% world's children are enrolled in them due to insufficient government supply, perceived higher quality and greater ability to meet differentiated needs. They assert that they should be recognized as playing an important complementary role through provision of free government registration and maximum flexibility to introduce innovative models within a framework of basic curriculum objectives and health and safety standards.

My study has demonstrated what an inclusive, relevant and democratic education looks like for poor and marginalized communities in rural Sindh, Pakistan, that such communities value and which in turn has enabled them to accumulate social capital to tackle the injustices they confront and bring about social change. Hitherto, social skills have been given little importance as compared to the measurement of academic achievement through standardized tests. However, the acquisition of these skills increases the social capital of marginalized communities, releasing their potential for social change. In addition this study has shown that such skills for women give them confidence to start to forge a new gendered identity and open up agential pathways for a better future. Therefore a key contribution of my research is to

foreground the importance of including social capital in the discourse on "quality" education.

A further contribution of the research emerges from the study being a *longitudinal* one which provided the opportunity to build on existing theoretical frameworks of "quality" in education by incorporating the theories of Bourdieu, utilizing them to explore contextual factors that must be considered when aiming to sustain educational quality for the disadvantaged. Previous literature highlighted the iterative nature of "quality", but my research has demonstrated how the process takes place in a specific context, and how the habitus of community members exercises both constraining and transformative courses of action. My theoretical framework has the potential to be used in a broad range of contexts for in-depth investigations into this widely recognized critical area of educational research in low-income countries.

This article also engages with quantitative and qualitative concerns regarding teachers in low-income countries and contributes to the implementation of solutions: employing local teachers addresses teacher shortages and the unsatisfactory educational outcomes being widely experienced in low income countries. The research demonstrates that a process of transformation which provides teachers with both skills and motivation to teach in their local school achieving valued learning outcomes, can be nurtured through contextualized teacher training. Furthermore, if a synergy can be created between pedagogy and school benefits, effective learning will be accelerated. In addition, an iterative contextualized curriculum will promote educational provision that continues to be relevant to disadvantaged learners and communities to bring social change.

In all research there are limitations. Earlier in this article I addressed my positionality and in particular the positional hierarchies that impact the research and how I endeavoured to circumvent the disadvantages of them. This article argues for contextualized teacher education, curriculum and pedagogy and reports their impact on the teachers and communities in identifying school benefits. However the research did not include observation of either the teachers in their classrooms or training programmes which a researcher with a different positionality would have more likely included. An in-depth study of the PEP training methodology would be useful since low-income countries are facing a shortage of effective teachers in rural areas, especially female teachers, with no solution yet identified of how best to train those who are from the local community but have low qualifications and skills. The findings reveal the critical relationship between pedagogy and benefits which needs further interrogation in other contexts and as an important aspect of teacher motivation. Ethnographic studies to explore "pedagogy in action" would offer complementary insights.

More research is needed on quality education for marginalized communities in hard to reach areas, both in other areas of Pakistan and other countries in the global South. It would be useful to explore in other contexts how the three enabling environments of policy, school and community can be mutually reinforcing to achieve valued outcomes for addressing social justice concerns.

The findings highlighted the socio-economic constraints to achieving valued outcomes. It would be useful to interrogate these constraints further in particular through action research to deconstruct habitus and create new knowledge in a localized context as a basis for improved agency to bring transformation in such contexts.

The findings demonstrated that many parents perceive education's relevance for girls solely through the lens of their future role in the home and the school's capacity to make them better wives. Therefore some parents doubted the relevance of education for females or regarded primary education as sufficient. These attitudes echo the findings of DeJaeghere and Lee's research

in Bangladesh (2011). Further research is needed to explore gender discourses amongst school stakeholders. Action research in all low-income countries to disrupt dominant conceptualizations of gender can promote the positive participation of marginalized girls in their communities and assist them to fulfil their potential and have a sense of well-being. Stromquist and Fischman (2009) have explored how schooling can “do” and “undo” gender, but research to continue that of DeJaeghere and Pellowski Wiger (2014) in Bangladesh from a poststructuralist stance would be useful.

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Appendix A. Supplementary data

Supplementary data associated with this article can be found, in the online version, at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2015.09.004>. These data include Google maps of the most important areas described in this article.

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