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A resilience, health and well-being lens for education and poverty

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In this paper I argue that the health and well-being outcomes of people at different levels of a social hierarchy, as studied by epidemiologists and psychologists has relevance for educational research, especially in unequal societies. When addressing poverty-associated risk, the educational emphasis need not only be on attaining more individual wealth in society, but could rather be to improve the educational, psychological and social well-being. I draw on four ethnographic studies to construct a bricolage of narratives to show how resilience, health and well-being agendas may lead to positive education outcomes given inequality.

Keywords: bricolage; epidemiology; ethnography; global south; health and well-being in education; inequality; positive education outcomes; positive psychology; poverty and education; resilience and education

Introduction - Picturing Poverty and Education

Data from several ethnographic studies (De Gouveia, 2015; Ebersöhn, 2012b, 2014b, 2014c; Ebersöhn, Sefotho, Mampane, Loots, Omidire, Sherman & Nxumalo-Tsebe, 2014; Ferreira & Ebersöhn, 2012; Malan-Van Rooyen, 2015) portray what elders and youth in high poverty ecologies in South Africa most struggle with daily (what they appraise as risk factors), how they go about adapting to adversity (adaptive coping processes by using available protective resources), and how they voice well-being (what happiness means for them). An older woman stated: *“I am happy to read education. No education means that there is no something. Then you sit at home. You have no work.”* An older man in the same community equated happiness with *“seeing pupils attend classes.”* One young man’s memories of *“I was happy when I go on a field trip with my school”* illustrates how closely he linked his positive emotions were with educational experiences in a setting of poverty.

Their responses demonstrate the centrality of education and training for subjective well-being when disparity is endemic to their life-worlds. Older and younger men and women ranked the presence of schools in their isolated community as the most significant protective resources in their resource constrained community – followed closely by access to and quality of services (roads, electricity) and infrastructure (houses, shops, clinics).

Elders and young people ranked unemployment as a foremost stressor, with elders specifying limited job opportunities as a pertinent contributor to poverty. In addition, irrespective of age or gender, participants indicated provision of essential public services (water availability, access and quality, as well as electricity, fire control, recreational infrastructure) as problematic in their poverty environment. In particular, limited availability and excessive distances to the few schools (and clinics) were deemed challenging. The vast distances to scarce education and health services were further exacerbated by infrequent provision of public transport and poorly-maintained gravel roads, rickety bridges and slippery surfaces. The remote poverty setting also meant that few teachers were available to teach, and few nurses were appointed at clinics.

The rural elders and youth also foregrounded social risks associated with poverty. Young women highlighted the communal responsibility of caring for increased numbers of orphans due to the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) pandemic – especially to provide food to children. Older women were concerned about the prevalence of teenage pregnancies, and, together with older men, about substance abuse in their community – all leading to early school drop-out and poor academic achievement. Older men and women, and younger men worried that unemployment led to family members frequenting local taverns, resulting in erratic behaviour and crime.

The image depicted in the above evidence-based description sketches the current life-worlds of many living with poverty. In many societies, poverty will remain a chronic and cumulative impediment to education (Branson & Zuze, 2012; Palardy, 2013). This begs the question as to which frameworks might guide education research and policy agendas, where chronic poverty prevails. How can education scholars contribute to quality education when poverty prevails? The above description of individuals’ experiences of living with poverty encapsulates many of the major discourses on inequality. On the asset side, the hope and optimism synonymous with education and development is obvious. So is the human capacity and curiosity to be engaged and to develop. Generational belief and expectation for education is apparent, with schools revered as communal riches. On the deficit-side, the severity of poverty exists alongside future-oriented aspirations. Teachers, students and families have to overcome everyday burdens of limited transport, lack of electricity and water, and scarce services, in order to access available education resources. Besides visible barriers, chronic unemployment brings with it a miasma of emotional despair, anger and fear on individual and household level. Poverty means a

constant tug-of-war with risk factors drawing students and teachers out of education, and protective resources pushing students and teachers towards education.

The primary focus of this article is to use a lens of well-being to consider ways in which education can mediate the effects of ongoing poverty when accelerated progress towards equality cannot be assumed (Ebersöhn, 2014c). When foreseeable change in economic welfare for all may not be probable on the short-term, understanding education pathways to adapt positively to existing inequality could be a pragmatic research agenda. My proposition is to combine well-being alongside deficit variables – thereby opposing an ‘either-or’ education research polarity. This systems argument is informed by well-being lenses on epidemiological/societal level, as signified by Wilkinson and Pickett (2010), as well as on psychological/individual level (Rutter, 2012; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Ungar, 2012). I deliberate how these positions may be integrated for education research and practices.

With this integration, I envisage pathways to buffer poverty-effects in education – not only in chronic poverty settings, but also in less equal, affluent societies. Consequently, in this paper, given persisting present challenges and opportunities related to poverty in the education sector, the focus is on research and practices, which education scholars can engage with, implement and evaluate. My argument for a well-being perspective to poverty and education is not an argument against ways of reducing poverty challenges through economic growth, or altered resource allocation in emerging economy countries. Nor is this position a wish to neglect the need for affluent societies to navigate towards more equal education opportunities, trouble existing power structures, and move towards more equity. Rather, a well-being stance to inequality scenarios features agency across systems (individual, school, household, school community) – together with policy-driven initiatives to supplement scaled efforts.

Societal and Individual Health and Well-being as Lenses in Education and Poverty

When ecologies characteristic of poverty are scripted as a manner of ‘lack’, marginalisation and discourses of ‘us and them’ abound. Individuals, communities and countries become polarised. Behaviour is blamed on those ‘who have’ and those ‘who have not’. Individual worth is aligned with scarcity principles. In such scenarios, individual and collective self-esteem is scripted according to (in-)adequacy of resources. Wilkinson and Pickett (2010) found that, as countries reach a threshold of material living standards, the benefits of additional economic growth are lessened. It follows that it is limiting to foreground economic growth as primary

motive for education – i.e. education as way to develop productive citizens who can accumulate individual wealth (Soudien, 2016). What is evident is that economic development in poorer countries does impact significantly on human well-being. Life expectancy and happiness improves. The great infectious diseases of poverty (including tuberculosis and HIV&AIDS) gradually cease to be main causes of death (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2010). However, these epidemiologists found that in the long-term, increased living standards do less for health. Societies with economic growth are typified by long-term rises in rates of anxiety, depression and anti-social behaviour (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2010). Likewise, diseases previously known to affluent society members, like heart disease, obesity and strokes, become more pronounced among those on the margins in resource constrained societies (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2010).

The characteristics of chronic structural disparity in a transforming society (such as a young, postcolonial, democratic South Africa) shows the limitations of primarily depending on state investment in the redress of inequality: (i) already limited government resources cannot be the only default development option; (ii) increased employment opportunities may be slow to take off and change general household income levels; and (iii) backlogs in transforming the education sector (lack of effective teacher training, illiteracy amongst parents, multilingualism in classrooms) may not develop human capital speedily enough to have an able workforce with initiative to generate entrepreneurial income.

So, what could educational research focus on if not productive citizenship and economic development? An alternative could be an emphasis on education for quality of human life (rather than a deficit focus on poverty and education).

Psychological Resilience, Well-Being, Poverty and Education

One response to high inequality could be to centralise work by well-being theorists (psychological resilience and epidemiology) in an opportunity to learn (Roemer, 1998) discussion. For thinking on psychological resilience, I draw on Rutter’s (2012) outcomes-thinking, Ungar’s (2012) transactional-ecological process thinking, Seligman’s (2011) propositions of pillars of positive psychology, and Keyes’s (2002) focus on flourishing. By and large, resilience implies that adaptive responses (individual, family, school, community, policy) may be better than one would expect, given the circumstances of risk. Resilience presupposes the presence of significant adversity, together with adaptation, by using available protective resources to attain positive outcomes. Less equal societies denote that fewer opportunities for equality, presented by monumental adversities.

The particular ecology of resilience matters when considering education and poverty. Across studies on issues of poverty and education (Branson & Zuze, 2012; Flessa, 2007; Laryea-Adjei & Sadan, 2012; Palardy, 2013) context is foregrounded as a significant variable. Educational intervention in one setting of a country may not be relevant in another setting in the very same country. Here, rural-urban variance is especially prominent (Afro Barometer, 2013). Correspondingly, it is plausible to imagine that efforts to tap into education to buffer against the effect of poverty (and reverse poverty trends) may differ from country to country, and between the Global South and the Global North.

Socio-ecologically (Collins, Kinzig, Grimm, Fagan, Hope, Wu & Borer, 2000; Liu, Dietz, Carpenter, Alberti, Folke, Moran, Pell, Deadman, Kratz, Lubchenco, Ostrom, Ouyang, Provencher, Redman, Schneider & Taylor, 2007) risk factors exist alongside available protective resources. The resources and risk differ in degree and scale. In a less equal society, those with fewer resources experience more risk, as more resources are available to some than to others. Thus, on the scale of individual, family, community, and society, variability exists regarding the degree of resource constraints. For some individuals, families, and communities, there may be few opportunities to access resources, constituting risk, and the need to fill the gap of such resource limitations.

Besides extreme risk, resilience also implies adaptation, as indicated by individual-level well-being outcomes. On a subjective level, positive well-being outcomes may include high satisfaction with life, high self-esteem, and academic achievement. On an objective level, positive well-being outcomes may include physical health indicators such as fitness, good nutrition, and lack of illness. The degree of positive adaptation may simply be 'better than expected' (Rutter, 2012), could portray degrees of flourishing (Keyes, 2002), or, maladaptation may occur. This means that at times, individuals living with high risk may adapt surprisingly well, and may surpass expectations (Keyes' (2002) flourishing and Moore's (2001) 'positive deviance'). The same individuals may not handle chronic poverty well on another day, and lose their temper, perform poorly on a test (maladaptation), or play truant (Ebersöhn, 2014b). Mani, Mullainathan, Shafir and Zhao (2013) found instances of maladaptation due to impaired cognitive functioning, which they argue is caused by poverty, and which may signify resilience processes, i.e. the human-ecological response to increased and decreased financial stressors in life-worlds.

Resilience is a dance between ecology and human response, requiring appraisal of risk and responses using available protective resources.

Well-being outcomes occur as a result of and during transactional-ecological processes. Consequently, an ecology of resilience risk factors (here poverty-related) may be mediated by using available protective resources. The protective resources (forms of capital), also scaled, include individual traits (personal grit, positive emotions (Fredrickson, 2001, 2003), positive temperament (Seligman, 2011), and environmental protective resources (positive institutions) (Seligman, 2011), political/decision-making capital (Department for International Development (DFID), 1999), cultural capital (Ungar's, 2012), social capital (DFID, 1999; Wong, Wong & Scott, 2006), as well as natural resources (Collins et al., 2000; DFID, 1999; Limpopo Provincial Government, South Africa, 2011; Liu et al., 2007).

Ungar (2012) explains that these transactional-ecological processes require skill to navigate towards available protective resources, and negotiate access and use of these resources. In the adaptation process, people use adaptive coping processes (Skinner & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2011) to draw on available resources to lessen the impact of risk. In a risk-saturated setting, you may not be inclined to identify available resources. One reason may be due to attentional capture (Mani et al., 2013), which does not merely mean impeded cognitive functioning because of poverty, but which, we argue from a resilience framework, is due to poverty as ecological stressor. Consequently, during adaptive coping processes (Skinner & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2011) poverty-related stressors capture the attention, and appraisal leads to (or constitutes) intrusive thoughts, which preoccupy thought to the extent that the bulk of cognitive resources may be focused on resisting financial scarcity.

The scale of the adaptive processes may differ. The processes may be individual (the person him/herself primarily directing the adaptation for their own, individual well-being). Here, an individual child may excel, because she hopes for a better future, is committed to learning, and uses her fortitude and intelligence to do well academically, even though she lives in a child-headed household in a rural village. The adaptation processes may also be collectivist and interdependent, rather than independent and individual.

In the Indigenous Pathways to Resilience (IPR) study (Ebersöhn, 2014a) it was evident that participants living within the very echelon of hardship given structural disparity, namely remote South African spaces, drew on a range of scaled resources identified above to adapt to continued hardship. De Gouveia (2015) found that on the individual scale, elders and young people in remote Venda and Mpumalanga districts, used self-perceived self-efficacy, emphasised maintenance of their objective health, and privileging simple

pleasures in life as pathways to resilience. In addition, as in the Imbeleko study (Ebersöhn et al., 2014) with elders and young people in other Southern African high risk communities, spiritual capital was evident as a pathway to well-being.

The IPR study found evidence that drawing on social capital to address rurality hardship appeared to be a default cultural pathway used by elders and young people (De Gouveia, 2015; Ebersöhn, 2014a; Malan-Van Rooyen, 2015). Flocking (Ebersöhn, 2012a) consequently appears to be a robust communal pathway to resilience used in several settings of hardship in Southern Africa, i.e. teachers in high risk schools (Ebersöhn, 2013), elders and young people in remote settings (De Gouveia, 2015; Ebersöhn, 2014a; Malan-Van Rooyen, 2015), and elders and young people in several high-risk Southern African communities (Ebersöhn et al., 2014).

Societal Well-Being: The Potential of Epidemiological Thinking for Poverty and Education
Whereas psychological resilience provides a platform for individual-level thoughts on well-being, epidemiology gives scope to society-level well-being outcomes. Epidemiologists Wilkinson and Pickett (2010) argue that factors which correlate with objective and subjective health outcomes are less aligned with economic riches, and more with: (i) individual self-esteem; (ii) being connected to meaningful others and belonging to a group; as well as (iii) experiencing a happy, functional childhood. I posit that learning and development equally may be less aligned with economic abundance. Essentially, learning and development may also be more aligned with: (i) children's and teachers' high estimation of themselves; (ii) school communities functioning as units of care and support; and (iii) the ability of schools, households, and neighbourhoods to foster happy childhoods.

Pragmatically this may mean that schools that are poorly resourced, and in low service-delivery settings may still prove beneficial to learning and development if children have happy childhoods where they feel good about who they are, and teachers, families and children feel proud to be

associated with a school-community. The education challenge would be to imagine, develop and implement education curriculum, policy and teacher training to this effect. In Figure 1, I illustrate variables one may use in analyses on opportunity and inequality using Wilkinson and Pickett's (2010) societal well-being propositions on individual (psychological) and societal (epidemiological) level.

From Figure 1 it is apparent that, viewed through a lens of societal well-being, high opportunity and low inequality exist on societal level within an ecology of protective efforts, where well-being resources are used. The presence and use of such protective resources which (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) define as positive emotions and positive institutions for sustained subjective/psychological well-being) are necessary to buffer against the impact of disparity, and mediate learning and development when risk factors in the same poverty context are considered.

Narratives from Case Study Data

I draw on ethnographic and participatory case study data (verbatim transcriptions of interviews and participatory reflection and action activities) to generate two narratives as bricolage (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011) of one young woman using the well-being lens depicted in Figure 1.

The data is nested in three Southern African studies: a study on care and support practices in seven Southern African communities with high need with dominant-indigenous populations ($n = 430$; elders = 240; youth = 190; men = 150 and women = 280) (Ebersöhn et al., 2014); a long-term study (2003–2016) with teachers in schools given high risk, high need and resource constraint ($n = 20$, primary = 16, high = 4; rural = 6, peri-urban = 14) in three South African provinces (Mpumalanga, Eastern Cape and Gauteng, respectively) (De Gouveia, 2015; Ebersöhn, 2014c; Ferreira & Ebersöhn, 2012; Malan-Van Rooyen, 2015); as well as the Indigenous Pathways to Resilience study (Ebersöhn, 2014b) with participants ($n = 225$: youth = 132, elders = 93; women = 134, men = 91) in remote settings in two South African provinces (Mpumalanga and Limpopo).

Opportunity High - abundance of opportunity	‘Educational opportunity’= services and goods (forms of capital) invested in development of human, social & cultural capital		Opportunity Low – deprivation of opportunity
Public policy required. Circumstances beyond control.	Protective social context & origin:	At-risk social context & origin:	Public policy required. Circumstances beyond control.
Privileged circumstances.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> location: affluent suburb, developed country exposure to safety male non-orphaned physical health positive temperament 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> location: rural, inner-city, emerging economy country exposure to conflict, insecurity female orphan hood disability negative temperament 	Vulnerability circumstances.
High likelihood of attending school.			High likelihood of not attending school.
Some circumstantial control possible through effort/agency Individual/collective agency, and/or public policy to support parental education, occupation & intergenerational mobility	Parental education and occupation as buffer:	Parental education and occupation as barrier:	Some circumstantial control possible through effort/agency
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> high levels of parental education high income generating parental occupation high intergenerational mobility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> low levels of parental education low income generating parental occupation high intergenerational poverty 	<u>Lack/absence</u> of individual/collective agency and/or public <u>policy to support</u> parental education, occupation & intergenerational <u>mobility</u>
Agency (effort)	Protective efforts (mobilizing well-being resources):	Risk efforts (apathy results in deficit factors, barriers):	Apathy (lack of engagement)
Both individual & collective mobilization, as well as public policy to invest services and goods to develop children.	intrapersonal <u>resources</u> :	<u>intrapersonal barriers</u> :	<u>Lack/absence</u> of individual & collective <u>mobilization</u> , as well as public <u>policy</u> to invest services & goods to <u>develop children</u>
High likelihood of attending school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> positive affect (emotions) high individual self-esteem <u>availability and access to positive institutions (forms of capital)</u> : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> functional family, school, community, neighbourhood, faith-based organisations, health and welfare services belonging to a group, being an insider, being supported, social connectedness a happy (safe) childhood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> negative affect (emotions) low individual self-esteem <u>lack of and inaccessible positive institutions (capital constraints)</u> : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> dysfunctional family, school, community, neighbourhood, faith-based organisations, health and welfare services being an outsider, not having friends, isolated without support, being disconnected unsafe childhood 	High likelihood of not attending school.
More Equal Low Disparity / Inequality	‘Equality-Inequality’ = coverage, distribution and access to educational services		Less Equal High Disparity / Inequality

Figure 1 Mediating disparity by focusing on well-being for opportunities in poverty

A narrative for the column on the right in Figure 1 paints an image of an unhappy, insecure childhood with low levels of well-being. This narrative assists with providing an example of how structural disparity may play out by describing an image of an unhappy, insecure childhood with low levels of well-being. Lerato's development is stymied by multiple risk factors, acting as barriers to her rural education. She is often worried and angry, and acts out by being violent. She does not like, nor believe in herself. These intrapersonal deficits are exacerbated by (and may even be a consequence of) a family environment where her parents are absent (working in a city, or diseased due to HIV&AIDS or tuberculosis) and therefore cannot motivate, care for and support her. She has dropped out of a school. She experiences schools as poorly resourced anyway. She also thought that her teachers were not teaching content that mattered to her, and that they were not interested in her. She needs health advice and support to understand the meaning of her life, but does not know where to turn. Her community is unsafe due to high instances of violent crime. She feels that, besides some teachers, she does not have role models in her everyday life. She is ashamed of herself, does not feel like part of a group, and feels that she is unable to change her circumstances.

A counter-narrative can be constructed to explicate the left column in Figure 1. Lerato lives without her parents. However, she is living in a supportive rural context, which is conducive to her learning, development and well-being. In this scenario, the level of inequality is mediated by the presence of supportive structures. The supportive structures function by means of civic participation. The civic participation is the sum of available resources and makes use of traditional processes to function. Consequently, opportunity may be high, although her development remains challenged due to the presence of multiple risk factors.

The school has a school-community structure to identify and refer her vulnerability for support. The same society used for collective savings in the village is used to screen learners and families in need. Together with the school leadership and school governing body, the members of the society also know how to best use available assets to help Lerato. Together, they consult on whom in the school-community is best at assisting with meals, helping with homework, and motivating the girl towards high aspirations. Lerato is very good at managing money and assists one of the society woman in running her spaza shop. Lerato also helps other learners with their homework in Business Science.

The school leadership and SGB also has close links to core services in the school-community. They can refer learners to a clinic nurse when they are ill or need health advice; and ask for a specific

social worker to assist learners' caregivers to apply for social grants. Teachers in the rural school like teaching there and understand the particular challenges and opportunities for themselves, learners and families in rural schools. To support rural teachers, the school-community networks have mobilised local taxi-owners to each donate free transport one month per year to teachers from and to school. Local businesses provide premises that can be used for informal gatherings of teachers, caregivers and children alike. Here school-communities can socialise, participate in sports and cultural activities, and have access to knowledge, training and development.

Rather than personality deficits, in this supportive rural context, Lerato is less worried and angry. She has role-models in the figure of teachers and society members, who have shown her how to channel her frustration in ways other than frustration and despair. She knows where to go for health advice, is proud of herself and the school she attends, has future education and career aspirations for herself, and has confidence that she can achieve her goals. She does not want to drop out of a school, or make at-risk decisions that may compromise her aspirations. She feels that she belongs in her school-community, that she is safe and supported and that she has value. Although her school is not that well-resourced, she can see that many people in her community are involved in the school. She can see that her teachers like teaching in her school, and being part of her school-community.

In both these scenarios, poverty may not even form part of the setting. The resilience interplay may occur in an affluent suburb or in an impoverished village. Lack of resources may naturally aggravate possibilities of positive adaptation. In addition, the above descriptions are simplified versions of truly dynamic interplays between individual and societal factors. Suffice it to say that mobilising any one or a combination of protective resources may change well-being outcomes to buffer against risk factors and increase opportunities for education and well-being.

Integrating Well-Being and Resources with Scarcity – Positioning Well-Being at the Centre of Research on Education and Poverty

By integrating resilience, health and well-being lenses, education research may generate knowledge on how to cushion against poverty and adapt functionally. This body of knowledge may show how education for wellness through agency can occur where poverty is evident. The outer parameters of Figure 1 indicate how opportunity to access education (irrespective of equality or inequality in a society) is interdependent on interactions between ecology (social context and origin), parental human capital, human effort, as

well as public policy.

In educational research, both agency and policy may be leveraged to increase parental or caregiver education as protective buffer. In other words, investment in developing human capital of parents or guardians seems to be an appropriate agenda point for education research related to poverty. Similarly, education research into developing and implementing inclusive education policy seems to be indicated to create school climates that embrace girls, children with disabilities, and children from non-traditional families. Educational psychology research agendas in poverty school settings may thus focus on identifying and supporting children exposed to violence, and building psychological resilience in those without innate positive coping repertoires.

Whereas, according to Roemer's (1998) equality theory, social context and origin, as well as parental education and occupation fall either beyond personal control, or require at least some policy support, where agency (a psychological and social well-being variable) is located firmly within the realm of individual and collective choice and motivation. The implication is that, notwithstanding at-risk social context and origin variables, individual and collective effort may serve as a protective barrier in buffering against a poverty ecology. Harnessing such scaled agency for well-being and education may therefore be a prudent educational research agenda.

Revisiting the initial description of a poverty environment seems appropriate. The at-risk social context and origins in this rural South African setting is aggravated by poverty. As is evident from the bricolage of narratives, resources and services are limited, and if available requires travel over long distances on hazardous roads to access education, health and commercial services. Because of HIV&AIDS and tuberculosis, many children are orphaned. Malnutrition and poor water quality lead to poor health status. Job opportunities are scarce and household incomes are limited. Many households are dependent on small subsistence farming. Although crime is not a problem, children are socialised into viewing violence as acceptable discipline measure (Mampane, Ebersöhn, Cherrington & Moen, 2014), and most people dislike taverns, where substance abuse and violence co-exist. Many parents and grandparents are not literate. Children in households lucky enough to have a father or a mother may seldom see them, as men and women work away from home in cities, on mines, in factories or as domestic workers.

Despite these at-risk circumstances, children flock to school every day. Despite poor roads, additional care responsibilities at home, poorly resourced schools' children are motivated to be educated. Despite their own unemployment and few available jobs, caregivers motivate children to

aspire for good school results in order to be accepted into training programmes and enter dependable careers. The psychological resilience evident in the above adaptation may be a consequence of societal level well-being variables. The range of Wilkinson and Pickett's (2010) epidemiological well-being indicators are evident in participant voices. A sense of belonging is evident in a younger woman saying: "[I am happy] *being home with my family*", an older woman stating, "*I am happy to go to church*", an older man expressing his joy about his 'good neighbours', and a younger man being delighted about being able to "*help my community*". Equally, pride shows in a young woman stating "*I can feed and support my family*", an older man rejoicing in successfully running his small business, a young man's pleasure "*to fix something that is broken*", and a young woman expressing pleasure in "*working hard and (being) dedicated to my work always*". Centring children's lives in daily community life is demonstrated in a young woman saying: "[I am happy] *because my baby grows well and happy every day*", an older woman saying about children in her village, "*you feel like a mother. It makes you happy*", and gratitude in a young woman fondly remembering her deceased father, "[I am happy] *for what he has done for his family*". The individual and collective agency that buffers against poverty-stressors are clear in these excerpts.

Recommendations for Education Research Driving Well-Being and Education in Poverty Settings

It has been my position that the poverty, and consequently the inequality status, in many societies will most probably remain unchanged in the foreseeable future. I therefore argued for consideration of education research, which could be used within such ecological constraints. I argued against a solitary focus on education to attain higher levels of productivity and higher individual wealth. I argued for including well-being into education agendas, especially in poverty ecologies. I posited that indicators for individual and societal well-being in education could include schools that harbour connectedness with communities, and of which teachers, children and parents are proud to belong to, and which provide children with spaces in which they can be happy, trust others and believe in themselves. I argued against alone-standing strategies for increased public spending in education. Rather, I argued that individual and collective agency, combined with education policy could support well-being agendas. Principals can focus on these three aspects of reform in their individual schools. Teachers can connect with faith-based organisations, clinics, and local businesses for intervention focused in these areas. Researchers can develop proposals for evidence-based inquiry and policymakers can drive well-

being and hope-oriented education development even in the presence of disparity.

Conclusion

Where poverty persists, a well-being perspective may direct educational intervention to, in the long-term, devise a more equal society, and simultaneously, in the short-term, continue with teaching and learning to develop human, social and cultural capital. Well-being oriented education interventions include: mobilising connectedness (school-communities where individuals do not feel isolated); developing self-esteem (school-communities where students, teachers and parents are not ashamed of who they are); and investing in happy early childhood (school-communities that build initial trust and attachment, rather than fear and distrust).

The idea of a resilience, health and well-being focus is not to detract from the need for capital investment on global and national levels. Vestiges of inequality (unequal public services, school infrastructure, and teacher-supply) not only all necessitate huge financial outlay, but also require first-rate policy frameworks for implementation and accountability. A societal emphasis means that it may be short-sighted to focus only on within-school intervention, and only at within-education sector change. Consequently, multi-sectoral responses are indicated, rather than simply focusing on educational intervention. By focusing on connectedness, self-esteem and early childhood in this paper, I hope to provide an investigative framework for research and an implementable framework for educators.

Note

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