Learning to Lead: A Social Justice Perspective on Understanding Elementary Teacher Leadership in Papua New Guinea

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Abstract: Leadership in elementary education is currently recognized as a political imperative in Papua New Guinea (PNG), as the nation develops strategies towards equitable access to schooling. One recent initiative aimed at building educational leadership was an intensive Australian Leadership Award Fellowship (ALAF) program funded by AusAID, involving a group of 10 teacher trainers from PNG. As part their involvement participants completed self-authored journal entries at the beginning and end of the leadership program. Participants were also involved in focus groups after completion of the initiative. Referring to the experiences of these teacher trainers, this paper draws on Nancy Fraser's (2005, 2008) social justice framework to examine participants' views of what constituted effective leadership in elementary education in PNG and how these views may have changed throughout the ALAF program. Key findings of this study included participants' emphasis on relationships and valuing people in elementary education leadership contexts, participants' concern about economic/financial barriers to effective leadership in the PNG context and participants' perception of research as a way to support leadership roles.

Background

Papua New Guinea (PNG) is committed to nation building within an increasingly globalised world (AusAID, 2009; Bellew, 2010; United Nations Country Program [UNCP], 2007; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Origination [UNESCO], 2009). A key plank of PNG's nation building strategy is equitable access to education, improved human capital, and active participation in cultural contexts and processes. Across a range of low income countries, including PNG, education has been identified as a way of pursuing social justice, particularly for disadvantaged learners (Bates, 2006; Hopkins et al., 2005; Tikly & Barrett, 2011; Whitington, Glover, Stephenson & Sigin, 2008). The relationship between the *quality* of education experienced by disadvantaged learners in low income countries and the concept of social justice is gaining prominence (AusAID, 2009; Hickling-Hudson, 2010; Rena, 2011; Tikly & Barrett, 2011; UNESCO, 2008; United Nations [UN], 2011; Whitington et al., 2008).

There is growing evidence that early childhood education in conjunction with early childhood teacher education are key to achieving national goals of economic growth, social

inclusion, health and life chances (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD], 2006; United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund [UNICEF], 2009). In nearby countries such as Australia, there is a press for educational leaders in early childhood to develop leadership skills to lead the expanding field of early childhood education and care (Council of Australian Governments [COAG], 2009). Such imperatives are giving rise to initiatives to redress disadvantage and injustice through leadership in quality early childhood teacher education (Brownlee, Farrell & Davis, in press). PNG is an example of a country that is leading the way in national initiatives to build educational leaders in early childhood, as part of its nation building through elementary education.

One initiative aimed at building PNG's educational leaders in elementary education was an intensive Australian Leadership Award Fellowship (ALAF) program involving a group of teacher trainers from PNG. A key concern of the ALAF program was to establish leadership skills and capacities in elementary education leaders in PNG. A starting point was to ascertain the views of ALAF participants around leadership. This paper is concerned with their views of what constitutes effective leadership in elementary education in PNG and how these views may have changed throughout the ALAF program. Drawing on the social justice perspectives of Nancy Fraser (2000, 2005, 2008), the paper argues that participants' changing views of effective elementary education leadership can provide a platform for the development of quality education, education for equality, and national capacity building.

Policy and Educational Contexts of PNG

Papua New Guinea is the largest of the Pacific Island nations, with an estimated 6.1 million in population and a land mass of approximately 460,000 square kilometres (UNCP, 2007). There are some 800 languages spoken in a country known for its cultural and ethnic diversity (UNCP, 2007). Of significance, the population is expected to grow to more than 11 million by 2050 with 40 per cent of the population currently under the age of 18 (UNCP, 2007), with predicted 25.7% growth between 2005 and 2014 (Rena, 2011; UN, 2011; UNCP, 2007). Such population growth poses major challenges for basic education. It is widely accepted that the education system needs to respond to this growth while simultaneously improving the quality of education and service deliver (Rena, 2011; UN, 2011; UNCP, 2007). A key challenge is the ongoing reform of basic education, comprising elementary education (Prep-Grade 2) and primary education (Grades 3-8). This agenda is influenced by, and reflects international imperatives such as UNESCO's 2000 *Education For All* (EFA) goals, The United Nations 2010 Millennium development goals (MDG), and a new partnership commenced in 2007 between the Government of Papua New Guinea United Nations Development System and the *United Nations Country Programme Papua New Guinea 2008-2012: A Partnership for Nation-Building*. Elementary education in PNG became part of the national education system in 1995, by amendment to the *Education Act* (UNESCO, 2000). As part of this reform, full time education gained a one year preparatory program, known as Prep, followed by a further two years of education known as Elementary 1 and Elementary 2. Making primary education compulsory and available free to all was highlighted in the report *Education for all. Assessment 2000: Papua New Guinea country report* (UNESCO, 2000).

The reform agenda involved educating large numbers of teachers to promote universal access to elementary education. Currently, however, there is concern about the quality of such education in PNG (OECD, 2006: UNESCO, 2008). Educational leadership is considered to be a key component of promoting quality education in PNG (Avalos, 2000, 2006; Pacific Leadership Development Network, 2009; Whalley, Chandler, John, Reid,

Thorpe, & Everitt, 2008) and is central to PNG's reform agenda in elementary education (UNESCO, 2009).

Promoting quality education through leadership, however, needs to be understood in the context of political and social context postcolonial societies such as PNG (Mohok-McLaughlin & Hickling-Hudson, 2005). Since achieving independence in 1975, PNG has experienced a history of foreign aid in education, particularly from donor countries such as Australia. This has brought challenges in terms of educational leadership in PNG, with donor countries, at times, prioritizing their own financial and political gains over leadership capacity building (Mohok-McLaughlin & Hickling-Hudson, 2005). This has perpetuated a financial focus over a social justice focus.

Leadership in elementary education in PNG is seen to contribute to the country's goals for quality education by advancing social equity in terms of race, culture, language and gender. In this paper, our focus is on understanding how a group of PNG elementary teacher trainers understood leadership as they participated in a leadership program in elementary education. Using a social justice theoretical framework, we sought their views of leadership and how their views changed over the course of the leadership program designed to strengthen their leadership capabilities in the context of their own work.

A Social Justice Theoretical Framework

Social justice, according to Nancy Fraser, refers to the capacity for individuals to participate as peers in social life. In Fraser's paradigm, overcoming social injustice means dismantling institutionalized obstacles that prevent some people from participation on par with others (Fraser, 2008). Institutional obstacles may include elements as economic structures that deny access to resources, institutional hierarchies of cultural value that deny equality, and problematic governance structures and decision-making processes that impede democratic participation (Fraser, 2008; Tikly & Barrett, 2011).

In tackling these barriers, Fraser (1998, 2005, 2008) proposes a three dimensional theory of social justice, comprising redistribution (economic), recognition (cultural) and representation (political). With regard to redistribution, social justice is achieved when public resources are directed towards the least advantaged (Fraser, 2005, 2008). In the case of education, redistribution relates to access to quality education and the potential outcomes that ensue. Recognition redresses social *mis*recognition by identifying and acknowledging historically marginalised groupings within specific contexts (in this instance, such as PNG) (Tikly & Barrett, 2011). Finally, representation involves links between education and social justice for public policy (Tikly & Barrett, 2011) and includes the rights of individuals or groups to have a voice and to actively participate in decision making (Fraser, 2008; Tikly & Barrett, 2011). This final dimension is considered a prerequisite for addressing issues of redistribution and recognition. Figure 1 draws on the work of Fraser (2005, 2007, 2008) and provides an overview of the social justice framework.
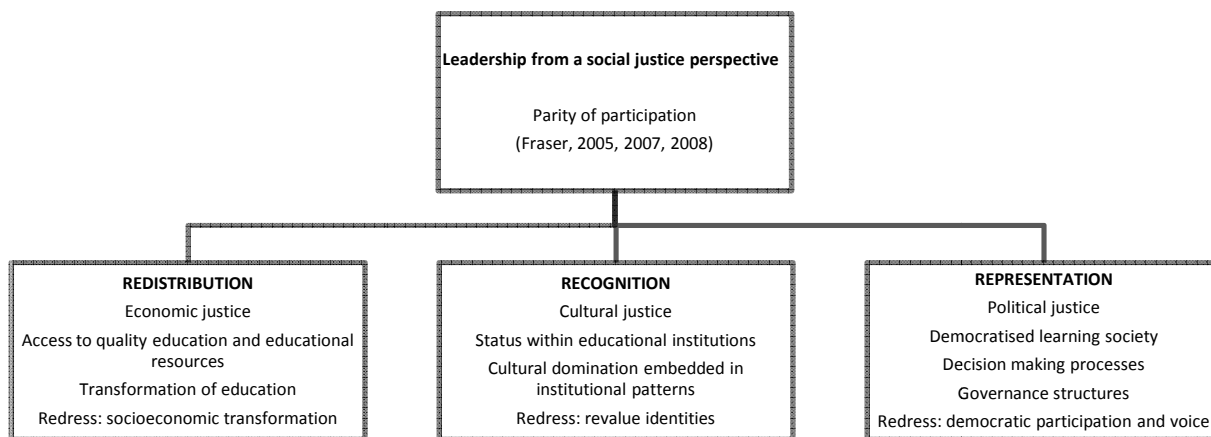
Figure 1: Fraser Framework

Fraser's framework provides a theoretical lens for considering elementary education leadership for social justice in PNG. Using this lens, leadership is seen as a socially constructed phenomenon, understood in context. A wide body of work challenges pre-determined, context-free views of leadership (Bloom & Bell, 2005; Lee, 2008; New Zealand Teachers Council, 2009; Scrivens, 2002; Waniganayake, 2002; Whalley et al., 2008). Francis (1997), for example, identified culturally specific complexities in her study of communication patterns in a PNG tertiary institution. She identified differences in the ways in which expatriates and PNG nationals defined institutional roles and responsibilities, how 'delegation' of authority was given meaning, and how 'consultation' was conceived. Two broad modes of communication operated within the institution: the industrial approach and the communal approach. The industrial approach was seen to embrace both the new values and behaviours in modern PNG, yet shaped by colonialism and the Western model of administration adopted by this institution. The label 'communal' was used by PNG nationals to describe their ways of relating and deciding (Francis, 1997). These different views of leadership provided some insights into why the PNG nationals were perceived as not participating (Francis, 1997). We argue, however, that a deeper understanding of leadership can be achieved by using a culturally contextualised, social justice framework.

The Study

The aim of the study was to investigate, through a social justice framework, how a group of elementary education leaders understood leadership in the context of a leadership program. Specifically the focus was on the following research questions:

1. What do elementary teacher trainers and policy personnel understand about educational leadership in the context of their elementary education roles in PNG?
2. To what extent do these understandings change as they move through a specifically-designed leadership program?

To address these questions, 10 elementary teacher trainers and policy personnel completed self-authored journal writing tasks at the beginning (Time 1) and end (Time 2) of the ALAF program. Time 2 data collection occurred in PNG approximately three months after the completion of the leadership program which was conducted in a university in Australia. The elementary education leaders also participated in a focus group at Time 2.

Participants

Table 1 is a summary of the participant's demographic details. The participants (4 males, 6 females) were drawn from across PNG, with most working as elementary teacher educators in Port Moresby's Papua New Guinea Education Institute (PNGEI). Two participants were elementary teacher trainers working in the provinces of PNG and another was the Superintendent Elementary Teacher Training in the Teacher Education Division of the National Department of Education (NDoE) with responsibilities related to managing elementary teacher education. The NDoE regarded it as essential to post-fellowship success that the Superintendent of Elementary Teacher Training participates in the program.

Group	Gender	Province	Employer	Leadership role
1	female	National Capital District, Port Moresby	NDoE, Teaching Service Commission	Elementary teacher educator at PNGEI
1	male	National Capital District, Port Moresby	NDoE	Superintendent Elementary Teacher Training, Teacher Education Division
1	female	National Capital District, Port Moresby	NDoE, Teaching Service Commission	Elementary teacher educator at PNGEI
1	female	National Capital District, Port Moresby	NDoE, Teaching Service Commission	Trainer in National Capital District
1	male	Morobe Province	NDoE, Teaching Service Commission	Trainer in Morobe province
1	female	National Capital District, Port Moresby	NDoE, Teaching Service Commission	Elementary teacher educator at PNGEI
2	female	National Capital District, Port Moresby	NDoE, Teaching Service Commission	Elementary teacher educator at PNGEI
2	female	National Capital District, Port Moresby	NDoE, Teaching Service Commission	Manager, Elementary Unit, PNGEI
2	female	East Sepik province	NDoE, Teaching Service Commission	Trainer in East Sepik province
2	male	National Capital District, Port Moresby	NDoE, Teaching Service Commission	Elementary teacher educator at PNGEI

Table 1. Summary of participants' demographics

The research sample comprises two groups of ALA Fellows (six in group 1 and four in group 2). Criteria for nomination of fellows included academic qualifications (all held Bachelor or Master level degrees), years of service within the NDoE, level of regional and remote work experiences, gender participation, demonstrated performance in teacher education and personal competencies. The ALAF was designed to provide a pool of expert elementary education leaders to support PNG's goal that, by 2012, all children would have access to quality basic education. On return to PNG, the Fellows were expected to form a core group of teacher educators who would lead their new programs, mentor fellow teacher educators and be in a position to positively influence future directions of elementary education in PNG.

The ALAF Program in Australia and PNG

The ALAF was an AusAID funded project aimed at promoting effective leadership in elementary education in PNG. Specifically, the ALAF program was designed to develop the capacity of participants to:

(i)   lead change in PNG's elementary education system;

(ii)   implement the new elementary curriculum through teacher education; and

(iii)   act as mentors for less experienced colleagues.

As noted, the research sample comprises two groups of ALA Fellows (six in group 1 and four in group 2). Each group, as outlined below, engaged in a four week intensive program at the Australian university followed by participation in a post-fellowship symposium held in PNG.

In *Week 1*, the focus was on developing joint understanding of leadership and strategic management in an elementary education context. It included mapping leadership competencies for early childhood teacher educators, role clarification and reflection on professional identities. It also provided an introduction to Education Action Plans (EAPs) action research proposals designed to address a selected leadership issue of relevance to elementary teacher training in PNG. Proposals were developed incrementally by the Fellows over the course of the program.

Next, in *Week 2,* the Fellows were matched with, and shadowed, an early childhood teacher educator at the host university, with recognized expertise in leadership, curriculum and pedagogy. As part of the workshadow component, Fellows participated in lectures, tutorials, and workshops with undergraduate students as well as participating in meetings with other lecturing staff. Fellows also engaged with the university's undergraduate student mentoring program in early childhood teacher education, whereby experienced students mentored neophyte students in academic and social aspects of their program.

In *Week 3*, Fellows were attached to leading early childhood training organizations, for example, an Institute of Technical and Further Education (TAFE), to extend their professional development in the area of child care, a priority area in early childhood in PNG. Finally in *Week 4*, Fellows participated in workshops to integrate their learning and experiences from the previous three weeks and to finalize their EAPs. This culminated in a Leadership Symposium focused on early childhood teacher education in which Fellows presented their draft educational action plans to workshadow colleagues, mentor colleagues and professional attachment colleagues.

Three months after the end of the Australian-based program, the Fellows held a second Leadership Symposium in PNG to report on the implementation of their EAPs and to develop shared ideas and strategies for the ongoing development of their elementary education leadership in PNG. This symposium provided the Fellows with the opportunity to demonstrate their leadership learning to a wide-ranging audience, including high-level education department personnel, PNGEI top-level administrators, PNGEI lecturing staff, and others from the elementary education community in PNG.

Collecting the Data

Ethical clearance for the study was granted by the University Human Research Ethics Committee (Ref No 0600000972). The fellows were asked to participate in a focus group and to write journal entries as a way to reflect on their understandings of elementary education leadership. The specific questions asked within the journal and focus group activities were:

1.   What do you think constitutes effective leadership in elementary teacher education?;

2.   What is the role of the leader in elementary teacher education?;

3.   What have you learnt through your involvement in the ALAF program? (Time 2 journals only); and

4.   What do you think might be some of the issues in PNG that might influence how you apply your new leadership?

Figure 2 provides an overview of the data collection. Journal writing took place at the beginning (Time 1) and end (Time 2) for each cohort. The focus group also took place at Time 2. Time 2 data collection occurred in PNG approximately three months after the commencement of the ALAF courses. At Time 2, the journal writing task preceded the focus group interview. This was designed so that journal reflections would not be influenced by focus group discussions and would provide the Fellows with an opportunity to think about their responses prior to engaging in the focus group interview. All participants wrote and spoke in English which, for all, was not their first language. While there was no set word limit for reflections, an arbitrary limit was imposed by the available space on the paper. All entries were then scanned and later transcribed by a commercial transcription service.

Time 1
Journals entries completed end week 1 of 4-week university based program in Australia.

Fellows return to PNG to implement EAPS

Time 2
Journal entries completed approximately 3 months later in PNG, at time of symposium

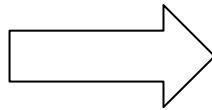Focus group completed following journal entries.

Figure 2. Data collection

The focus group was used to stimulate exchanges of information, provoke thought-geared solutions, and optimise the validity of the study (Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990). The group size of 10 was within the range of what is considered ideal. We envisaged that, as an interactive method, focus groups would obtain multiple perspectives on issues in a relatively short period of time, and obtain a sample of differing views at the one time (although responses can be distorted by unequal power relations amongst participants, see, for example, Kitzinger, 1995). The focus group was organised to capture the Fellows' ideas about leadership as they completed the program. The session lasted about 40 minutes, was audio-recorded, and sent for transcription to the same commercial transcription service as was used for the journals.

Analysing the data

The journal entries and focus group transcript were considered inductively using thematic analysis, the analytic strategy of looking for and coding patterns (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). One researcher who was involved in gathering the data in both Australia and PNG and a research assistant undertook the initial coding. The analysis process outlined by Creswell (2005) involved, first, *familiarizing* ourselves with the data through multiple readings of the transcripts and journals by the researchers. Second, responses were *analyzed into themes*. This thematic analysis is an iterative process involving several stages of categorising and filtering the data in order to identify and extract dominant themes. Specifically, it involved comparing responses with other responses in the transcripts and journals; then comparing responses with

emergent categories or themes; and then comparing categories or themes with other themes (Creswell, 2005). In the third step, *synthesis*, both the researcher and the research assistant investigated each of the themes to consider whether any could be combined with others of a similar nature. These were then presented to the broader research team for scrutiny of the themes, labels and quotes that exemplified each theme. The co-construction of themes by the researcher and the research assistant, and the final check by the broader research team, enabled credible research findings to be established. This is dialogic reliability in which agreement on coding is reached through discussion (Akerlind, 2005).

In this paper, data from journal entries are identified individually (e.g. ALAF 4) while the focus group data are identified in terms of whether the respondent was male or female and the order in which their response was recorded. For example, the identifier "Focus group female 2" denotes the second female to respond during the interview, with the code used thereafter whenever she responded.

Findings

The responses from the journals and focus group transcripts are presented together in our discussion of the research findings. Table 1 provides a summary of the topics, research questions and the key themes that emerged. This is followed by a discussion of each of the key findings. Where relevant, both the journal entries and focus group responses are referred to in order to exemplify key themes.

Research topics and questions	Key themes
Effective leadership and the role of the leader (Research questions 1 & 2)	• respecting and valuing others, collaborative relationships, and caring approaches to leadership • effective use of resources • enabling others to participate • role of research in perspectives of effective leadership
Changes in understanding through involvement in the program (Research question 3)	• learning about research to help solve problems in elementary education in PNG • learning about relationships • developing knowledge and skills through the program
Contextual barriers to leadership (Research question 4)	• problematic interpersonal relationships • economic barriers

Table 2. Research topics, questions and key themes

Effective Leadership and the Role of Leader in Elementary Teacher Education

The ALAF participants were asked to comment on what they considered to be effective leadership in elementary education and the roles of effective leaders. The main ideas that emerged were (i) respect and valuing others, the need for strong collaborative relationships, and having a caring approach to leadership; (ii) effective use of resources; (iii) enabling others to participate; and (iv) the role of research in their perspectives of effective leadership.

Respect and valuing others, collaborative relationships, and caring approaches to leadership

In both the journals and the focus group responses, all participants spoke of leadership as involving respect and valuing others, the need for strong collaborative relationships, and having a caring approach to leadership. For example:

> A good leader in elementary is someone who values other people's vision, other people's ideas, views and suggestions. Also (they) have respect and understanding and have concern over other people's condition, situation that they are in, and someone who is willing to listen and have time for others despite of their busy schedules. (Focus group, female 2)

Consideration of collaborative relationships suggests a focus on equal status rather than hierarchical relationships. From the Fraser framework, the dimension described as *recognition* refers to relationships, valuing people and identifying historically marginalised groupings within specific contexts (Tikly & Barrett, 2011).

Effective use of resources

In addition to a focus on recognition, participants described leadership and leadership roles in terms of promoting the effective use of resources in their journal entries (n=6 at Time 1; n=5 at Time 2), for example:

> The role of the leader in elementary teacher education should be to support and resource the teachers, provide conducive working environment both for staff students, recruiting quality early childhood education at the teachers' colleges, [unclear] entry trainers and elementary teachers. (ALAF 2, Time 2 journal)

A response such as this suggests a focus on providing access to quality education and educational resources, and aligns well with Fraser's dimension of *redistribution*. While Fraser discusses redistribution in economic terms, others such as Bates (2006) and Tikly and Barrett (2011) have applied this dimension specifically to education, referring to redistribution as educational access to a quality education and it potential outcomes.

Enabling others to participate

Journal entries (n=4 at Time 1; n=4 at Time 2) reveal a strategic and political dimension of leadership. For example:

> (A good leader needs) to contribute ideas for the development of elementary education policy and its review as well. e.g. the selection of teachers, the registration of school processes. (ALAF 3 Time 1 journal)

These responses point to Fraser's dimension of *representation* and opportunities to participate at a political level. Although Fraser often refers to political systems, Tikly and Barrett (2011) argue that representation covers participation, voice, accountability and decision-making at different levels of the education system.

The role of research in effective leadership

The final view of effective leadership related to the role played by research, and this emerged in both the journals (*n*=4) and focus group data. For example:

> (A good leader must) advocate and reflect the current thinking, trends and respect the diverse cultures and background learners and colleagues come from. Research issues affecting the organization and find solutions as a way forward to achieve the vision of the organization. (ALAF 8, Time 2 journal)
>
> A leader must be well versed in early childhood principles, theory and practice at the policy level and advocates caring for children. (Focus group, female 4)

This focus on research demonstrates that participants perceived the need for leaders to be informed and to draw on research information for problem solving. The role of research in effective leadership also featured in participants' responses about changes in their understandings about leadership over time. This is described in the next section.

Changes in Understanding Through involvement in the Program

The participants were asked what they thought had changed for them personally as a consequence of being involved in the ALAF program. This question was posed in both the Time 2 journals and in the focus group interview. Key ideas to emerge were (i) learning about research to solve problems in elementary education in PNG; (ii) learning about relationships; and (iii) developing knowledge and skills through the program.

Learning about research

In the focus group, participants indicated that action research was useful for problem solving and helpful for them to become good leaders (as well as developing confidence and skills, such as database searching). In the ALAF program, they were able to develop new skills that could be utilized to further develop their leadership capacities. For example:

> I learnt that as a leader, action research is the best for a leader who is struggling to solve a lot of issues. So I learnt that it helped me, it sort of enhanced me, this kind of research. It's my first time to do action research, although I've heard it. I haven't put it into practice until I can put it into practice, and I understood it. I learnt that I can be a good leader if I make use of this kind of research. (Focus group, female 6)

In the Time 2 journals, participants also commented on how they learnt of the importance of doing research (ALAF 4), especially reading widely for more information (ALAF 1), its value in problem solving (ALAF 2) and for developing confidence to do research (ALAF 8).

While these responses did not indicate a focus on social justice specifically, the following participant in the focus group described research as problem solving which seemed to be in the context of increasing participation, and developing capacity:

> It has enhanced my research skills. I had information on research skills, but this has taken me further in to look into my own work, my own work. But what I am doing, what can I do with the skills and knowledge that I have gained from these research skills, what can I do to look into my work, and I think that has really helped me because [unclear] I made before were on ideas, things that I see that maybe this is the way through to go, some gossip would come and say maybe this is the best thing you could use or you could plan it this way, your training programs, but now I see that using research skills is the basis for every conflict, have this research. With elementary, I think that's the way to go. I have to look into my own work area and investigate and find solutions, make decisions. (Focus group, male 3)

Overall, these comments appear to reflect participants' perceptions that research is a means of informed decision making. Decision making involves finding solutions that contribute to education quality. As representation includes the opportunity to participate and have a voice in decision making at different levels of the education system, the significance attributed to research could be viewed as a means of validating decisions, and 'using research skills as the basis for every conflict'. (Focus group, male 3)

Learning about relationships

The participants also indicated that they had changed their understanding about the importance of relationships in leadership as a result of participating in the program. The importance of relationships - that is learning to listen, getting others' views, spending time with students, valuing people, learning to be encouraging with workers - also emerged as a key characteristic of effective leadership in elementary education in the previous section. In the journals and focus group at Time 2 the participants described how they had learnt about the importance of relationships and collaboration, valuing of others, the need to collaborate, listen, and respect others' views (tolerance), and how to speak out.

It is interesting that, even though there was a focus on valuing and caring for others, and recognition of the need to identify and acknowledge 'people at my level', some participants expressed a need, at times, for higher status in their leadership relations:

What I've learnt as a leader, I need to provide an encouragement atmosphere among my workers, listen more and the study has broadened my knowledge to read more and to be steps ahead of my workers so that I am knowledgeable, skilful and I can provide that learning, extra learning to my colleagues. (Focus group, female 3)

Here, even though the participant recognises the importance of developing collaborative relationships, simultaneously, there appears to be an attempt to set herself up hierarchically as the provider of knowledge. This suggests that a focus on collaborative, caring relationships does not always reflect the social justice dimension of recognition. Indeed, it may well reveal entrenched patterns of misrecognition. Examples of misrecognition in educational processes are widespread within authoritarian cultures such as Botswana (Tikly & Barrett, 2011) and even countries such as Australia, that profess more democratic protocols (Bates, 2006). As misrecognition is culturally embedded in institutional patterns of exclusions and status inequality, addressing social justice in this dimension also includes making visible who can speak and with what authority (Tikly & Barrett, 2011).

Developing Knowledge and Skills Through the Program

Participants also described changes in a range of knowledge and skills as a result of participating in the ALAF program. For example, in the journal entries they variously described learning about new teaching strategies (ALAF 10; ALAF 9; ALAF 8):

Learnt some teaching strategies through observing lecturers at QUT and the teacher at Kelvin Grove and Lady Gowrie Pre School Kids (encircled) and how learners who do not speak English at home are assisted through programs to support their learning at school. (ALAF 8, Time 2 journal)

As was the case for the journals, there was a general sense, in the focus group discussion, that a range of knowledge and skills had been gained throughout the program:

The study has broadened my knowledge to read more and to be steps ahead of my workers so that I am knowledgeable, skilful and I can provide that learning, extra learning to my colleagues. (Focus group, female 3)

The description of gaining new knowledge, though, often seemed to suggest an hierarchical approach to leadership rather than a collaborative approach. There appeared to be a focus on being "steps ahead" and "providing learning" rather than knowledge learned through collaborative interactions. In terms of the Fraser framework, this would imply that knowledge, within the contexts of the educational institution may, at times, be parity-impeding rather than parity-fostering (Dahl, Stoltz & Willig, 2004).

Other responses from participants also focused on changes in knowledge as a result of the program, but these descriptions seemed to reflect more strongly on notions of social justice. For example, learning about how leadership can be learnt, can be used to help others to realise leadership potential, and how developing an understanding of transformational styles to generate change can improve teaching, suggested the social justice dimension of redistribution:

> Involvement through ALAF, I learn a lot. Different leadership styles, how to help others to realize their potential to become effective leaders. I also learnt that leadership is a very important [area] of human organization. We need effective leadership to create transformation, way of leading and bring about changes. It was [also noted] that leadership is a unit of its own, conducted in Semester basis, which is PNG we need to have a unit on leadership to help on trainees become effective leaders for their [school]. Finally, I learnt that, there is always opportunity available for pursuing to Degree and Masters to improve on educations system in PNG. (ALAF 5 Time 2 journal)

Here, the participant refers to how the program helped her to understand how to support others to reach their potential as leaders for transforming elementary education. Redistribution, in this quote, refers to leaders having access to quality education and the potential outcomes of transformation of education that might arise from this (Bates, 2006; Tikly & Barrett, 2011). A key issue, from a social justice perspective, is to better understand the resource inputs required and to assist leaders to identity how resources can be distributed (Tikly & Barrett, 2011).

Similarly, understanding that teacher trainers can be leaders in promoting global knowledge for innovation in education suggested redistribution in terms of the Fraser framework (ALAF 6 Time 2 journal):

> I have learnt that I can be a leader in my own sphere of influence despite the level qualification or position. A lot of collaboration needs to be done to enhance or boost or bring about change in our way of doing things. Networking is vital if we want change. We are all learners and need to be mentored so we must be able to listen to others and to take risks (willingly if possible). (I have learnt also to) be tolerant of others' views - think globally to be innovative in our own settings, so we see what others are doing; keep abreast. (ALAF 6 Time 2 journal)

There was also a view put forward by one participant that the program had assisted her to learn more about the role of resources in promoting programs, which suggested an alternate view of redistribution (ALAF 8 Time 2 journal). Here, social justice is achieved through redistribution when public resources are directed towards the least advantaged (Fraser, 2005, 2008).

For another participant, the program had helped her to think at a differently about leadership and decision making:

> A leader models leadership qualities, builds a network of strong team members, values other people's ideas and contributions. A leader involves other people in decision making, is an innovative thinker and leads other people who face challenges and helps provide positive ways of solving the problem. (ALAF 7 Time 2 journal)

The dimension of representation is evident in this quote in considering educational leadership as supporting a democratised learning society. The quote suggests that having a

voice and participating in decision making will help to solve problems in elementary education. Representation, in an increasingly globalized context requires contemporary conceptions that consider aspects of social normativity, values and collegial contributions (Dahl, Stoltz & Willig, 2004).

The focus group also reported on changes in understandings about leadership over the course of the program, but highlighted the dimension of recognition. Participants discussed how they perceived that PNG needs leadership programs to teach about leadership, that leadership needs to be practiced by everyone, that teacher trainers can be leaders in elementary education, and how they developed confidence as leaders, including how learning to be researchers strengthened their views of self as leader.

For these participants, their developing knowledge about leadership suggested a shift in thinking from misrecognition to recognition, that is, from a view that leadership that involves culturally defined categories of social actors and status groups (misrecognition), to identifying and acknowledging marginalised groupings within elementary education leadership in PNG (recognition) (Bates, 2006; Fraser, 2000).

Contextual barriers to leadership in PNG

All of the participants at Time 2, in both the journal entries and the focus group, described how (i) problematic interpersonal relationships and (ii) economic barriers are challenging the implementation of effective leadership in elementary education in PNG.

Problematic interpersonal relationships

In the Time 2 journals and focus group many participants expressed concern with poor relationships in work environments in elementary education. These included a view of low morale in elementary teacher education contexts (ALAF 1; ALAF 8):

> One of the things that may hinder or constraint the implementation of what we have learnt is there's a general feeling of staff morale very low because of the weak administration, because issues and concerns regarding teaching and learning have not been actioned by the administration and a lot of things, reports have gone in that have not been actioned so that really is putting the staff not to perform at their best. (Focus group, female 8)

Many participants commented in the journals (ALAF 2; ALAF 4; ALAF 5; ALAF 9; ALAF 10) and in the focus group, that that there was little support or cooperation from the elementary education hierarchy in PNG.

In their journals, a lack of equality (ALAF 3, ALAF 4) and recognition (ALAF 6; ALAF 8) was also perceived by some participants to be barriers. For example a lack of gender equality was described by one participant:

> As female, male counterparts in leadership positions try to suppress me daily, however, I tell them that the rules and regulations are for both men and women in teacher training programs at PNGEI/PNG. Some men refuse not to take instructions from me as a female Unit Manager, but I try to talk them politely all the time to win them over and this is slowly building a positive relationship between them. (ALAF 3, Time 2 journal)

The perception of gender suppression is significant in light of broader political reforms being implemented in PNG for gender equality (UNESCO, 2009). From a social justice perspective, gender can be viewed in terms of both the dimensions of redistribution and recognition (Fraser, 2007). In terms of the redistribution dimension, gender appears as a class-like differentiation, rooted in the economic structure of the society (Fraser, 2007). From the recognition perspective, gender appears as a status differentiation with institutionalized patterns of cultural value that privilege traits associated with the masculine, while devaluing

everything coded as feminine (Fraser, 2007). In the focus group, a lack of equality was noted as endemic in the various training programs at PNGEI.

Other responses in the focus group also indicated issues concerning various organisational areas of PNGEI. They indicated, for example, that residential and distance programs at PNGEI should be treated equally in order to enable more collaborative work arrangements. The participants also believed that PNGEI was not working collaboratively with its trainers demonstrated by not responding promptly to matters important to trainers' work.

Social barriers, such as a "lack of understand(ing) and knowledge by the community and stakeholders" (ALAF 5), also made it hard to develop shared visions amongst staff at PNGEI. Some participants also perceived that cultural attitudes of close mindedness (ALAF 7), overall negativity (ALAF 6, ALAF 8, ALAF 9), and lack of vision and people skills (ALAF 6) were barriers evident within elementary education in PNG.

Many of the participants in both the journals and the focus group commented on socially entrenched patterns of cultural value, defined categories and hierarchies, institutional patterns of exclusion and an unwillingness to engage, which reflect Frasers' dimension of recognition. This focus on recognition as a dimension of social justice was also a common theme when participants were asked to comment on effective leadership and roles in elementary education, as discussed earlier.

Economic barriers

Another group of responses suggested financial barriers and poor distribution of resources was a contextual barrier in elementary education in PNG. In the journal responses, the need for financial redistribution and the impact of financial barriers (ALAF 2; ALAF 3; ALAF 4; ALAF 5; ALAF 8; ALAF 9; ALAF 10) emerged as key issues, for example:

> One barrier is the stagnant (weak) leadership at the college administrative level where funding and other support systems. e.g. phones, internet, computers, funding constraints the normal delivery of quality teaching and learning. (ALAF 8, Time 2 journal)

One participant also talked about a lack of opportunities to engage in professional development (ALAF 5, Time 2 journal). This, too, can be seen as an outcome of overall lack of resourcing within education, and of weak economic/financial management specifically. It also appears to exemplify the view of professional development as a cost burden rather than an investment in training. The focus group also indicated that there is a need for appropriate distribution of resources, specifically, in this case, of educational resources such as books, furniture and teacher housing.

Overall, in this analysis of contextual barriers to leadership, there were no responses related to barriers that prevented individuals from having a voice and participating in decision making (representation). While the dimensions of redistribution and recognition are foremost in discussions, it is the third dimension of social justice, representation, which connects these two dimensions and completes a comprehensive understanding of justice (Dahl, Stoltz & Willig, 2004). From a social equity perspective, a theory of justice allows us to consider interactions within institutions in a society and to identify processes that are both visible and invisible (Dahl, Stoltz & Willig, 2004). It is therefore interesting to note that participants did not foreground representation as a contextual barrier to leadership although participation has been identified as constraining educational leadership toward a democratised learning society in other contexts (Bates, 2006; Tikly & Barrett, 2011). This lack of examination is also significant if you consider representation as a prerequisite for addressing issues associated with facilitating redistributing and recognition (Fraser, 2008; Tikly & Barrett, 2011).

Discussion

A key finding of this study was the emphasis placed on relationships and valuing people in elementary education leadership contexts, that is, recognition and misrecognition by participants. This focus was evident in their views of educational leadership and roles, in their descriptions of how their understanding changed over the course of the program, and in their reports of barriers to effective leadership in elementary education in PNG.

Within the social justice framework, recognition within elementary education in PNG meant acceptance as a full and equal member of that social formation. To be misrecognized, devalued or made to feel "not equal", as described by many participants in this study, was about being considered inadequate or devalued. It also means being denied full partnership in social interactions, as a consequence of institutionalized patterns of cultural value that constitute one as comparatively unworthy of respect or esteem (Fraser 2000). Misrecognition constitutes a form of institutionalized subordination and, according to Fraser (2000), is a violation of justice. As PNG, as a nation, has indicated its commitment to initiatives to address disadvantage and social justice through educational leadership and quality teacher education (UNCP, 2007; UNESCO, 2000; UNESCO, 2009), an understanding of the participants' views about leadership provides a starting point for further transformation. Evidence of misrecognition is a significant finding given PNG's national and regional aspirations (for example, as indicated in the Pacific Institute of Advanced Studies in Development and Governance (2007). So too, there are challenges as educational leaders work towards meeting the goals of Education For All (EFA) and the education Millennium Development Goal for PNG (AusAID, 2009; Bellow, 2010). A starting point is to be attuned to emerging elementary education leaders' perceptions of leadership, acknowledgement of their achievements, and recognition of their understandings of barriers and challenges in their field, rather than ignoring or dismissing them as seemed to be the case for these participants.

Another key finding was the participants' increasing awareness of research as way to support leadership roles. The participants described how action research was useful for problem solving and would support them in the process of becoming good leaders. In some cases, however, participants talked about research using language that reinforced subordination and obstacles to equality of participation. That is, some described knowledge gained through research as to be "given" or transmitted to others who were considered less knowledgeable and in some respects "deficient". Holding such views diminishes the transformative potential of both research and leadership for the promotion of social justice outcomes.

Others noted that the program had fostered an overall increase in their general knowledge about leadership with stronger notions of social justice evident in these responses, for example, learning how to help others to realise leadership potential, developing an understanding of transformational styles to generate change, and understanding that trainers can be leaders in developing global knowledge, as suggested by the social dimension of redistribution. Redistribution refers to how social justice is achieved through directing resources towards the least advantaged (Fraser, 2005, 2008). Within an educational context this also refers to access to quality education and the associated outcomes (Bates, 2006; Tikly & Barrett, 2011). For one participant, social justice was evident in the sense that the leadership program had helped her to think differently about issues and how they could be solved, thus giving consideration to educational leadership as contributing to a democratised learning society. This notion of representation refers to having a voice and participating in decision making (Tikly & Barrett, 2011). This is significant as participants appear to have, in many ways, embraced the national agenda for educational reform including equitable access

to education, improved human capital and active participation in cultural contexts (AusAID, 2009; UNCP, 2007; UNESCO, 2009).

The final key finding was a concern expressed by participants about the economic/financial barriers to effective leadership in elementary education in PNG. Most of the participants, either in their journal or in the focus group interview, suggested that redistribution of resources was a major concern. From Frasers' perspective, redistribution is an economic dimension of social justice referring to access to resources and she advocates for institutional reforms that redress maldistribution (Fraser, 2005, 2008). Clearly the financial barriers imposed on these leaders were impacting on access to quality education for both leaders and elementary children.

Conclusion

PNG is moving towards nation building in an increasingly globalized world, with education conceptualized as a way of developing social equity (Bates, 2006; Hopkins et al., 2005; Tikly & Barrett, 2011; Whitington et al., 2008). Against the backcloth of national capacity building, a social justice lens has provided a relevant frame for examining the experiences of identified leaders who engaged in the ALAF program. Of particular relevance for the participants were the dimensions of redistribution and recognition in seeking to overcome injustice and dismantling institutionalized obstacles that prevent some people from participation on a par with others (Fraser, 2008). While the dimension of representation was apparent in some participants' responses about their roles as leaders, it was less visible in the other topics discussed. This is of concern because to successfully promote social justice, all three dimensions must work together (Fraser, 2005). Political struggles against top down global and regional agendas mean that democratic decision making (representation) in addition to valuing others (recognition) and redistribution of resources are required at multiple levels in the education system. For these elementary leaders who work in school systems which are seldom run on democratic principles (Bates, 2006; Gandin & Apple, 2002), the dimension of representation seemed to have less significance.

One way to support stronger connections between all three dimensions of social justice may be to adopt a social justice framework as core content for implementing leadership programs. For example, participants can be supported to reflect explicitly upon social justice perspectives in their personal learning about leadership. Such reflection may help to generate and foreground some of the conflicting views held by leaders in real world contexts. Opportunities for grappling with conflicting views may assist participants to apply social justice in authentic ways to their own context and to contribute, in sustained ways, to the quality of elementary teacher education in PNG.

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