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Conceptualising Educational Quality in Kenyan Secondary Education: Comparing Local and National Perspectives

By

Elizabeth (Lizzi) Mary Anne Milligan

A dissertation submitted to the University of Bristol in accordance
with the requirements of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the
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Abstract

Considerable research has highlighted the power of development agencies and the influence of international agendas in national policymaking across the Global South. In recent years, increasing critical attention has been paid to the promotion of the dominant economic and rights-based approaches to educational quality at the primary level, with some authors arguing for the reconceptualisation of educational quality in alternative and participatory ways. This study contributes to this literature by developing the relationship between participation and context and addresses gaps in the existing knowledge by shifting the focus to the secondary level where it is argued out-of-school factors are particularly pertinent. Kenya was one of the first African countries to extend free basic education to the secondary level with the introduction of the Free Secondary Education (FSE) policy in 2008. This is, to my knowledge, the first in-depth case study of its implementation and the associated challenges to educational quality.

The study documents local conceptualisations of quality in Kenyan secondary education and compares and contrasts these with those identified in the national FSE policy documentation. The empirical research answers three research questions: (1) how is quality defined in the Kenyan FSE policy documents? (2) what does a quality secondary education look like for a range of local stakeholders? (3) what are the main challenges facing secondary education in practice in two case study schools? Guided by a postcolonial methodological framing, the research is conducted using a two-level case study design. At the national level, thematic discourse analysis is employed to interrogate dimensions of quality in the policy documents, and at the local level, in one rural community in the Kisii region, a range of qualitative and participative methods are used to gather data on the perspectives, experiences and attitudes of teachers, students, governors and parents.

At the national level, thematic discourse analysis reveals the strong presence of global discourses underpinned by Eurocentric values with little contextualisation for Kenya. Key findings from the local level include that major challenges facing secondary education in practice are imposed from above through policy and curricular decisions. The student-generated data shows that many also face significant out-of-school challenges related to poverty, an uncondusive home environment, sex and alcohol. These act as barriers to their achievement of a quality education. A perceived quality education is shown to be one that addresses such curricular and out-of-school challenges, promotes a quality school where good governance and discipline are particularly highlighted, and has wide-ranging outcomes.

Conclusions point to the potential for greater democratic participation in policy formulation for educational quality and related priorities. It is argued that for such participation to be meaningful, the dominant discourses identified at the policy level need to be challenged to allow alternative ways of knowing about education to enter the quality debate. Alongside implications related to specific findings revealed at the school level, key implications are explored for the educational policymaking process and for the potential of participation to lead to more contextualised policies and a narrowing of the gap between policy and practice.

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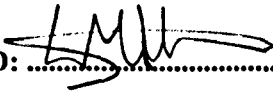
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Author's Declaration

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the University's Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes and that it has not been submitted for any other academic award. Except where indicated by specific reference in the text, the work is the candidate's own work. Work done in collaboration with, or with the assistance of, others, is indicated as such. Any views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author.

SIGNED:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'L.M.H.', written over a dotted line.

DATE:

10/2/14

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List of Abbreviations

BAICE: British Association for International and Comparative Education
BoG: Board of Governors
CDF: Constituency Development Fund
DfID: Department for International Development
EdQual: Education Quality in Low Income Countries
EFA: Education for All
EPAfrica: Education Partnerships Africa
ESRC: Economic and Social Research Council
FPE: Free Primary Education
FSE: Free Secondary Education
GDP: Gross Domestic Product
GNI: Gross National Income
ILO: International Labour Organisation
KADU: Kenya African Democratic Union
KANU: Kenya African National Union
KCPE: Kenyan Certificate of Primary Education
KCSE: Kenyan Certificate of Secondary Education
KESSP: Kenya Education Sector Support Programme
MDG: Millennium Development Goal
MoE: Ministry of Education
MoEST: Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
NARC: National Alliance of Rainbow Coalition
ODA: Official Development Assistance
ODM: Orange Democratic Movement
OECD: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PISA: Programme for International Student Assessment
PRISM: The Primary School Management Programme
PNU: Party of National Unity
RoK: Republic of Kenya
SACMEQ: Southern and East African Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality
SAP: Structural Adjustment Programme
TSC: Teacher Service Commission
UN: United Nations
UNDP: United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF: United Nations Children's Fund
UPE: Universal Primary Education
USE: Universal Secondary Education
WHO: World Health Organisation

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Chapter One:

Introducing the Study

The topic of study and background for the research

In 1990, 155 country delegates met at the UNESCO-led conference in Jomtein, Thailand, and pledged to support the global goal of 'Education for All' (EFA). In the twenty years since this conference, and following the establishment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2000, international agendas, actors and funding bodies have prioritised universal access for all to basic education. In practice, however, achieving Universal Primary Education (UPE), as discussed in Chapter 2, has become the dominant target for global educational agendas, and, subsequently, for national priorities of many low income countries (Mundy, 2006; Samoff, 2007). This has often been at the expense of other educational levels (Oketch & Rolleston, 2007). More recently, in a number of Sub-Saharan African countries, there has been a move towards widening the concept of basic education to include secondary schooling under the universal and/or free umbrella.

Free Secondary Education (FSE) was introduced in Kenya in 2008 following the introduction of free and compulsory primary education in 2003. This means that education is now, nominally, free for twelve years of schooling from the ages of seven to eighteen years. Despite widespread criticism of the speed with which Free Primary Education (FPE) was introduced in 2003, it can be argued that few lessons were learnt when it came to the introduction and implementation of FSE (Kamunde, 2010). FSE was a key promise made by President Kibaki in his 2007 re-election manifesto, and its

introduction followed soon after his presidential reinstatement. Despite little public debate or participation in the decision to introduce FSE, it is a policy that has been welcomed in the schools where I have worked in Western Kenya. Early signs indicate that there has been a significant increase in enrolments, though not at the rate experienced in neighbouring Uganda and distinctly less so in poorer and more rural communities (Ohba, 2011).

This study explores local conceptions of quality secondary education in the context of related global agendas and an analysis of the FSE policy in Kenya. This is carried out through a critical analysis of the policy documentation, an in-depth qualitative case study situated in one rural community in Western Kenya, an analysis of the relevant theoretical literature and my own prior experience working in Kenyan secondary schools. It compares and contrasts different conceptions of educational quality in secondary education at the international, national and local levels with special reference to Kenya. In the global context of EFA and MDGs, a strong degree of uniformity can be seen for educational policymaking in low income countries. Subscription to global agendas has been influenced by international political and economic forces, often in tension with national priorities and characterised by the absence of local level involvement (Samoff, 1996; King & Rose, 2005; Mundy, 2006). As discussed in Chapter 2, the power of the development community and the competing human rights and economist discourses in relation to education has compromised national and local debates about what constitutes a quality and relevant education. Increasingly, research is revealing the need for new ways of understanding quality in education, moving beyond the narrow parameters of the rights-based and economist approaches (Unterhalter, 2007; Tikly & Barrett, 2011). This study argues

that there is much potential for key concepts such as participation and context to underscore future discussions of quality secondary education.

The remainder of this chapter introduces the study by first discussing its rationale in terms of general, Kenyan and personal priorities. The research aim and objectives then follow, along with core research questions and an overview of both the conceptual framework and methodological foundations. The chapter concludes with a summary of the structure of the full dissertation.

General Rationale

There are numerous examples of the unsuccessful implementation of education policies globally. The authors who highlight these examples argue that increased globalisation and the processes of global agenda-setting have created an environment in which uncritical educational policy transfer and the borrowing of perceived 'best practice' have intensified (Crossley & Watson, 2003; McGrath, 2009a). Some researchers focus upon the influence of multi-lateral donor organisations and the way that low income countries are compelled to adopt the underlying principles of such organisations (Ilon, 1996; Jones, 2006). The oft-cited example of this is the association between the World Bank's endorsement of human capital theory and the subsequent prioritisation of primary schooling in educational policies across Sub-Saharan Africa and South-East Asia. Specific to this study is the body of literature that points to the development of a standardised blue-print for educational development and how quality in education should be conceptualised (Chabbott, 2003). Alongside these debates, some researchers argue that many educational development initiatives are too strongly influenced by international agencies and agendas, and that they are often less successful than intended because they are not

context-sensitive enough (Crossley, 2010). At the primary level, for example, it is argued that one of the main lessons learnt is that what counts as a quality education is relative and that this needs to be assessed within the relevant socio-cultural context.

It is in the light of this broader intellectual and professional context that this present research has been carried out. Moreover, given the lack of attention to secondary education at the time of writing, the arena of FSE offers new potential to challenge the dominant discourses in a less contested terrain and make an original contribution to the existing literature.

Kenyan Rationale

As FSE is only in its early stages in Kenya, the present research is both timely and of direct relevance for contemporary policymaking. As is discussed in Chapter 3, since Kenyan independence there have been a number of constants in educational policy development. Great importance has been placed by both the Kenyan government and the public on education and its role in enabling societal change and development. Longstanding tensions have been recognized between the prioritisation of different levels of education, global and national priorities and access and quality (King, 2007a; Kamunde, 2010). Amutabi (2003) and Somerset (2009) have also both highlighted the role that politics has played in educational policymaking. Somerset (2009, p.248), for example, argues that all three attempts to make primary education free were essentially political initiatives ‘launched in response to popular demand, but with insufficient attention to the consequences for quality’.

Very little has been written about the FSE policy or the quality and relevance of the provision of secondary education in Kenya. While FSE represents a huge national

investment, there is little knowledge or understanding of its implementation. This study explores the challenges and benefits of secondary education through an in-depth analysis of the realities of FSE in practice. Secondly, secondary education in Kenya has recently been encompassed under the umbrella of basic education. If secondary education is to become compulsory and enrolment is to increase substantially, it is argued that a relevant understanding of quality in the face of rapidly growing access will be even more crucial.

Personal Rationale

Since 2004 I have been a member of a small charity, Education Partnerships Africa (EPAfrica), which aims to improve the quality of education in rural secondary schools in Kisii, western Kenya. The charity provides essential resources and works in partnership with schools to encourage the long-term and sustainable advancement of the quality of education in these rural areas. I have witnessed the hiatus between what is written in national policy documents and the reality of the challenges faced in secondary education at the grassroots level; something Higgins (2004) describes as 'marching to different drums'. Furthermore, throughout this time, I have observed the haphazard nature of policy implementation and the lack of both time and resources that restrict head teachers' ability to respond in practice; a problem highlighted by Kamunde (2010) at the primary level. I have seen the passion and commitment for education throughout the rural communities where we work. These voices, seldom heard, and to my knowledge, rarely documented, are central to this study. Grounded in this personal rationale, the need for closer attention to be given to local priorities and realities underpins my own professional commitment.

Research Aim, Objectives and Questions

In the light of the above, the aim of the research is to document local conceptualizations of quality in secondary education and compare and contrast these with those identified in the national FSE policy documentation. The more specific research objectives are to:

- a) Critically review the international literature relating to the influence of global education agendas and goals in national policymaking, the power of the language used by influential actors regarding educational quality and the work which promotes an alternative approach to educational quality based on key concepts of context and participation;
- b) Situate the FSE policy in Kenya within its historical and contemporary contexts;
- c) Develop a postcolonial and participatory inspired methodological approach for the analysis of quality conceptualisations at the national and local levels;
- d) Carry out a critical analysis of the FSE policy documentation;
- e) Conduct a detailed empirically grounded community case study focusing on the nature and quality of secondary education in Kisii, Western Kenya;
- f) In the light of this, develop a contextually grounded understanding of what 'a quality secondary education' looks like for that community;
- g) Consider the implications of the research for the future of secondary education in Kenya; and
- h) Examine the implications of the findings for the theoretical literature outlined in a) and for future research.

In light of the above, three research questions guide the study. These are:

1. How is quality defined in the Kenyan FSE policy documents?
2. What does a quality secondary education look like for a range of local stakeholders?
3. What are the main challenges facing secondary education in practice in the two schools?

Conceptual Framework: An Overview

The study draws on three intertwined bodies of literature to develop the conceptual framework. These are the literature which cut across the key themes of (1) the uncritical transfer and increasing universality of policies, ideas and practices, particularly into low income contexts and within a time period which has witnessed significant changes in educational development; (2) the neo-imperial power of development which is underpinned by particular values and discourses that promote dominant approaches to educational development; and (3) the critique of economic and rights-based conceptualizations of educational quality and the potential for alternative approaches to understanding quality in more relevant and meaningful ways. Key concepts of participation and context are identified in the last body of literature as the basis for the conceptual framework for the study.

The first body of literature is that which critiques the increasing uniformity of educational policies and uncritical adoption of global trends, agendas, ideas and evaluation modalities into low income contexts. This draws upon writers such as Crossley and Watson (2003) who suggest that in recent years there has been intensification in the ease and uncritical nature of much policy borrowing with significant implications for implementation. Drawing on researchers such as

Chisholm and Leyendecker (2008) who critique learner-centred pedagogy and its promotion in low income countries, it is argued there has been increased movement globally of particular educational ideas and practices. I also draw on the literature which critiques the MDGs and EFA goals for further creating an enabling environment for the promotion of one-size-fits-all approaches to educational development (Mundy, 2006). Such work helps to underpin theoretical perspectives that promote the importance of taking context into account when global agendas and national priorities are set.

The second body of literature explores the power of development and the ways in which such power is maintained through the language used in the main approaches to educational development. The understanding that development is discursive is of great relevance to this study. Many authors suggest that discussions about educational development take place within discursive boundaries. The development community is critiqued for developing a 'standardised authoritative terminology' (or discourse) so that some 'embedded particular conceptions' have become completely normalised and taken for granted (Samoff, 2008, p.3). The study also draws on the concept of neo-imperialism for exploring the power relations involved in the development process within its postcolonial history and the present day reliance on donor assistance (Tikly, 2004). Given its influential role in Kenyan education in recent years, the dominant role of the World Bank is particularly highlighted. Authors such as King and McGrath (2002), Jones (2006) and Brock-Utne (2007) are drawn upon to show that the World Bank has tremendous power globally and its influence on what is deemed to be the 'right way to do education' can be seen in the discourses and policies of development agencies and ministries throughout the South.

Since the introduction of EFA and particularly in the last ten years, increased international attention has been given to the place of quality education in economic development and as a foundation for human rights. The third body of literature includes work by authors such as Unterhalter (2007) and Tikly and Barrett (2011) who argue that these dominant discourses (the economist approach particularly) promote a one-size-fits-all and decontextualised way of understanding educational quality. These authors suggest that these current approaches to conceptualizing educational quality are both inadequate and mask education's varied and complex nature and consider alternative and participatory conceptualizations based on the promotion of social justice and capabilities.

A conceptual framework is developed that challenges the influence of powerful educational policy agendas and their dominant discourses. This framework values public debate and stakeholder participation in promoting more locally relevant conceptualisations of education quality and provides the rationale for the methodological design of the study. It further draws on the EdQual context-led framework (see Chapter 2) and the comparative literature that calls for more context sensitivity in identifying context as a key concept for the dissertation (Crossley, 2010; Tikly, 2011). This framework also helps to underpin the rationale for the methodological design of the study.

Research Methodology and Methods: An Overview

Consistent with the conceptual framework shown above, the study adopts a postcolonial and participatory research design. It supports Hickling-Hudson (1998) and Tikly (1999) who have argued that postcolonial theory has much to offer the field

of international and comparative education. This rationale is acutely summarised by Rivzi, Lingard and Lavia (2006, p.250) who argue that:

For scholars in disciplines as wide-ranging as literature, history, sociology, anthropology, geography and indeed education, postcolonialism makes visible the history and legacy of European colonialism, enabling us to understand how Europe was able to exercise colonial power over 80% of the world's population, and how it continues to shape most of our contemporary discourses and institutions—politically, culturally and economically. Postcolonialism draws our theoretical attention to the ways in which language works in the colonial formation of discursive and cultural practices. It shows how discourse and power are inextricably linked.

Postcolonialism is therefore applied in interrogating the 'discourses and institutions' that are shown to influence Kenyan educational policymaking. Further, in awareness of the critique often put to postcolonial theorists of being overly theoretical, it promotes its use for both framing the study theoretically and in designing empirical research which recognises power, language and 'knowledge' imbalances.

My use of postcolonial theory for methodological framing is based on a constructivist world view and is closely connected to postmodern, critical and interpretivist perspectives. Constructivism is built upon notions of the social construction of reality (Searle, 1995). My own approach, thus, does not seek a universal truth or singular answer, but rather explores the multiple meanings that individuals make and that form a particular view of reality. The study shares the view of many postcolonial writers that the 'post' is dialectic as well as temporal. As Young (2001, p.57) explains, 'the postcolonial is a dialectical concept that marks the broad historical facts of decolonization and the determined achievement of sovereignty – but also the realities of nations and peoples emerging into a new imperialistic context of economic and sometimes political domination'. The 'post' also signifies its close links with the

deconstructive and multiple-perspective elements of both postmodernism and poststructuralism (Loomba, 2005). However, this study recognises the postcolonial critique that these epistemologies, and other main paradigms of educational research, are Eurocentric in nature (Tikly, 1999). The role of the researcher in cross-cultural research and the need to adapt methods appropriately to participants 'living in the postcolonial condition' are particularly highlighted.

The research employs a case-study research design. This is focused upon a) the national level and b) the local level. This is consistent with an overall concern for context and the need for better understandings of local realities for successful policy implementation. As Crossley (2001, p.191) argues:

If research is to contribute to more successful educational reform it may well need to be cumulative and policy-oriented; but policy planning also needs to be more effectively grounded in the realities of practice and the specifics of the local context. This both challenges continued adherence to the uncritical, global transfer of fashionable educational policy, and heightens the importance of research strategies that engage more directly with locally perceived priorities and participants' social constructions of reality.

The case study research design also allows for 'the exploration of a phenomenon within its context using a variety of data sources' and 'a variety of lenses' through which 'the multiple facets of the phenomenon can be revealed and understood' (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p.544). This is particularly useful in educational research when 'how' or 'why' questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context' (Yin, 2003, p.1). Yin (2003) further categorises the case study design into the three types of explanatory, exploratory and descriptive. This study is both exploratory and descriptive in nature; the former in its exploration of the global influences

impacting on policymaking at the national level and the challenges of secondary education in practice; the latter in its description of the localised accounts and conceptions of quality schooling.

At the national level, thematic discourse analysis is used to explore definitions of quality in the secondary education policy documents. In doing so, much is gained through understanding the process of policymaking and document production as discursive, limited to the involvement of the privileged few and situated within hegemonic global ideologies. Postcolonial analysis is also utilised to reveal how the policy documentation is shown to be a form of 'colonial discourse', guided by the definition of Loomba (2005, p.54):

A new way of thinking in which cultural, intellectual, economic or political processes are seen to work together in the formation, perpetuating and dismantling of colonialism. It seeks to widen the scope of studies of colonialism by examining the intersection of ideas and institutions, knowledge and power.

Essential to this approach is recognition of the enduring neo-imperial relations that characterise Kenya's relationship with international agencies and the donor community.

The local level case study is situated in one rural community, and two of its secondary schools, in the Kisii region of Western Kenya, and utilises a range of qualitative and participative methods to explore FSE in practice and local conceptions of quality education. Across the two case study schools, semi-structured interviews were conducted with sixteen teachers and ten management committee members. Participative methods were introduced for student participation. Twenty Form IV (final year) students were given either a camera or diary to document their educational

realities before these texts were used as the basis for a narrative interview. Younger students were also included through essay writing (twenty) and poster drawing (eight groups). In the wider community, semi-structured interviews were conducted with local dignitaries and unstructured interviews with parents, with the assistance of a translator. I also drew upon observation and my experiential knowledge of having previously worked in similar schools in the Kisii region. The choice of methods was designed to address some of the power imbalance that relate to myself as white, British and an outsider researcher.

Data collected at the local level was analysed using thematic analysis and categorised into the themes of contextual challenges, policy enablers, school priorities and the purposes of secondary education (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This is then compared and contrasted with the globally-informed themes revealed in the national level policy documents which had first been analysed. Full details of the research design, research methodology and detailed research methods are provided in Chapter 4.

Structure of the Dissertation

This study is organised into nine chapters. This chapter has introduced the study and presented the research rationale, provided an overview of the research aim and objectives, clarified key research questions and given an overview of the conceptual framework and research methodology.

Chapter 2 reviews the international literature for the study relating to the uncritical policy transfer and the adoption of one-size-fits all approaches to pedagogy, practice and educational development, the power of development and the critiques of the dominant economic and rights-based conceptualizations of educational quality.

Drawing on the literature which promotes the potential for alternative approaches to understanding quality, a conceptual framework is presented which could challenge the influence of powerful educational policy agendas and their dominant discourses. This framework is based on key concepts of context and participation for enabling more relevant and meaningful educational policies.

Chapter 3 situates the study in the historical and contemporary context of secondary education in Kenya. Particular emphasis is placed on the tensions between global agendas and national priorities and the place of political involvement in educational policymaking since independence in Kenya. The FSE policy rationale and its practical implications for secondary education are presented in drawing the chapter to a close.

Chapter 4 provides full details of the research methodology and more specific fieldwork methods used in the study. The adoption of a postcolonial theoretical lens for the methodological framing is outlined before the rationale for using a qualitative and participatory case study design is presented. The analysis approach and ethical and validity issues are also discussed.

Chapters 5, 6 and 7 present the findings of the research and focus upon the case study and critical analysis of quality in secondary education. Chapter 5 begins with a critical review of the absence of policy documentation for the FSE policy before the analysis of the secondary education strategy document to explore the ways in which educational quality is defined at the national level.

Chapter 6 focuses on how quality secondary education is defined by the different stakeholder groups at the local level. The chapter is split into three distinct sections. The first describes the two case study schools. The second and third sections explore what makes a quality school and what is deemed to be the purpose of secondary education according to teachers, students, management committee members, parents and local dignitaries.

Chapter 7 presents findings that relate to the third research question by exploring the main challenges facing secondary education in practice across the national, school and home environments. The importance of context and the influence of out-of-school factors are particularly highlighted.

Chapter 8 draws out the key themes that have emerged from the locally-grounded case study around quality secondary education and these are then compared with the principles that were identified in Chapter 5. Significant differences between the national and local levels are highlighted, together with final conclusions being drawn from the empirical evidence.

Chapter 9 presents the implications of the study for secondary education policy and practice and for ongoing policymaking in Kenya. Implications are examined for the theoretical literature relating to educational quality, context and participation and for methodological considerations related to postcolonial theory and participative methods. The chapter concludes by outlining the limitations of the research and implications for future research.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has introduced the research problem and provided the rationale for a study which explores local conceptions of quality education. It has been argued that this is important for the implementation of meaningful secondary education policies. The research aim, objectives and questions have been presented before an overview of the four bodies of literature which broadly critique the universality and discursive nature of discussions of quality education in low income countries. A research design split across the national and local levels has been introduced. To explore the neo-imperial relations at the national level and allow for an in-depth understanding of quality at the local level, the study has been introduced as one which adopts a constructivist worldview using a postcolonial and participatory methodology with a two-levelled case study design. An overview of the structure of the entire study has also been presented. The following chapter provides a critical review of the theoretical literature and develops a conceptual framework for the study based on the key concepts of context and participation in educational quality.

Chapter Two: Literature Review and Conceptual Framework - Power, Participation and Context

Introduction

This chapter reviews the bodies of literature upon which my conceptual framework is built. Broadly speaking, these relate to the power of global agendas and actors on educational development and the potential of the key concepts of participation and context for challenging dominant definitions of educational quality. The chapter begins by situating the study within the comparative education tradition and its contribution to analysing external influences in national policymaking. I then present the global context for the study by providing an overview of the MDGs and EFA goals and presenting the key critiques of these agendas as relevant to the study. The potential of concepts of discourse and neo-imperialism are then considered for revealing external influences and their agendas in national policymaking. The second half of the chapter turns the focus to education quality. First the key critiques aimed at the one-size-fits-all approaches to educational development are outlined before the discourses which underline the conceptualisation of educational quality are explored. The chapter concludes with a presentation of the key concepts for a quality education for this study – participation and context – before summarising the main themes which have emerged through the literature review.

The uncritical transfer of educational policies, ideas and practices

This study is situated within a comparative tradition which has long highlighted the importance of context and difference for successful policy implementation and subsequent quality educational practice. The emergence of a debate around borrowing

and adaptation of educational policies is often marked as Michael Sadler's oft-cited address at the Guildford Educational Conference. In this speech, he asked the question that remains as pertinent for comparativists now as 110 years ago, 'how far can we learn anything of practical value from the study of foreign systems of education?' The following short extract from the speech offers a savoury message that still has much relevance today:

In studying foreign systems of education we should not forget that the things outside the schools matter even more than the things inside the schools, and govern and interpret the things inside. We cannot wander at pleasure among the educational systems of the world, like a child strolling through a garden, and picking off a flower from one bush and some leaves from another, and then expect that if we stick what we have gathered into the soil at home, we shall have a living plant...' (Sadler, 1900, p.49 in Crossley, 2012, p.5)

An underlying principle of the comparative tradition that remains more than a century later is that lessons can be learnt transnationally but successful policies cannot be transferred without greater consideration of the implications generated by different contexts. Mapping the experience of other countries can have the potential to aid both policy making and the implementation of educational practice. However, it is only with critical understanding of such borrowing and an emphasis on contextual differences between countries and/or regions that such policy making and implementation can be successful (Crossley & Watson, 2003). In this section, I review the literature within the timeframe of the EFA and MDG agendas (1990-present day) which has shown the uncritical nature of much of the transfer and adoption of Western educational policy, pedagogy, ideology and practice into low income contexts (Holmes & Crossley, 2004; Louisy, 2004; Chisholm & Leyendecker, 2008; Le Fanu, 2013).

This timeframe also coincides with the intensification of globalisation which I interpret to be a phenomenon which has transformed society globally 'such that governments and societies across the globe are having to adjust to a world in which there is no longer a clear distinction between international and domestic, external and internal affairs' (Held *et al.*, 1999, p.7). This view is in line with what Held *et al.* (1999) describe as a transformalist view of globalisation as compared with a sceptical or hyperglobalist standpoint. Hyperglobalists emphasise the comprehensive effect of globalisation, specifically the economic influence of the global market and the subsequent decline of the nation state. Sceptics have reacted to this viewpoint as 'an exaggerated myth' and highlighted the connectedness of the world in earlier eras such as the colonial period (Crossley & Watson, 2003). Taking a transformalist view of globalisation for this study recognises that while the nation state continues to be relevant as a unit of analysis it is also important to study global and local levels. Furthermore, by recognising the importance of globalisation in the analysis of national policy, I draw to some extent on Dale (1999) who has argued that the mechanisms through which globalisation operates are significantly different from earlier mechanisms that characterised external influence on policy. Policies in the past may have been sourced directly from individual nations and wholesale adopted; however, in the globalised world, it is less appropriate to talk about transfer from one country to another since they are now devised within a wide web of different forms of power. Of particular note for this study is the increasingly powerful position of the multilateral organisations in the development of national policy across the global south.

Broadly speaking, it is argued that globalisation has heightened the potential for uncritical transfer through the relative ease of movement through innovations in information technologies and changes to the global world order (Crossley & Jarvis, 2001). Much of what has been written about such uncritical transfer of policy has focused on high income contexts and is outside of the realms of this study. However, two works are worthy of mention for raising the important role of politics, power and context in analysing the movement of policies globally. The political motivations for 'cross-national attraction' given by Phillips (2000) in relation to the UK and Germany suggest the attractiveness of policy transfer. If a policy is seen to work well abroad, it is often assumed that it can be uncritically adopted into the home context. It can also be purposively borrowed for political gain through 'the distortion (exaggeration), whether or not deliberate, of evidence from abroad to highlight perceived deficiencies at home' (Phillips, 2000, p.299). Phillips and Ochs (2004) introduce the importance of context in understanding the process of policy borrowing. They refer to contextual forces and interaction. The former are those that affect the motives behind cross-national attraction and those which act as a catalyst to spark cross-national inquiry. The latter affects the stage of the policy development, the policy development process and the potential for policy implementation. Although more relevant to high-income countries, it still raises the importance of context throughout the policy process and the multi-dimensional nature of policy borrowing and implementation.

The review by Quist (2003) of the secondary school models transferred from British and American contexts to Ghana since colonial times offers just one example of uncritical transfer in the Global South. The author suggests that these foreign models have been adopted with the goal of the socio-political development of modern Ghana

and concludes that Western models have not only failed to be adapted for the Ghanaian context but have contributed to a dependency on the Western way of 'doing education'. This argument suggests the importance of interrogating policy transfer not only for the global power relations but also postcolonial influences which impact on the reasons why and the ways that policymakers look to the North for 'best practice'.

A key lesson learnt from the comparative literature is that the uncritical adoption of policies from elsewhere predetermines a lack of prioritisation of context in much educational policymaking. This often leads to a hiatus between policies which are designed and transferred globally and subsequently adopted at the national level and the realities of local practice (McGrath, 2009b). As Jones (1994, p.175) once observed, the 'differences of local tradition, convention and politics would normally suggest a far greater diversity in educational development than we are currently witnessing worldwide'. Rather than borrowing 'best practice' from elsewhere, there is a call for greater understanding of the national and local context for the successful implementation and longevity of any particular policy. The analogy by Samoff (1999, p.84) of context as the womb to the 'baby-policy' is one which I have found particularly useful in understanding the importance of context:

It seems clear to most of the education community that effective reform requires agendas and initiatives with strong local roots and the broad participation of those with a stake in outcomes, including not only officials, but also students, parents, teachers and communities. Unless the beneficiaries of the reform become its bearer, it is likely to be still-born. For external agencies to support that process they must conceive their role in terms of development co-operation rather than providing philanthropy or determining directions.

McGrath (2009a, p.547) synthesises the argument for increased contextualisation as promoting the 'possibilities of successful local translation of transnational concepts ...

[since] key education-for-development ideas only have real meaning through a process of contextualisation'. However, Steiner-Khamsi (2000) also reminds us that educational transfer and adaptation ultimately means the displacement of indigenously viable alternatives which would otherwise have been developed and implemented.

There are two important points here. The first is that educational policies adopted from elsewhere tend to be rolled out without enough attention being paid to 'local translation' and making the policy relevant to the local context. The second is that for policies to more accurately reflect such local contexts there is a real need for more democratic participation in the policymaking process with policymakers looking down to the school level as well as outwardly to global trends. Here, there is a significant role for postcolonial perspectives through an incredulity of the metanarrative and critique of positivistic assumptions, accompanied by greater focus upon local and non-Western perspectives, values and traditions (Tuhiwai-Smith, 2006). I will return to these perspectives in Chapter 4.

There is a significant body of literature that focuses on the adoption of certain approaches to education and the perceived unsuccessful adaptation of these approaches within African classrooms. Later in this chapter, I will turn to the unsuitability of much of the dominant approaches to quality education to the African context. Here, I focus on one example of a Western approach to education to highlight that, although much of the literature regarding 'uncritical transfer' focuses upon policy, there is widespread uncritical transfer of educational ideas that impact on educational practices. Learner-centred pedagogy has been uncritically transferred into many non-Western settings, often at odds to local tradition and values. Despite many

attempts to introduce learner-centred pedagogy in a number of African countries (including Botswana, South Africa, Namibia, Tanzania, Ethiopia and Kenya), some recent studies have shown that teaching and learning in many African classrooms continue to be characterised by traditional, teacher-dominated instruction (Chisholm & Leyendecker, 2008; Altinyelken, 2010). Chisholm and Leyendecker (2008) draw on a study conducted by the Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam, which indicated that the prevalence of didactic teaching practices exists in many African contexts. For example, in Botswana, it is stated that a 'regurgitate-recite learning cycle' continues despite an official competency-based and learning-centred curriculum while in Ghana lessons are almost exclusively teacher-centred and content driven. The lack of adoption in the classroom relates to the fact that learner-centred pedagogy is uncritically accepted as the 'right way to do education' without sufficient attention being given to the context (Tabulawa, 2003; Altinyelken, 2010). The challenge of adopting learner-centred approaches in the face of unprecedented enrolment increases is highlighted by some authors; a contextual challenge which it is argued has not been given sufficient attention in the agency literature that promotes the adoption of such pedagogical renewal (Altinyelken, 2010; Chisholm & Leyendecker, 2008). These authors call for more consideration to be given to the practical implications of curricular and pedagogical reform.

Chisholm and Leyendecker (2008, p.202) map the problems with the attempts to locally translate learner-centred and outcome-based education in South Africa which include 'the consequences of the intended instructional practices not being of a piece with local classroom cultures and realities'. Furthermore they (2008, p.203) argue that

problems with implementation have arisen from a lack of resources and capacity, and shortcomings in the curriculum design:

Although the critical link between 'the big idea' and changing actual classroom practice must be acknowledged, curriculum changes probably work best when curriculum developers acknowledge existing realities, classroom cultures and implementation requirements. This requires understanding and sharing the meaning of the educational change, providing adaptations to cultural circumstances, local context and capacity building throughout the system. For learner-centred education to take root in local African contexts, teachers need to understand the underlying idea, be motivated to change practice, adapt and apply appropriate pedagogies, and have the capacity to do it.

This quote is just one of many that could have been taken from the literature reviewed in this section. It, again, highlights the importance of context for the successful implementation of a particular educational approach, especially one which is expected to fundamentally change educational practice in classrooms across the African continent. This is not to say that there is no space for reform or that such approaches cannot be adapted. Rather, an understanding of how teachers will interpret the changes and the context within which the reform will take place will aid successful implementation.

The examples of uncritical transfer in this section highlight a tendency for adopting policies and ideas by national governments and the challenges in implementation of externally designed concepts that can be incompatible with local contexts and values. A central premise of this study is that the global movement of policies and ideas cannot be explored without interrogating the power relations that create an environment in which some values, ideas, research modalities and policies are deemed more worthy than others. In the light of this, the next section explores the ways in

which international development agencies exert their power and influence to promote Western-led agendas.

Educational Development in the EFA era

In this section, the focus is placed on the global context of EFA, in support of Strutt and Kepe (2010, p.376) who argue that 'EFA provides a framework in which to analyse the current structure within which development decision making and implementation occurs in the 21st century'. Although there is a long history in the postcolonial period in Africa of the influence of global trends on national priority setting, since 1990 there has been a remarkable shift towards what appears at first glance to be a largely homogenised global consensus for educational development. In this section, I will unpack this global consensus and interrogate both the power relations which underpin the priorities and the extent to which 'education for all' has been 'decided by all'.

In 1990, the World Conference on Education for All took place in Jomtein, Thailand with 155 different countries taking part and jointly coordinated by the World Bank and the UN agencies of UNDP, UNICEF and UNESCO. As shown in box 2.1, the Jomtein conference, and the EFA framework agreed at it, was intended to promote basic education for all in its widest remit. The six EFA agreed dimensions were across all levels of education. However, in practice they soon were condensed to have a much narrower emphasis upon free primary education with the result that it has become 'the somewhat misleading rubric of EFA' (Mundy, 2006, p.23).

EFA Goals	Jomtein (1990)	Dakar (2000)
1.	The expansion of early childhood care and development activities	Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantage children
2.	Universal access to, and completion, of primary (or whatever level of education is considered as 'basic') education by 2000	Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality
3.	Reducing the rates of adult illiteracy, with special emphasis on female literacy by 2000	Ensuring that learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes
4.	Improved achievements in learning based on clearly defined levels of performance;	Achieving 50% improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults
5.	Expansion of basic education for youths and adults;	Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality
6.	Improved dissemination of skills, knowledge and values for sustainable development	Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognised and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.

Box 2.1: 6 EFA suggested dimensions of 1990 and goals of 2000 (cited in Torres, 2000, p.6)

During the 1990s, a number of low and middle income countries introduced FPE policies. However, many countries, including Kenya, did not follow this trend until the early 2000s following the Dakar reaffirming of the EFA pledge in which specific targets were set, as shown in Box 2.1. There were a number of important shifts in the content and form of the outputs of the Dakar conference. Whereas following Jomtein, the proposed dimensions were recommended, the outputs from Dakar were prescriptive in the form of specific targets (King, 2007b). There was also a distinct

shift in the spirits of this conference as compared to its predecessor in Jomtein. Torres (2000, p.2) describes the mood at Jomtein as a positive one looking forward to a promising future while Dakar was overshadowed by the increase in both poverty and the digital divide and 'faced with the crass contrast between rhetoric and reality'. 2000 also witnessed the formation of the MDGs which elevated education within the wider development agenda and embedded education within other goals as is further explained in box 2.2.

What is important here is that the EFA goals and MDGs have done much to shape education policies throughout sub-Saharan Africa and have dramatically changed how educational development is defined and enacted. In the following section, I will show the ways in which this can be understood by viewing development as discourse. However, it is first important to summarise some of the main critiques that have accompanied the goals since some of these are pertinent to this study. These critiques include the fact that they encourage unsustainable expansion, continue a level of dependency on external donors and concentrate more on the outcomes of education rather than the processes. Of particular relevance to this study is (1) the impact that the introduction of a target-setting culture has had on the way in which quality is defined, discussed and measured (as discussed later in this chapter), (2) the fact that agendas are formulated and monitored in the North and (3) the promotion of a one-size-fits all approach which fails to recognise contextual differences and the challenges of large-scale implementation.

The Millennium Development Goals

The Millennium Development Goals are to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, achieve universal primary education, promote gender equality and empowerment of women, reduce child mortality, improve maternal health, combat HIV/AIDs, malaria and other diseases, ensure environmental sustainability and develop a global partnership for development.

There are eighteen specific targets related to these eight goals including the education target: 'ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling'. Education is explicitly stated in the second and third MDG (the target for the promotion of gender equality is 'eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education by 2015').

Education also has an implicit foundation to the other MDGSs since there has been research, especially within the World Bank, which suggests a relationship between educational attainment and a reduction in child mortality, improvements in maternal health and lower rates of HIV/AIDs and other diseases. Furthermore, it can be argued that the promotion of environmental sustainability cannot be achieved without an improvement in environmental education.

Box 2.2: The Millennium Development Goals

The first significant critique is the process by which the EFA and MDGs were defined and decided (King, 2007b; Unterhalter, 2012). Taking the example of the 1990 version of the EFA framework, King (2007b) has argued that this was largely decided in the North by revealing that there was minimal involvement of Southern governments, researchers, NGOs and wider civil society in drawing up the Jomtein declaration. The fact that 155 national delegates attended the Jomtein conference and signed up to the treaty 'is judged to be sufficient to suggest that the Jomtein agenda was widely shared across the world – which it almost certainly was not' (King, 2007b, p.381). Rather, they were drawn up by 'an inner circle of development assistance specialists and then later endorsed by the majority of governments and international organisations' (Unterhalter, 2012, p.79). Shepherd (2008) has further argued that the lack of widespread participation in the goals' formulation has left many viewing them as 'northern', muting debate in the South. In my experience in Kenya, debates around education priorities are anything but muted. Rather, there have not been appropriate

mechanisms in place for these debates to enter the global arena and there has been little to suggest that the 'inner circle' would privilege such opinions.

This brings into question how far the goals can reflect local and national priorities if there was little debate and consultation regarding what they may look like. With little practitioner, parent, student, local NGO or researcher involvement in the consultation approach, it is difficult to see how far the goals could do this. Similar to the critiques regarding the decontextualised approach to education policymaking discussed above, many question how one-size-fits all approaches can be relevant to all countries. Thus, context, again, emerges as a key theme, as Lewin (2007, p.578) explains, 'EFA does not pay attention to national and regional differences since it is a global movement and set of aspirations that exists in tension with national cultural and political contexts'; in implementation, it translates into a 'policy based on the exigencies of external assistance rather than a dynamic understanding of need and capability and a failure to recognise diverse starting points'. Other authors have pointed to the role of the international development agencies in the implementation of EFA since they often 'undermine national ownership of education policy in their drive to implement the latest development orthodoxy' (King, McGrath & Rose, 2007, p.349). Samoff (1999, p.250) explains the way in which the global agendas have produced an 'irresolvable tension' in educational policymaking for many countries in postcolonial Africa:

In most countries, the pressure to expand access to and improve the quality of education has been enormous. At the same time, poverty and the need to address simultaneously multiple high priority goals make it difficult, perhaps impossible, to fund the education expansion and improvement that are demanded. Convinced of their necessity but unable to fund the expansion and improvement of education, African countries have turned to external agencies for assistance.

This highlights the sense of necessity which brings tensions between externally-designed and insisted-upon priorities and national needs. King (2007a) has shown that there is a long history in Kenya of balancing national priorities for post-basic education and global emphasis on primary education. There are signs that there has been an intensification of the tensions, as is further explained in Chapter 3 which places the study within the Kenyan secondary education policy context. Hayman (2007) has shown that similar tensions exist in policymaking in Rwanda. She convincingly argues that there has been a significant shift in educational priority setting in Rwanda in recent years with Rwanda's necessity to subscribe to global targets and donor priorities creating real tension within the Ministry of Education (MoE) between implementing FPE and investing in higher education. The latter has been identified as a national development aim for prioritising specialist knowledge developed in higher education. This last example is particularly illustrative of the power relations that come into play in policymaking between what Brock-Utne and Garbo (2009, p.7) describe as 'givers controlling the purses and recipients having the choice between accepting the preconditions of the payers or abstaining from their paternalistic charities'.

Closely related to the critiques of decontextualisation are those that the EFA agenda and the 'new development compact' have intensified difficulties regarding global policy setting and in-country implementation. As with Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) before it, it is argued that the simplistic face of the global EFA agenda has masked both the complexity of the relationship between education, development, the political economy and the challenge of development (King & Rose, 2005; Mundy, 2006). EFA thus holds its 'unassailable ideological position' and hides

the challenges that come with implementation (Barrett *et al.*, 2006, p.8). Two examples from Tanzania and Kenya serve to offer just a glimpse of such challenges for implementing an externally-designed priority. A study by Kamunde (2010) charts the difficulties that head teachers have faced in turning the FPE policy into practice in challenging circumstances of surging student enrolment and increased workload. He particularly critiques the fact that that they had no involvement in developing the policy yet were burdened with a substantial workload and the numerous issues that came with implementation. The critical narrative of Wedgwood (2007) regarding the Tanzanian experience identifies similar issues and is particularly illuminating regarding the impact the drive to universalise primary education has had on quality. For Wedgwood (2007, p.387), 'quality was compromised to such an extent that the schooling available to the majority was of very little value and it was only a richer minority who were able to access post-primary education'. In fact, by 2000, there was a joke that the acronym UPE actually stood for Ualimu Pasipo Elimu (teaching without education in Swahili). The description by Wedgwood (2007) of large proportions of students dropping out, and teachers, with very little training, being expected to teach more than 100 students in overcrowded classrooms lacking resources, is not an unfamiliar one in the East African context.

The emphasis placed on quality in the reaffirmed EFA goals of 2000 reflects some recognition of the challenges of implementation among the global community. However, it remains the reality for many head teachers, teachers and students across East Africa. Perhaps in a move towards universalising any level of education, this is unavoidable in some contexts. The principal point here is that more emphasis on

participation in defining the goals and translating them for the local context could have enabled a slower, more structured and better resourced implementation process.

There has, thus, been clear influence of external actors and global agendas in the formulation of primary education policies with significant impact on subsequent implementation. Of critical importance to this study is the way in which these powerful actors and agendas have far reaching influence beyond the narrow parameters of the EFA and MDG remit. Secondary-level education may have been largely absent in the narrower focus of the agendas but there has been a rollover effect from primary to secondary level. For example, a number of African countries have sought to universalise secondary education in response to the growing numbers of students successfully completing primary education. I will look more closely at the FSE phenomenon in Chapter 4. However, it is worth noting one example here where the influence of the processes and challenges identified above has rolled over into the secondary level. In Uganda, when Universal Secondary Education (USE) was introduced with limited global encouragement, there was little involvement of head teachers or other school-based advocates in the policymaking process or attention paid to the capacity of the system (Chapman, Burton & Werner, 2010). Its implementation has been shown to have significant political influence with 'less attention...given to planning organizational strategy for implementation or for anticipating consequences of rapid expansion of secondary enrolments in the face of a shortage of funding and a sufficient cadre of qualified teachers (Chapman, Burton & Werner, 2010, p.81). The process for deciding and implementing the policy has, thus, been shown to bear huge similarities to that for UPE. Although there is less attention paid to secondary education in the international literature, this one example suggests that the global

agendas may have influenced this level of education through the one-size-fits all discourses that have been shown in this section to characterise policymaking across the African continent and further afield to the Global South. It is these global discourses and the power which underpins them that are the focus of the following section.

The power of development

It has been shown that global agendas, actors and ideas have a significant impact on educational policymaking and priority setting across the world; particularly so in low income contexts. In this section, it is argued that educational development is defined by a powerful few with some dominant values characterising much policymaking across the Global South. Two concepts which are useful tools for interrogating these values - discourse and neo-imperialism – are explained and explored.

Discourse

Viewing development as **discourse** has increasingly been seen as a useful way to analyse the complexities of educational development and the power relations which underlie these. Put simply, discourse is the process by which power is exercised through the production of knowledge and 'truth'. Discourses are, thus, 'about what can be said and thought, but also about who can speak, when, where and with what authority' (Ball, 1994, p.22). This draws heavily on Foucault (1972, p.49) who defines discourses as 'practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak ... Discourses are not about objects; they do not identify objects, they constitute them and in the practice of doing so conceal their own invention'. This means that all objects in discourse are constitutive rather than existing independently. Foucault

(1972, p.53) uses the example of mental illness as an object which was 'constituted by all that was said in all the statements that named it, divided it up, described it, explained it ...'. Thus, discourses through using scientific and authoritative language about these objects come to be seen as 'truth'. One of the central ways in which discourse carries power is by creating the discursive boundaries which 'provides a set of possible statements about a given area, and organises and gives structure to the manner in which a particular topic, object, process is to be talked about' (Kress, 1989, p.7). This means that a particular discourse becomes the dominant one and the language used becomes both normal and accepted.

Discourse is commonly misused regarding development by those who simplify its meaning to be a synonym for development dialogue. However, it is more accurate to see it in a more complex form situated within the power relations acknowledged in the development forum; the language used, the rules which decide what this is (and what it is not) and who decides what these rules are (Robinson-Pant, 2001). Understanding development as discourse shares the critical lens of other colonising discourses such as Said's *Orientalism*. As is further explained in Chapter 4, the central thesis of Said (1988, p.3) is that knowledge about the Orient was produced and reproduced to create a hegemonic discourse of 'the other' by 'making statements about it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it'. Similarly, Escobar (1994, 1995) critiques development and has likened it to a function for the production and management of the 'developing world' since the Second World War. Escobar (1995, p.213) questions the very concept of development in theory and practice and documents how the discursive parameters of development have defined how development works in low income countries:

Development can best be described as an apparatus that links forms of knowledge about the Third World with the deployment of forms of power and intervention, resulting in the mapping and production of Third World societies. Development constructs the contemporary Third World, silently, without our noticing it. By means of this discourse, individuals, governments and communities are seen as 'underdeveloped' and treated as such.

Escobar thus argues that there is a discourse of development through which particular Western-oriented concepts and practices for social change are created and reproduced. The language and discourse of development are seen to be systematically maintaining power relations. Discursive boundaries are set for what development looks like.

Neo-imperialism

As discussed above, policymaking takes place within the complex dynamics of a globalised world. From a postcolonial perspective, the diffusion of global ideas and presence of powerful actors in low income contexts can be explained as 'the emergence of a new form of Western imperialism that has as its purpose the incorporation of populations within the formerly so-called 'second' and 'third worlds' into a regime of global government' (Tikly, 2004, p.173). The concept of **neo-imperialism** draws heavily on Said (1993, p.6) and his definition of imperialism as 'the practice, the theory and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan centre ruling a distant territory [as compared with] colonialism, which is almost always a consequence of imperialism, is the implanting of settlements on distant territory'. This concept of neo-imperialism is central to this study's critical interrogation of the global influences on policymaking. Large scale multilateral agencies and NGOs are seen to serve a specific agenda and their discourses subordinate local knowledge and priorities. The discourse of development is thus understood as a mechanism for

external actors to control the definitions and practices of development (Tembo, 2003). If multi-lateral agencies have leadership over the policy formulated (or the knowledge constructed), postcolonial peoples continue to be subject to 'epistemological violence' (Spivak, 1999) while Eurocentric discourses 'serve the purpose of justifying the neo-colonial agenda' (Wane, 2008, p.190).

The concept of neo-imperialism has been used as a way to describe the powerful position of the USA across the world since the Second World War following Truman's inaugural speech in 1949 heralded by many as the starting point of development (Rist, 1997). The following quote is taken from this speech:

For the first time in history humanity possesses the **knowledge** and the skill to relieve the suffering of these people... I believe that we should make available to peace-loving peoples the benefits of our store of technical knowledge in order to **help them** realize their aspirations for a better life... What we envisage is a program of development based on the concepts of **democratic fair dealing**... Greater production is the key to prosperity and peace. And the key to greater production is a wider and more vigorous application of modern scientific and technical **knowledge**.

(Truman, 1949 cited in Naz, 2006, with my highlighting)

There are a number of key ideas of relevance here that I have highlighted in the text. Whereas previously development had been seen as something natural, it became something that could be performed by one country on another (under the auspice of help and justified through the more 'knowledgeable' making their expertise available) (Tikly, 2004). Furthermore, by appealing to democratic principles and human rights, development became something that was a moral prerequisite of all 'developed' countries. The analysis of Rist (1997) usefully documents this shift in discourse by highlighting how non-Western peoples were homogeneously labelled as 'underdeveloped'. The legitimisation aspect of the development discourse is of particular importance since it was explicitly put against colonialism and thus

discrediting it while keeping hegemony (Tikly, 2004). These authors have shown that, since this time, development has been one of the central tools for the continuation and legitimisation of neo-imperial power structures usually within the narrow discursive parameters formulated in the West.

The discourses which underlie EFA and educational development

To return to the EFA and MDG era, the concepts of discourse and neo-imperialism continue to be useful tools for interrogating the power relations and value-laden decisions made regarding education for all and development. As shown in the previous section, there has been increasing homogeneity to educational policymaking and priority setting globally in response to the EFA framework and the MDGs. We have seen how education has increasingly been seen by policymakers as a prerequisite for national development and global poverty reduction (Ilon, 1996; King & McGrath, 2002; Rose, 2003b; Samoff, 2008). As Tikly (2004, p.190) convincingly argues this has served to:

Reinforce the new imperialism through further limiting the capacity of low-income countries to determine their own educational agendas. Dependency and the resulting incapacity generated are reinforced through the disciplinary mechanisms of poverty-conditional lending, poverty reduction strategies and international target setting.

Many authors have shown how the education and development agenda has been characterised by the global diffusions of Western ideas underscored by particular values such as democracy and capitalism (Mundy, 2006; Samoff, 2007). Investment in education generally, but specifically primary schooling, has increasingly been seen as key to national development and has become one of what Chabbott (2003, p.5) describes as the 'standardised blueprints or models of how to 'do' development [that] tend to emerge and prevail'. As I showed in the previous section, the 'standardised

blueprint' associated with universalising primary education has had great impact not only on the provision of quality primary education globally, but also more widely in setting a specific approach to 'doing educational development' which has influenced the way that secondary education policies are defined and implemented. Crush (1995, p.3) has reflected that 'the discourse of development, the forms in which it ... establishes its authority ... are usually seen as self-evident and unworthy of attention'. This study has been developed from a positioning that the economic discourse of development is very much worthy of attention and the first research question seeks to critically interrogate those specific to quality education.

The dominant aid discourse promotes the link between education and economic development in the form of human capital (see Box 2.3). Over the past few decades, many have critiqued how a dominant aid discourse has brought a prevailing economic-utilitarian paradigm for educational research and practice (King & McGrath, 2002; Crossley & Watson, 2003; Samoff, 2007). The discourses of education are critiqued for becoming 'almost universal, dominated by a set of imperial assumptions concerning economic progress with notions of human capital and development becoming part of a broader discourse of capitalist triumphalism' (Samoff, 2007, p.57). As McGrath (2010, pp.248–249) has argued, this is not to assume that educationalists reject a relationship between education and development; rather, 'most educationalists would probably be fairly comfortable with the argument that there is a relationship...although they would disagree about its tightness and directionality [and] they would be far more nuanced in arguing that there is and/or should be a close relationship between levels of education and economic development.'

Human Capital

The first use of the term 'human capital' in modern economic literature was by Schultz (1971) in 1961 who argued that in the modern era it was the productive capacity of humans that had become far greater than all other forms of capital taken together. Put simply, 'one's human capital is based on 'something like knowledge and skills' acquired by an individual's learning activities' which can be used to make the individual more productive in their working life (Kwon Dae-Bong, 2009, p.2). In its translation to low income contexts, human capital theory has become almost exclusively associated with formal schooling; and often from the 1980s onwards specifically to formal primary education. Much of the early economic analysis regarding human capital theory focused upon high income countries; for example, Schultz argued that the German and Japanese economies were able to recover so quickly in the aftermath of the Second World War because of their highly educated populations who were more healthy and productive. However, since the 1970s, human capital theory has increasingly acted as the rationale for large scale investment in education in low income countries. This has also been heavily influenced by the perceived evidence to support the theory in post-war rapid economic development of South-East Asian economies where education was prioritised.

By viewing skills and knowledge as an investment in an individual's future economic productivity, economists aim to estimate returns to education for different educational levels and types of education. Rates of return analysis by World Bank researchers such as Psacharopoulos and Patrinos (2002) have explicitly linked years of education with personal and national development. Since the 1990s, the focus has very much shifted towards poverty alleviation. The foundation of World Bank endorsement of basic education is a belief that this is crucial in the stimulation of individual empowerment which in turn increases capacity to create income and break the poverty cycle. This has come with a more nuanced understanding of social welfare; an enabling environment for development has been prioritised rather than simply seeing development as an increase in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (Tikly & Barrett, 2011). For example, the relationship between educational attainment of mothers and fertility rates or child mortality rates is emphasised.

Box 2.3: Human Capital Theory

Furthermore, in low income contexts, the recognition that education and training can lead to future earning potential and ability to survive particularly in an informal economy is an important one, as Robeyns (2006, p.72) explains:

This human capital model of education certainly makes an important point, namely that skills and knowledge, acquired through education, are an important part of a person's income-generating abilities. Especially in the context of people living in severe poverty, this is very important, as having some basic skills or having a decent education can make all the difference between starving and surviving, and between merely surviving and having a decent life.

The main argument here is not whether the relationship between education and economic development is appropriate in, for example, the Kenyan context, but rather that the notion of human capital has become central to development discourse. Cerny (1990, p.205), more than twenty years ago, argued that there was a new 'master narrative' of development as the market solution. This master narrative has been widely criticised for the narrow definition placed on education by deeming it to be purely a process through which instrumental and economic outcomes can be achieved with little emphasis placed on the diverse and complex needs of learners (Rose, 2003b). For example, viewing the importance of expanding girls' education purely in terms of its benefits for reducing fertility rates has been critiqued for being solely instrumental and narrow (Unterhalter, 2007).

The World Bank has been the most influential multilateral organisation in shaping educational development in low income countries over the last fifty years. The emergence of a Western discourse around development has been associated by many with the increasingly powerful role of the World Bank in the post-war era. By 1999, the World Bank accounted for between 30 and 40% of global educational assistance. By the very nature of the institution, the World Bank strongly advocates economist theories of education and has continually promoted the human capital associated benefits of education. Jones (2006) and his historical analysis of the World Bank's discourse has been a significant work in this field. Jones (2006, p.242) characterises the World Bank as 'the assertive Bank [that] has tended to be a simplistic Bank' and accurately describes such assertiveness by stating that the Bank 'tends to declare ... in absolute terms as if its correctness were as clear as day'. The World Bank has created what Rose (2003b, p.83) has coined 'the black box' of education which 'remains

firmly shut other than in the labelling of financial costs and benefits'. This is particularly important because of the influence of the World Bank's approach to educational development has been wide reaching both to policymakers in the South and development agencies in the North in a process which one commentator has described as 'Worldbankification' (Brock-Utne, 2007).

The World Bank has, thus, been central in the formation of the discursive boundaries, or a set of possible statements, about the given area of education and development. Samoff (1996, p.265) acutely summarises the World Bank's role in developing authoritative language which is used in the rationale for 'development':

The development business spawns a standardised authoritative terminology, promulgated and reinforced by the World Bank's prominent role as research manager and publisher as well as source of funds. Within that terminology are embedded particular conceptions, orientations, prejudices and policy preferences. Many of the commonly employed terms treat as part of the environment – what is 'given' and, therefore, does not require explicit justification and is not subjected to critical attention – important issues that ought to be the focus of policy discussion.

The discursive parameters serve to simplify education which by its very nature is hugely complex. This argument is closely linked to other critiques including that the World Bank relies too heavily upon its own research and so does not encourage local research capacity, focuses too heavily on positivistic paradigms and sets unrealistic time deadlines (Jones, 2006, 2006).

The link between education and national development is often shown to be one of uncontested fact and it is supported by the elusive goal of the knowledge economy. There is a huge body of literature related to the concept of the knowledge economy and the influence of the World Bank in promoting it (Robertson, 2005). There is not

space here to discuss these at length but it is important to note that alongside human capital, the idea of building a knowledge economy has become an integral cog in the promotion of an economic approach to education and a very attractive notion to low income country governments looking to become globally competitive. As Ball (1998, p.122) has argued, terms such as knowledge economy have served to 'symbolise the increasing colonisation of education policy by economic policy imperatives'. One example of this comes from the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa. Akoojee and McGrath (2007, p.428) analyse the initiative and suggest that the identification of education and skills as crucial to national development 'is entirely in keeping with international trends in thinking about the impact of globalisation and the knowledge economy, which led policymakers to see education and skills as crucial to competitiveness'. Education is thus repositioned particularly by the World Bank as knowledge for economic development (Samoff, 2007). Critics further posit that the language used is self-explanatory thus making its adoption very attractive to national policymakers. The discourse of education for economic development has thus been shown to be very powerful and supported by concepts which are simplified and hide the complexities of education.

The economic approach may be the most widely critiqued of the global discourses but there is a growing body of literature which is showing that the rights-based approach has been increasingly dominant in the EFA era. The rights-based approach (see Box 2.4) and its accompanying frameworks for quality have become increasingly influential in the international literature since the formulation of the EFA and MDGs.

Human rights

The rights-based approach has been promoted strongly by the United Nations in line with their lead in the human rights movement from the 1990s onwards. It is also widely advocated by a number of the most influential non-government organisations operating in many countries of the world; for example UNICEF and Save the Children. A rights-based approach emphasises the process of education and the insurance that an individual child's rights are promoted through education as well as just in acquiring education. Thus, understanding students' diverse needs and learner centred pedagogy are emphasised; the promulgation of which has been widely critiqued as discussed Chapter 3. Good governance is also prioritised in the structure, content and process of education in this approach with an emphasis upon the relationship between government and its citizens (Levin, 1998). This means an emphasis upon inclusion, particularly for those who have traditionally been excluded from education.

The rights approach advocates the right of every child to education and the protection and promotion of rights in educational settings. It promotes access to basic education in a safe and enabling environment as a fundamental right of every child. It is the 'conceptual antipole' to viewing education in human capital terms; rather than viewing human beings as input factors for future economic productivity, they are viewed as individuals who deserve education based on moral and political concerns (Robeyns, 2006). Furthermore, in contrast to the human capital approach, it is supposed to be a more multi-dimensional and comprehensive model for educational development taking education's role beyond instrumental and economic aspects to include the intrinsic and cultural.

Box 2.4: Human Rights

It is clear to see that the concept of education as a human right has been one of the main explaining tools for the EFA agenda. In fact, it has been argued that the dominance of the EFA agenda in recent years relates to its ideological foundations in both the dominant discourses in international educational development. The rights-based and human capital approaches can both take ownership of it; the World Bank and UN agencies can both promote it. The elevation of education into the wider social goals of the development agenda can partly be explained by its bridging of the divide between neo-liberal and social welfare concerns (Mundy, 2006).

The language used by the rights-based agencies is very powerful. Just as the economic approach promises national development along the lines of what has been achieved in

the Western World, and the South-East economies, this approach pledges democratic values and ideals often associated with the West. The critique of learner-centred pedagogy by Tabulawa (2003) is applicable here. He argues that the promotion of a pedagogy based upon democratic values is an ideological decision on behalf of the international aid agencies wishing to promote a particular political positioning following the fall of the Berlin Wall. Although this argument is overtly antagonistic, it does raise questions about the promulgation of rights and how far the promotion of democratic principles can reflect neo-imperial power structures.

The UN promotes not only education as a human right but also as a process through which other rights can be attained. However, the interpretation of human rights in the MDGs and EFA agendas has been widely critiqued for being minimalist with the rich debate surrounding rights to, in and through education reduced to singular targets of completing primary schooling or ensuring basic literacy for young adults (Tomasevski, 2006).

While the role of the World Bank in defining global educational priorities has received critical attention, less has been written about the influences of the UN agencies and their promotion of a rights-based approach. The analysis by Jones (2005) of multilateralism, development and education offers an overview of the roles of UNICEF, UNESCO and UNDP alongside the World Bank in promoting education on the development agenda in the post-war era. His account highlights what he describes as 'the resilience of internationalism' in development and education and the values of the multilateral agencies which have underpinned policy and practice particularly since 1990. He concludes that these agencies have played a significant role 'in

lessening the discretion that individuals and local communities have over their education futures, in promoting essentially mono-cultural views of education (Jones, 2005, p.254). I purposively finish this section with this quote since it highlights an underlying argument central to this study. It is not so much whether it is an economic or right-based approach which is promoted at any given time in different national contexts that is important. Rather it is the promotion of 'mono-cultural', and one-size-fits-all approaches, that is of critical import. Furthermore, it has been shown in this section that international actors dominate the 'practice, theory and attitudes' in the development arena meaning that much other influence can be described as neo-imperial (Said, 1988). The dominant approaches can thus be understood as discursive; promoted in specific language, within particular power structures and with little attention paid to practice. Of particular relevance to this study is the shift within the global discourses to focus upon quality schooling as shown in the next section.

Educational Quality

In this final section, I focus particularly upon the conceptualisation of educational quality within education development before turning to the authors whose reconceptualisation of quality has fed into the conceptual framework for this study based on key themes of context and participation in defining quality. There is a huge body of literature regarding education quality; the majority of this is outside the scope of this study. In this section, I review the relevant literature related to how quality is conceptualised within the two dominant approaches to educational development discussed in the previous section. Quality has increasingly taken a central focus in the multilateral and bilateral agencies' reports in response to the widely acknowledged impact on quality that universalising primary education has had globally. Kendall (2007, p.702) explains the shift to a greater emphasis upon quality:

Given the political impossibility of rolling back educational expenses by cutting access, governments and international organizations are constrained in the practical responses available to them. Educational quality frameworks offer a response to this dilemma: the problem is not that basic schooling might not in fact result in certain types of state-level development, nor is it that it might not be the most important human right upon which for states to spend their resources. Instead, the problem is that the intervention, the educational service itself, is not of high enough quality to result in either the economic or the social changes imagined for it in previous development models.

Here, I analyse documents from multilateral agencies which have been influential in the development of uniform conceptualisations of quality in the EFA and MDG era. The dominant concepts which represent these conceptualisations of quality are revealed. It is argued that just as it has been shown that policy and development are complex terms underpinned by a powerful web of particular values, quality must be also be understood as discursive. This section casts light on how the concept of quality in education has been incorporated in the discourses that underpin development initiatives with the outcome that particular and one-size-fits-all conceptualisations of quality have become dominant and uncritically adopted into low income settings. It is important to begin this section by remembering that conceptualising quality education is an incredibly difficult thing to do because of the complex nature of the concept. Quality is often portrayed in logical frameworks and discussed using self-evident language. This can mean that the value-laden perspectives which underpin them are not given critical attention. As quoted above, Crush (1995) has argued that the discourses of development are often seen as self-evident and unworthy of attention. Exploring the value-basis of different conceptualisations of quality is of critical importance to this study.

The dominant discourses of education quality

From an economist perspective, there has been increasing acknowledgement of the importance of quality for enabling the expected outcomes of education for individual and national development. Quality is defined by how investment in education can be maximised for definite gains (Sayed & Ahmed, 2011). This approach focuses on measurable inputs and outputs which include 'enrolment ratios and retention rates, rates of return on investment in education in terms of earnings and cognitive achievement as measured in national or international tests' (Barrett *et al.*, 2006, p.2). In 1991, two authors from within the World Bank, Lockheed and Verspoor (1991), published *Improving Primary Education in Developing Countries*. Although in 1991 there may have been little attention paid in the global discourses on quality, this text would become hugely influential for promoting a school effectiveness approach for conceptualising educational quality for economic development. The rationale for increasing educational effectiveness is that it will unequivocally produce 'greater educational efficiency' (Lockheed & Verspoor, 1991, p.41). The focus is very much at the school level with the key elements for an effective school being identified as an orderly school environment, an emphasis on academic achievement and instructional leadership.

In the intervening years, effectiveness has arguably become the most widely used concept in the economic discourses. *Schools Count: World Bank Project Designs and the Quality of Primary Education in Sub-Saharan Africa* by Heneveld and Craig (1996) has been a key text in proposing a school effectiveness framework for the African continent. The authors outline sixteen inputs and school-related factors that must be considered for quality student outcomes to be achieved across the four themes

of supporting inputs, school climate, enabling conditions and the teaching/learning process as shown in figure 2.1. As the title suggests, their principle argument is that schools count; an effective school will produce high quality outcomes for their learners. Students are expected to be effective in their learning, teachers in their teaching, head teachers in their leadership and the local community in their financial support, curriculum in its content and examinations in its assessment. Put simply, schools need to be effective for students to receive a quality education.

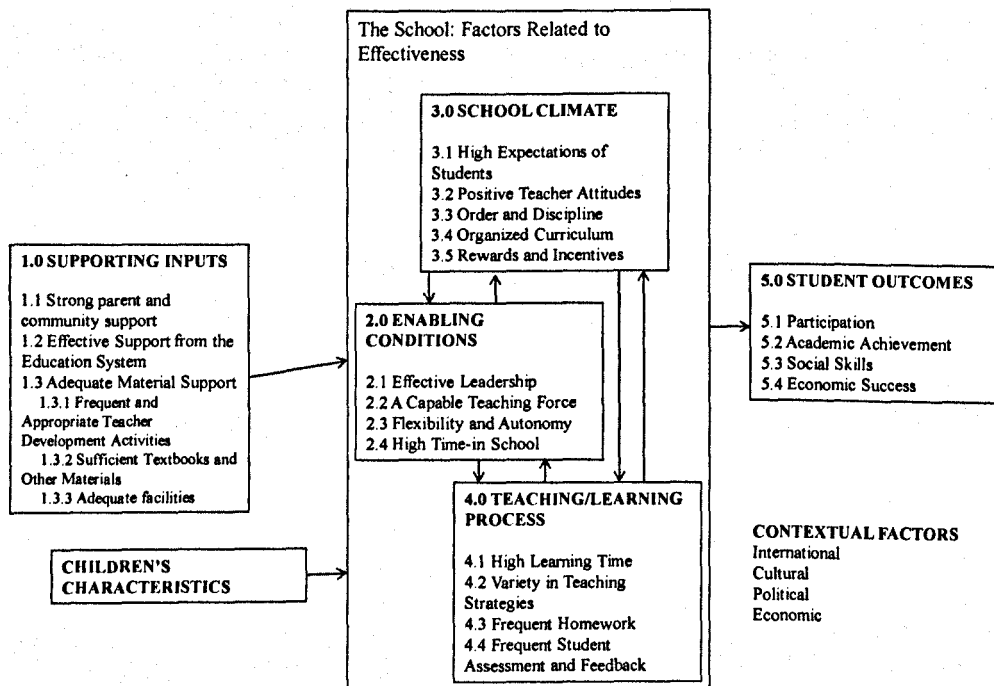


Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework: Factors that Determine School Effectiveness (Heneveld and Craig, 1996)

Hanushek and Woessmann (2007) are arguably the most vocal proposers of the need for quality education for determining economic growth in recent years within the World Bank as shown in *The Role of School Improvement in Economic Development*. Despite the title of the paper, it is representative of a wider rhetoric within the World

Bank of quality replacing school improvement and a growing emphasis on non-institutional factors. Using cognitive skills as the measure of educational quality, they make country-to-country comparisons through PISA and International Literacy Tests. The majority of the data used comes from high income countries but they extend the argument to include low income settings where they present evidence that educational quality has a strong impact on individual earnings, social returns and national economic growth. Hanushek and Woessmann's state that there are three key institutional features that will bring about quality schooling:

- Choice/competition;
- Decentralisation & autonomy of schools; and
- Accountability and teacher incentivising.

The first proposes that parents should have the choice to seek out the best schools for their children and that the pressure of demand should result in schools being more effective and attracting the highest quality staff. This assumes that privatisation brings higher quality education which is something that has been widely disputed in low income countries and which I would strongly argue against from firsthand experience in Ugandan secondary schools. The second feature in the model of Hanushek and Woessmann (2007, p.70) is a promotion of local decision making, fiscal decentralisation and parental involvement as they argue 'across countries, students tend to perform better in schools that have autonomy in personnel and day-to-day decisions, in particular where there is accountability'. Although the majority of examples come from high income contexts, they do refer to research which shows the positive effects of parental involvement, and enhanced community involvement for improving student learning in El Salvador, Argentina, Mexico and the Philippines. Lastly the authors argue that despite little evidence for its importance in low income

countries reliable school accountability systems are essential for good quality education. Aligned to their recognition of the pivotal role of good teaching, they argue that incentivising good teaching practice measured by student results makes teachers more accountable to the learners. They stress the importance of teaching quality over 'simple resource policies – reducing class size, increasing teacher salaries...and so forth' since they argue that there is 'little consistent impact on student performance when the overall institutional structure is not changed' (Hanushek & Woessmann, 2007, p.77). Hanushek and Woessmann's framework is thus highly systematic but does give greater acknowledgement to the processes needed to achieve desired educational outcomes than other economist accounts.

In the main paper in recent years regarding secondary education, *Expanding Opportunities and Building Competencies for Young People A New Agenda for Secondary Education*, the authors acknowledge that World Bank strategy since the 1980s has prioritised primary and tertiary education at the expense of the secondary level. The paper proposes placing secondary education as the corner-stone and key middle link of the education system in low and middle income countries since 'the provision of secondary education of good quality is seen as a crucial tool for generating the opportunities and benefits of social and economic development' (Cuadra & Moreno, 2005, p.xvi). It is highly questionable whether this goal has been achieved within the World Bank but the paper does give insight into how a quality secondary education is defined. No clearly defined quality framework is presented but quality is an elusive term used throughout the document. Key components discussed in relation to quality are:

(1) A relevant curriculum: this relates to the concern that in many countries the secondary curriculum does not reflect the needs and priorities of the contemporary economy:

In many developing and transition countries the secondary education curriculum remains profoundly abstract and alien to social and economic needs. It is almost completely driven by high-stakes public examinations that in many of these countries were introduced by the colonial powers and that still hold the key to university access and to elite professional jobs. Abstract, fact-centered, and decontextualised narrative knowledge prevails in the secondary curriculum and continues to be used for selective purposes in a setting of scarce educational and job opportunities, causing high dropout and high failure rates among secondary school students

(Cuadra & Moreno, 2005, p.78)

They propose a secondary curriculum which promotes meta-cognitive skills so that students not only have declarative knowledge (knowing that), they also have procedural knowledge (know-how). They learn participatory and teamwork skills, problem-solving, accessing, selecting and evaluating knowledge and learning how to locate themselves in the future employment market by making effective decisions.

(2) Equitable access: equity is primarily discussed in relation to access and the need to marry demand and supply so as to make secondary education more widely available. There is some discussions of the recognition that girls are less likely to attend secondary school in some countries but this fact is not developed; nor is the concept of equity within the school compound or though the curriculum. The report also highlights the importance of teaching ICT at the secondary level so as to reduce urban-rural and gender inequities in ICT knowledge.

(3) Effective school governance: Hargreaves' three forms of capital – intellectual, social and organisational – are adapted for secondary level and are used as factors of effective schooling. Intellectual capital relates to the knowledge and skills of the teachers, staff and parents to support students in their learning while social

capital promotes teamwork and cooperation across the student and teaching bodies. Organisational capital focuses on effective governance and structures and the capability of the head teacher to ensure a safe and orderly school environment (Hargreaves, 2003). Cooperation between parents, the community and teachers under the leadership of the head teacher is highlighted reflecting World Bank policies of decentralisation.

One section of the report particularly highlights the essential differences between the learners at primary and secondary level and the incompatibility of many elements of secondary education system with the young people within it. These include the increased control exerted by teachers as compared to primary school when students tend to crave self-autonomy and mounting evaluation pressure coming when students can have low self-esteem (Cuadra & Moreno, 2005, pp.30–31). Although these points are made in very loose and far-reaching terms, it shows some understanding of the unique challenges at the secondary level which are rarely recognised in the international literature.

The key concepts that emerge across these papers are the promotion of quality for determining economic growth underpinned by key concepts of decentralisation, competition and accountability. These ideals tend to be based on an assumption that they will ensure more effective teaching and learning alongside more efficient management. What transpires from these World Bank documents regarding education quality is that market-led solutions are seen to be the answer (Tikly, 2011). Specific to the school effectiveness models, Yu (2007) has argued that the success or failure of a particular intervention needs to be contextually sensitive; something which is not widely recognised in the school effectiveness literature. This approach is further

critiqued for its uncritical transfer of an approach which had been widely used in high income countries (Barrett *et al.*, 2007; Fertig, 2000). Despite little evidence to support the school effectiveness model in the African context, it continues to be widely promoted with little attention paid to adapting it to the diverse contexts, particularly for those struggling to cope with the rapid enrolment increase in response to universalising primary education. As Tikly (2011, p.7) has argued, the danger of using an input-output model, which characterises all the school effectiveness frameworks, is that they 'lead to a "one-size-fits-all" approach to quality that is insensitive to the learning needs of different groups of learners and diverse learning environments'. Such a one-size-fits-all approach further determines the discursive boundaries within which educational quality can be defined with little manoeuvring space for qualitative or more contextualised elements to enter the quality debate.

The quality frameworks within the rights tradition have been designed, to some extent, in response to the critiques posited in the previous section regarding the fact that rights had been distilled to minimalist definitions of getting children into school. A quality education is one which enables rights not only to education but also one which enables the realisation of rights through education. Furthermore, rights in education are emphasised. For example, every child should have the right to learning in a safe environment and be able to participate fully in both their education and the governance structures of the school. The rights-based approach to quality education placed greater emphasis on the processes within the classroom. This has been welcomed by many as an antidote to the economist approach which has been critiqued for condensing classroom processes into the 'black box of education'. As Pigozzi (2008, p.1), an influential author within the UN regarding education quality, argues

there is a real need ‘for a new approach to understanding education quality ... because the current understanding with its focus on inputs and, increasingly, outputs is no longer functional’. Quality within the rights-based tradition defines education in humanist terms with an emphasis on the individual’s general development beyond the narrow parameters of economic outputs.

The Pigozzi framework shown in Figure 2.2, is designed to capture the needs of an individual learner and enable the right processes to meet their needs for successful learning outcomes.

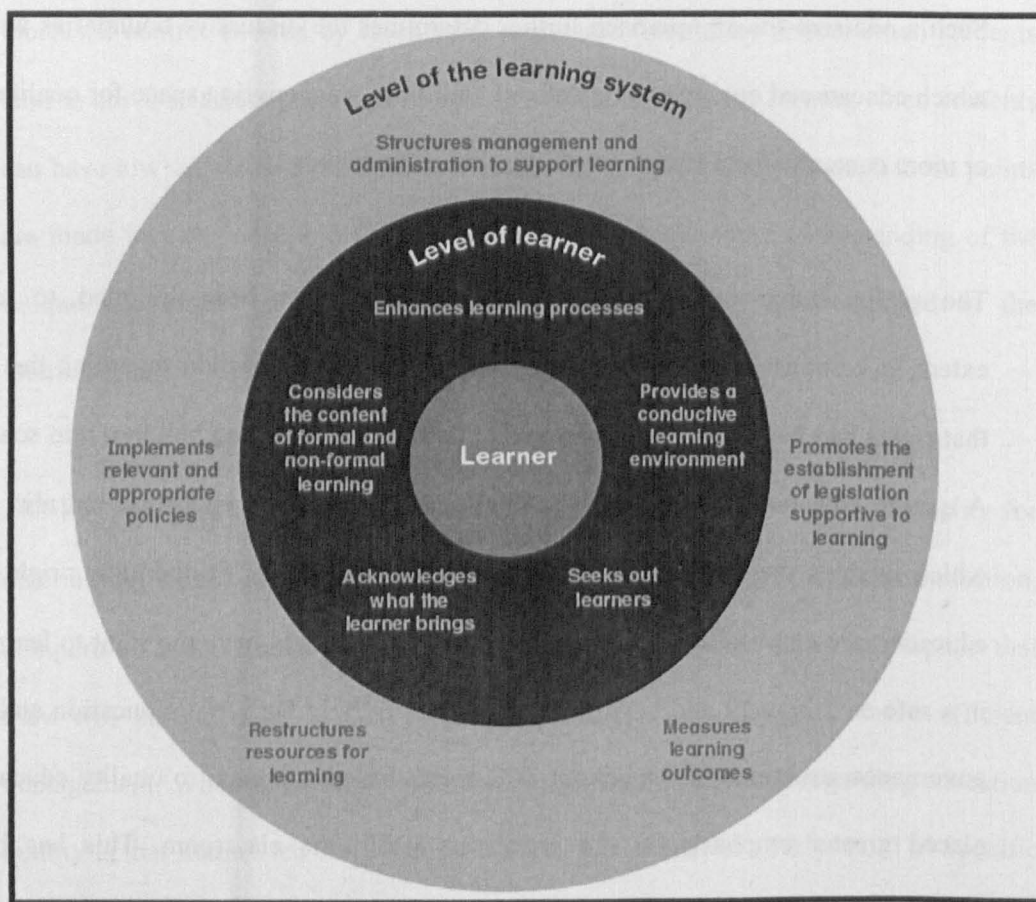


Figure 2.2: UNESCO Inter-Agency Task Team on Education Model (Pigozzi 2008)

The language used is particularly illuminating – learner or learning is used twelve times; teacher (or related terminology) is not mentioned once in the framework.

In the early nineties, a commission was established by UNESCO regarding educational quality. Its fifteen member delivered a report in 1996 entitled 'Learning: the treasure within'; it is also often called the Delors (1996) report after the commission's leader. *Learning: the treasure within* was to represent UNESCO's vision for global education based on its four pillars:

Learning to know: 'this type of learning is concerned less with the acquisition of structured knowledge than with the mastery of learning tools' and primarily involves learning to think in a critical manner and the development of communication skills;

Learning to do: this focused upon the development of skills but extended this from solely the preparation for industrial work to wider vocational training. There is also some contextualisation and emphasis upon life skills such as dealing with situations;

Learning to live together: this pillar encourages education for getting along with others both within the close family, community and wider nation and to advocate participation within society; and

Learning to be: The final strand is particularly philosophical and focuses upon the development of each individual's potential.

This framework thus emphasises the purpose of education and the social development of each individual rather than the institution of the school.

The *child-friendly school model* is UNICEF's quality framework and is the one that is most visible in Kenyan education policy and practice. It is based on two key principles that a child should be both child-seeking and child-centred. For the former, the UNICEF child-friendly school manual suggests that schools should actively

identify excluded children from the local community (UNICEF, 2009). The latter emphasises a holistic education meaning that a quality education is not only defined as one which promotes child-centred pedagogies within the classroom context but also goes beyond teaching and learning to also include the health and safety of school facilities. As is explained in the child-friendly school manual, 'the focus is on the needs of the child as a whole, not just on the 'school bits' that educators traditionally feel responsible for... [meaning] multidimensional coverage of quality and a holistic concern for the child's needs' (UNICEF, 2009, pp.2, ch.1). Quality is primarily defined in terms of equity and inclusion of all children as shown by the phrase in large print on the inside of the front cover of the child-friendly school model: 'quality education is education that works for every child and enables all children to achieve their full potential' (UNICEF, 2009).

The insurance of a safe and protective learning environment is a foundation of the child-friendly school model. In practice this means anti-violence policies and mechanisms to allow students to report abuse from teachers and fellow students. Closely related to this is the concept that a school has a responsibility to promote the health, both physical and emotional, of all learners. This means providing school meals, safe drinking water and sanitary facilities. Schools are also expected to offer services more normally associated with healthcare facilities including health checks, immunisation, de-worming campaigns and vitamin A supplements. The child-friendly model emphasises the role of community-engagement and encourages partnerships between parents, teachers and children. The following quote from the UNICEF child-friendly manual explains why community links are deemed to be so critical to every child's education:

Learning does not begin when children walk through the school doors nor does it end when they exit for the day. It takes place all the time and everywhere, throughout life. There is a pedagogic dimension to the links between schools and homes and localities. Children bring to school their family and community beliefs, practices, knowledge, expectations and behaviours. Similarly, when they return from school they bring back to their homes and communities new forms of knowledge, practices, behaviours, attitudes and skills....Linking schools and communities is widely recognized as good pedagogic practice (UNICEF, 2009, p.2, ch.4)

The rights-based and inclusive element refers to the concept of proactively seeking those out of school and encouraging their enrolment. Being gender-sensitive not only refers to the promotion of equality in enrolment and achievement across girls and boys but also to aim to eliminate gender stereotyping and guarantee gender-sensitive facilities, resources and curricula. A school which is deemed to be academically effective is one where teachers must use child-centred and participative teaching methods so students learn relevant knowledge and skills. All of the frameworks discussed here are explicitly, or implicitly, related to primary education given the organisations' prioritization of the right of all children to access to a quality basic education. Considerations for secondary education are not made.

Across the three frameworks, there are two key themes which emerge. The first is a clear emphasis on the disadvantaged learners who tend to be excluded from formal education. For example, one of the main features of a child-friendly school is that it is a child-seeking school with responsibility placed on the management to seek out children in the local community who are not attending school. There is also a clear focus on the processes of education - the Pigozzi framework offers a clear visual representation of this focus.

While this emphasis on processes in the classroom has been widely welcomed, it can have the consequence that too much focus is placed on what happens within the classroom rather than the wider school context. Other critiques of quality within the rights tradition include that of Tikly and Barrett (2011, p.9) who have critiqued the rights-based frameworks for overemphasising the individual learner. They argue that there is a tendency to atomise the learner and focus on their learning without taking enough account of the socio-economic contextual factors which affect what they bring to school. Furthermore, while the definitions of quality tend to be more complex than within the economic tradition, they can read like a wish list of everything a quality education should entail. This makes it difficult to promote their use in the East African contexts where I have worked. Moreover, while they promote community participation in the practice of education, there is little evidence of involving civil society or the wider population of potential stakeholders in the defining education quality. This means that they remain embedded with the Eurocentric values and open to the same criticisms shown in the previous section for the rights discourse more widely.

In concluding this section, it is important to note that across the two dominant approaches there is very little written with reference to secondary education. The only exception to this is the World Bank report which focuses on this level of education (Cuadro & Moreno, 2005). However, quality is not presented in a framework meaning that it has little transferability into the wider literature regarding quality education. The emphasis on primary education in the quality frameworks discussed in this section is not surprising given the global focus on this level of education in recent

years. However, it has important implications for this study where the spotlight is placed on secondary education.

Reconceptualising education quality

The critiques given in the previous section, and more broadly to the insufficiency of economic and rights-based approaches to educational development, point to the inability of universal discourses to conceptualise the complex and varied reality of quality educational practice. Some authors have taken a capabilities approach to develop a more nuanced perspective on education (see Box 2.5). As Tikly (2011, p.9) explains, the capabilities approach is a combination and further development of both the rights and human capital approaches:

From a capabilities perspective both economic growth and the realization of human rights are important in their own terms but also as a means for achieving fundamental freedoms and wellbeing both at an individual and at a collective level and it is this wider vision of development that underpins the approach....in keeping with human capital concerns... education [has] an instrumental value in terms of supporting livelihoods, generating income and reducing human insecurity. Departing from the human capital approach ... education [is identified] as having a great deal of intrinsic worth as a capability in its own right.

The approach by Tikly and Barrett (2011) offers a potential conceptual tool for understanding education quality. This approach draws on both capabilities and social justice to develop a conceptualisation of quality which is both more comprehensive and takes into account the socio-political contexts that impact education. It is the outcome of 'Implementing Education Quality in Low Income Countries' (EdQual), a five-year research programme consortium funded by DfID to inform the organisation's initiatives for improving quality of education in low-income countries. The EdQual framework for understanding educational quality in low income countries draws on principles of capabilities and social justice. The framework has only recently

been disseminated but it has the potential to be influential in bridging academia and educational practice by developing an alternative approach to viewing education quality.

The basic premise of the capabilities approach is that ‘development consists of the removal of various types of unfreedoms that leave people with little choice and little opportunity of exercising their reasoned agency’ (Sen, 1999, p.xii). Rather than seeing development primarily in terms of economic growth at the national level, this approach has a wider social agenda which focuses upon personal well-being. Nussbaum (2000) has proposed ten central human capabilities which she sees as the core entitlements for humans to live a life with dignity. The capabilities thesis was developed in response to a critique of other approaches to development which focus on commodities and standard of living rather than well-being (Walker & Unterhalter, 2007). Of these, the capability of senses, imagination and thought is directly related to education as Nussbaum explicitly associates this with access to basic education (Nussbaum, 2000). Walker (2005) presents eight capabilities identified among participants from her own work in South Africa which have particular relevance to the current study. They are autonomy, knowledge, social relations, respect and recognition, aspiration, voice, bodily integrity and health and emotional integrity. A number of authors have developed the capabilities approach to education and highlight its role in development for both intrinsic and instrumental reasons (Walker & Unterhalter, 2007). Education is also instrumentally important in its expansion of other capabilities. For example, an educated woman may allow her to leave an abusive marriage or be able to take part in politics.

Box 2.5: Capabilities

A good quality education is defined as one that ‘provides all learners with the capabilities they require to become economically productive, develop sustainable livelihoods, contribute to peaceful and democratic societies and enhance individual well-beings’ (Tikly & Barrett, 2011, p.9). It draws heavily on Fraser’s three dimensions of social justice of redistribution, recognition and participation. Box 2.6 shows the key policy priorities that the EdQual findings recommend with the caveat that ‘it needs to be interpreted and set against careful analysis of local needs and realities’ (Tikly, 2011, p.12). The framework is based on three key principles of inclusion, relevance and democratic participation as shown in Figure 2.3. The first draws on Fraser (2008) and her concepts of redistribution and recognition in ensuring

that quality education is inclusive of a range of learners. For example, Tikly (2011, p.9) highlights the importance of materials for all students which are ‘appropriate to the curriculum, environment, learners’ cognitive level, their language proficiency(ies) and multiple social identities’. A quality education is identified as needing to be relevant so that learning outcomes are useful to graduates and their community and are those which they value.

Quality Inputs	Key processes underlying a good quality education
Suitably trained, experienced and motivated teachers	A national debate on education quality
Head teacher Training	Improved accountability and parent/community voice
Appropriate textbooks and learning materials	Effective assessment, monitoring and evaluation of quality
Investing in basic infrastructure and resources including ICTs	A relevant and inclusive curriculum and pedagogy
School feeding, child health and early childhood development	School, home and community links

Box 2.6: Policy priorities of the EdQual framework

Of particular importance for this study is the concept of democratic participation which, put simply, is the promotion of mechanisms to enable communities to share what educational outcomes they deem relevant and the capabilities which they value. This draws on the capabilities literature where the capabilities associated with a good quality education are both contextually grounded and decided at the local level. Tikly and Barrett (2011) thus promote the importance of public dialogue concerning the types of capabilities that students, parents, local communities and national governments have reason to value. They also draw on Fraser (2005, p.75) and her concept of social justice as the parity of participation:

According to this radical-democratic interpretation of the principle of equal moral worth, justice requires social arrangements that permit all to participate as peers in social life. Overcoming injustice means dismantling institutionalized obstacles that prevent some people from participating on a par with others, as full partners in social interaction.

Fraser further argues for the importance of analysing the political in the both the distribution and recognition of justice, both of which are power-laden with the powerful determining ‘who is included, and who excluded, from the circle of those entitled to a just distribution and reciprocal recognition’ (Fraser, 2005, p.74). In drawing on Fraser, Tikly and Barrett (2011) acknowledge the political nature of the debate around educational quality. Although there has been a call for more democratic participation in the practice of quality education from the economic and rights-based approaches, this is the only framework which actively encourages local involvement in defining quality education and stimulating democratic debate.

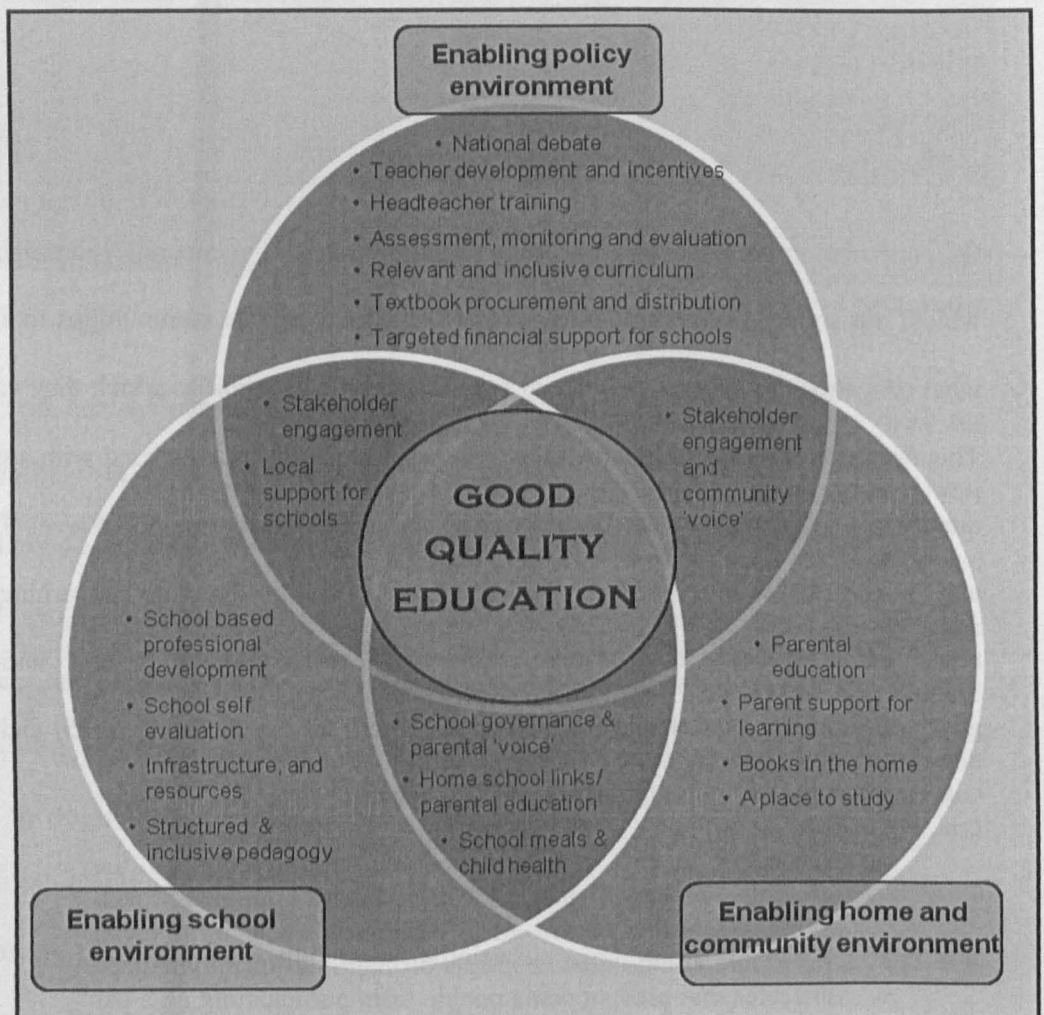


Figure 2.3: EdQual context-led framework for implementing education quality

Context is the other element of this approach which has significant relevance for this study. Where the EdQual framework particularly stands out for me is in its recognition of the interlinking environments of the policy, school and home as compared with other models which have prioritized the school context over the others. By presenting the environments in a venn diagram, the importance of how these different contexts interact and how they all need to be considered is emphasised for enabling a quality education. This focus on context across the policy, school and community levels is be influenced by the comparative literature discussed at the start of this chapter which highlights the uncritical transfer of educational policies and ideas, globally. Sayed and Ahmed (2011, p.105), who draw on Tikly and Barrett's work, similarly argue for the importance of context in understanding educational quality by conceptualising it as 'the interaction between what learners bring to learning (learner characteristics), what happens in the learning space such as school/classroom setting (enabling inputs), what happens to individuals as a consequence of education (outcomes) and the context within which the activity takes place'. This argument is important since it firstly highlights the need to understand the local community within which education takes place. It is not enough to make a school effective if no attention is paid to the out-of-school factors which impact on student learning both at home and in school. EdQual analysis of the Southern and East African Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality (SACMEQ) highlights the importance of the home environment in determining education quality for grade 6 learners in Southern and East Africa (Smith, 2011; Smith & Barrett, 2011). The analysis indicates that the home environment is a particularly significant factor for the most socio-economically disadvantaged students who are more likely to lack basic

resources and be exposed to diseases – two of the predictors for low level literacy and numeracy. However, Tikly and Barrett (2011) and Sayed and Ahmed (2011) both argue that context is more than the out-of-school factors from the local community. Rather it takes into account the context of the school itself. This is a critical point for this study since it shows that the context of a secondary school may share some characteristics with a primary school but it may also be fundamentally different in a number of ways.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented the key concepts that are central to this study. It has been shown that national policymaking does not take place in a vacuum; rather the intensification of globalisation, the introduction of global agendas and targets and the presence of powerful agencies and actors has further developed an enabling environment for much uncritical policy borrowing, the seeking of best practice and the promotion of one-size-fits-all approaches to educational development. In recognition of the power relations at play in policymaking in the Global South, two key concepts of discourse and neo-imperialism are identified. These are useful conceptual tools in unpacking the language used in educational policymaking and highlighting the importance of historical and contemporary relations within the new development compact. By viewing both educational development and the way that quality is defined within it as discourse has revealed the insufficiency of the dominant discourses for their translation into quality educational practice.

Two key concepts that have emerged throughout the chapter have particular importance for this study. These are context and participation. A tendency among national policymakers to look externally for examples of best practice or the

recommendation of a particular development expert has been revealed. This leaves little space for local involvement in the policy process in low income countries. This is particularly true regarding the process for defining what educational quality looks like; a process which has been little studied. Drawing on Tikly and Barrett's work regarding education quality, it is argued that for a meaningful education which is valued by stakeholders, it is imperative that there is some national and local debate about what a quality education should look like. It has further been shown that Comparativists have long highlighted the importance of context in enabling successful policy implementation. EdQual findings have further suggested the importance of looking at context across the three levels of policy, school and wider community. Given the importance placed on context, the next chapter introduces the national context for FSE in Kenya. Particular emphasis is placed on plotting the education policymaking process in the postcolonial era.

Chapter Three:

The Context and History of Free Secondary Education in Kenya

Introduction

In Chapter 2, I reviewed the key literature which has framed this thesis; much of this literature highlights the importance of context for the successful implementation of educational policies (Crossley 2010) and in developing more meaningful conceptualisations of educational quality (Tikly and Barrett, 2011). This chapter locates the study in the Kenyan political and historical context within which education policies are formulated and the socio-cultural and economic context within which educational practice takes place. The chapter begins with an overview of the contemporary and historical national context. The varied physical and socio-cultural landscape is discussed so as to highlight the educational priorities and challenges that face the Kenyan government. It then turns to a historical discussion of education since independence with particular emphasis on key policy decisions that have shaped, and continue to shape, secondary educational policy and practice. The final part of the chapter focuses upon the FSE policy and the challenges facing secondary education in practice. Please note the information in this chapter is correct as of January 2013.

Contemporary National Context

Kenya is situated in Eastern Africa and sits on the equator. The country has a significant coastline on the Indian Ocean and is bordered to the South by Tanzania, Uganda to the West and Somalia, Ethiopia and South Sudan to the North (see figure 3.1). The total area is 580,367 km².

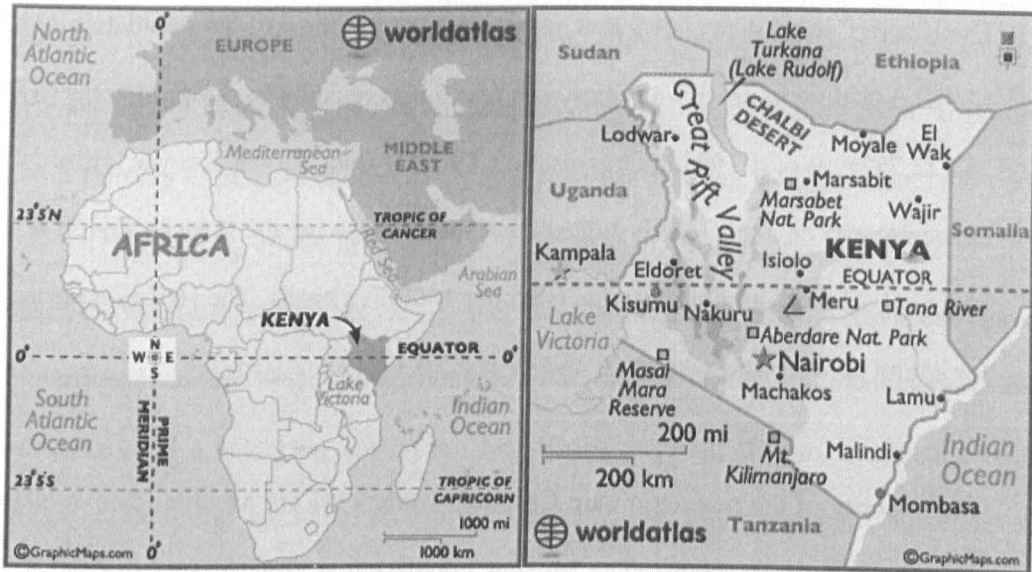


Figure 3.1: Kenya on the World map (taken from the World Atlas website)

The 2009 population census places the total population as 38,610,097 with World Bank Development Indicators of the following year placing it at the slightly higher figure of 40,513,000. According to the latter figures, 42.4% of the population are aged 0-14 (World Bank, 2010). The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has projected that by 2015, the population will rise to 44.2 million, in line with the higher rate of population growth that has been seen in the past ten years as shown in the diagram below:

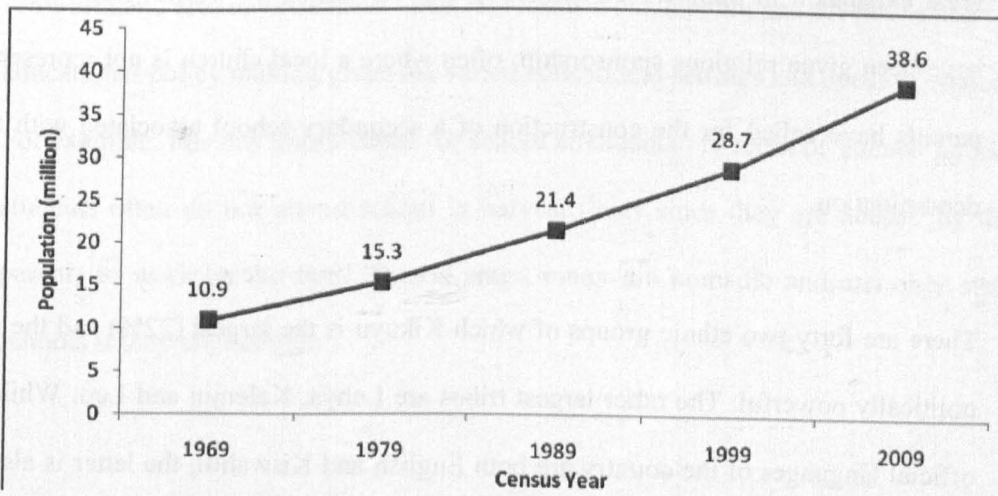


Figure 3.2: the Kenyan population (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2009)

The Kenya Census data shows that approximately one third of the population (32.3%; 12,487,375) live in urban vicinities with two thirds residing in the rural areas (67.7%; 26,122,722). World Health Organisation (WHO) data shows Kenyan citizens' life expectancy to be significantly higher than the average for the African region at sixty years old. The infant mortality rate is 85 per 1000 live births. The HIV prevalence rate for adults between the ages of 15 and 49 is 6.3% (WHO, 2012).

The majority of the population are Christian while 11% are Muslim (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2009). The Muslim population is concentrated in coastal areas and in larger urban settings. There are many Christian denominations spread across Protestantism (e.g. Presbyterian, Anglican and Methodist), Catholicism and other movements (e.g. Seventh-day Adventist, Jehovah's Witnesses and Eastern Orthodox Church). Taking the example of rural Kisii, in a single community, many different Christian denominations tend to be represented. This has had a significant impact on secondary education since the majority of schools are sponsored by a local Christian church. As discussed below, the Harambee movement in the 1960s and 1970s led to great expansion in numbers of secondary schools. Since the 1980s, these institutes have been given religious sponsorship; often where a local church is not represented, parents have called for the construction of a secondary school associated with their denomination.

There are forty-two ethnic groups of which Kikuyu is the largest (22%) and the most politically powerful. The other largest tribes are Luhya, Kalenjin and Luo. While the official languages of the country are both English and Kiswahili, the latter is also the national language (The Official Law Reports of the Republic of Kenya, 2010). Each

ethnic group also has their own vernacular language and this is the common parlance, particularly so in the rural areas. In early years' education and the first three years of primary school in public schools, Kenyan children are taught in their local language. From Primary 4, English becomes the language of instruction. Kenyan identity is very much defined along ethnic lines; for example, in Kisii, most people I have met would describe themselves first as Kisii and then as Kenyan. Ethnic divisions have underlined politics since independence in a system which is characterised by patronage and a balancing act on the behalf of the ruling elite to ensure that each major ethnic group can have 'their turn to eat' (Wrong, 2009; Branch, Cheeseman & Gardner, 2010). Ethnic groups have their own cultural practices; many can be seen to impact on educational attendance and achievement. For example, the Kisii people continue to practice female circumcision (or female genital mutilation as it is called in the international literature).

Alongside such ethnic and linguistic variety, Kenya has a diverse physical landscape with a relief stretching from sea level to 5,199 metres at the peak of Mt Kenya. This varied physical context means that some areas are tropical contrasting with other semi-arid and arid environments. This represents a challenging and diverse context for educational policy making given the varied educational settings and needs of students. For example, this has implications for school attendance. In areas of intense farming, students often do not attend school in harvest times since they are needed by their parents to work on the farm. In arid areas, many are nomadic and can only attend schools if they are mobile.

Kenya's economic mainstay is agriculture contributing to over one third of the GDP. Key crops for export include tea, coffee, flowers, pyrethrum and pineapples. Food crops that are predominantly for domestic consumption include maize (the staple food), beans, sugar cane, bananas, potatoes and millet. Livestock rearing is also a dominant occupation for many Kenyans. Tourism has increasingly become a significant contributor to the economy and leads Kenya's foreign exchange earnings (Kamunde, 2010). The warm equatorial climate, the beaches along the Indian Ocean, the wildlife in the Masai Mara and the lakes in the Rift Valley make Kenya the main tourist destination in East Africa.

The Kenyan Government's Vision 2030 is their 'long-term development blueprint for the country' with the aim of becoming a 'globally competitive and prosperous country with a high quality of life by 2030' (RoK, 2007, p.vii). Vision 2030 is based on three pillars – economic, social and political – and is anchored in the foundations of: 'macroeconomic stability; continuity in governance reforms; enhanced equity and wealth creation opportunities for the poor; infrastructure; energy; science, technology and innovation; land reform; human resources development; security; and public sector reforms' (RoK, 2007, p.viii). Economically, the goal is a growth rate of 10 percent per annum each year until 2030. Individual projects have been set up in the identified key areas of tourism, agriculture, manufacturing, wholesale and retail trade, business process outsourcing and financial services to enable sustainable development. The social pillar comprises education and training; a locally-administered, high quality affordable health care system; access to safe water and better levels of sanitation; a sustainable environment; high quality urban housing and an emphasis on gender, youth and vulnerable groups. Although education is

frequently referred to as an integral part of Vision 2030, Ojambo (2009) has argued that there is minimal emphasis on the role of education and where it is mentioned, this is only in generalities and its role in the process is ambivalent.

The informal sector is increasingly being recognised globally for its contribution to developing countries' GDP through increased production, job creation and helping to combat poverty (Palmer, 2004). In Kenya four in five (80.6%) jobs of the non-agricultural economy are in the informal sector with 440,900 new jobs created in 2010 (Oparanya, 2011). Kenya has a long history of engagement in the informal economy; the 1972 report for the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and UNDP employment mission to Kenya (1972, p.5) is widely held responsible for the ushering in of the term 'informal sector' and portraying activities related to it in a positive light:

The popular view of informal-sector activities is that they are primarily those of petty traders, street hawkers, shoeshine boys and other groups "underemployed" on the streets of the big towns.. . the report suggest[ed] that the bulk of employment in the informal sector, far from being only marginally productive, is economically efficient and profit-making, though small in scale and limited by simple technologies, little capital and lack of links with the other ("formal") sector.

In a World Bank study (2006) focusing upon the Nairobi slums, the main activities stated within the informal economy include selling fruits/vegetables and other foods, kiosks selling various items, selling clothes and shoes, small retailers and hawkers and small-scale manufacturing, construction and repair of goods. In rural areas, informal employment tends to focus on the buying and selling of locally-farmed produce and other materials bought in market settings. Women are the most active players in the informal sector; particularly so in rural areas where women are often left to head the

family while men look for temporary work in urban settings. For example, brewing and selling chang'aa , the local liqueur, is one of the 'more salient culturally permitted routes of economic income for women in Kenya and other countries in sub-Saharan Africa' (Papas *et al.*, 2010).

Chang'aa has become increasingly popular in poorer areas of Kenya. The literal translation for chang'aa is 'kill-me-quick' and there are often reports in the Kenyan, and international, media which highlight its dangerous nature (see for example, The Economist, 2010). It is produced by distilling sorghum, millet or maize; the latter being the main ingredient in the Kisii area. A recent scientific study in Eldoret, a neighbouring region of Kisii in Western Kenya, found the mean alcohol content of chang'aa to be 34% with the highest ethanol content at 53% (Papas *et al.*, 2010). The brewing of chang'aa was legalised by the Kenyan government in 2010 with mixed responses both from the government and media communities (BBC News, 2010).

Kenya was a British Colony from 1890 until it achieved self-rule on 1st June 1963 and independence on 12th December 1963. In 1964, Jomo Kenyatta was elected president and a new constitution established Kenya as a republic. Kenyatta fought for independence on a democratic reform pledge and the republic began as 'a fairly democratic political and socio-economic structure under the Kenyan African National Union (KANU) party on the basis of an essentially democratic, if not populist platform and vowing to fight against poverty, disease and ignorance' (Amutabi, 2003, p.128). The KANU slogan on independence was *uhuru na kazi* ('freedom and work') but within months, the masses began to feel aggrieved by what they saw as a replacement of the colonial elite with a Kenyan one. Five hundred men marched in

Nairobi chanting *uhuru na taabu* ('freedom and suffering') and demanded ministers to sell their expensive cars and give the proceeds to the neediest in Kenyan society (Branch, 2011). The government's reaction was to ban public meetings in Nairobi and other major towns; a precursor of the more authoritarian approach of Kenyan political leadership which resisted public criticism.

The federal system broke down in 1964 when the opposition party, Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU), dissolved itself and by 1969, Kenya was a de facto one party state, abandoning any pretensions of democratic ideals (Amutabi, 2003; Branch, 2011). Daniel Arap Moi who had been Kenyatta's vice president, became president, again nominally as the leader of the KANU party, in 1978. He remained president until 2002. Moi was one of 'a second generation of political leaders...with their own ambitions to rule through one-party dictatorships' which typified many African political systems in the 1970s and 1980s (Meredith, 2005, p.383). By 1982, Moi had turned Kenya into a one-party state by law and his rule 'became a litany of Big Man tactics' (Meredith, 2005, p.384). The policy environment was characterised by a lack of popular consultation with political rhetoric and Moi's whim replacing policy-making instruments. In 1992, in response to the removal of Western donor aid, Moi announced that he was to lift the ban on opposition parties and hold multi-party elections. He was subsequently re-elected in multiparty elections in 1992 and 1997.

In December 2002, Mwai Kibaki became the third Kenyan president with nearly two thirds of the votes. His party won 132 of 222 seats in parliament; the National Alliance of Rainbow Coalition (NARC) has been described by Branch as 'a formidable force' because each of the main ethnic groups and regions were

represented in the coalition's leadership, with the exception of Moi's Kalenjin (Branch, 2011, p.249). Kenya, known as *nchi ya kitu kidogo* ('the land of the little something'), has a long history of corruption; despite Kibaki's pledge on arrival in office in 2003 that corruption would cease to be a way of life in Kenya, it remains endemic in both political and public life (Wrong, 2009). The British High Commissioner, Edward Clay, exclaimed in 2004:

It is outrageous to think that corruption accounts for about 8 percent of Kenya's GDP. Kenya is not a rich country in terms of oil deposits, diamonds or some other buffer which might featherbed a thoroughgoing culture of corruption. What it chiefly has is its people – their intelligence, work ethic, education, entrepreneurial and other skills

(Clay speech cited in Meredith 2005, p.687)

In 2009, DfID suspended education donor funding due to allegations of fraud regarding UK funds for Kenyan education. The DfID website (2012) states that 'no UK aid has been transferred to the MoE since the fraud came to light in September 2009'. In early November 2005, Kibaki's administration suffered a major blow when they were defeated in a national referendum for a new constitution that would have given Kibaki greater executive powers (Kamunde, 2010). In response to this and allegations of corruptions, Kibaki dissolved the entire cabinet later in the month. Within three years of power, Kibaki's position had become significantly compromised.

The 2007 election win by Kibaki was disputed by the Orange Democratic Party (ODM) and Raila Odinga. Although it will probably never be 'possible to tell definitely who actually won the election' (Branch, 2011), the results are widely felt to have been fixed with rigging on both sides and the paper trail retrospectively tampered with. The violence that followed the elections came in three forms: (1) the

protests against the results themselves, which resulted in the least fatalities; (2) overzealous response by the police and private security forces with a reported 405 people killed by the police alone; (3) ethnically motivated attacks on homes and communities particularly in the Rift Valley and Western Province, reigniting older conflicts over land, power and wealth (Branch, 2011). The numbers killed have been estimated at 1,133 people while 500,000 people were displaced from their homes and properties widely destroyed (Cheeseman, 2008; Branch, 2011). The violence was not motivated by singular causes but 'many overlapping conflicts with differing motivations and dynamics' and various popular frustrations (Cheeseman, 2008, p.172). As Cheeseman (2008, p.170) further reminds us, the violence was not completely unexpected:

Going by the media coverage of the Kenyan crisis, one would think that both the post-election violence and the mediation efforts of international actors were dramatic new developments in Kenyan politics which represented a sharp break from a stable and peaceful past. However, while the conflict has been tragic, it is far from unprecedented.

Large numbers had been killed and displaced in ethnic clashes following both the 1992 and 1997 elections in which there was large-scale instrumentalism of the use of political violence along ethnic lines.

In the aftermath of the violence, a peace agreement brokered by the former UN Secretary Kofi Annan was made between Kibaki and Odinga. The 'Ocampo Six' which includes some of the most influential politicians - Uhuru Kenyatta and William Ruto - have been called to the International Criminal Court in relation to their alleged involvement in the post-election violence. The legal case is yet to be resolved. In August 2010, Kenyans participated in a referendum and voted convincingly for the introduction of a new constitution. Key elements of the new constitution include a significant reduction in presidential powers and devolution of power to regions

through counties and a senate (The Official Law Reports of the Republic of Kenya, 2010). The previous constitution, negotiated with the British on independence, had allowed the exploitation of 'political tribalism' (Branch, 2011). In the lead-up to Kenyans going to the polls in 2013, there is widespread hope in the media and among my friends and colleagues that the new constitution will aid a peaceful election¹. For an economy which is dependent upon tourism, 2013 will be an influential year for how the rest of the world views the country and allow for it to return to its previous reputation as both politically stable and safe. The new constitution also carries some change for education as explained below. Before discussion of the contemporary influences in educational policy and practice, I will first provide an overview of the history of education in Kenya since independence.

History of education in Kenya, with special reference to secondary education

A brief introduction and key definitions

The Kenyan education system currently consists of eight years of primary, four years of secondary and four years of university. While most countries, globally, have upper and lower secondary education, Kenya has just a single stage of four years. This system is upheld in all public secondary schools. At secondary level, there are also many private colleges which provide Ugandan O and A Levels, UK GCSE and A Levels and the International Baccalaureate. Students at secondary school are supposed to be between the ages of 14 and 18 but a culture of repeating means that often secondary school students can be as old as 25 years. The study by Ohba (2011) of the

¹ Information correct as at January 2013 to reflect the political context within which the case study was conducted.

primary school leavers in the rural Makueni district of Eastern province, for example, found that the mean age for primary completion was 17.4 years; more than three years older than the official age for primary school completion. The language of instruction for the first three years of primary school is the local language; from Standard four onwards, students are taught in English and by the time they reach secondary school it is expected that students will be fluent in spoken and written English.

The recent national policy framework for education indicates that there are 4,215 secondary schools in Kenya as of 2011 with an increased enrolment from 870,000 students in 2003 to 1.77 million in 2011. More than four in five schools are public (87%) (MoE, 2012). There are three types of public secondary schools – national, provincial and district – ‘arranged in a tripartite hierarchy’ (Oketch & Somerset, 2010, p.15). The distinction is based on the catchment base for each type of school – national schools accept students nationwide, provincial schools from the province and district schools only take students from the local district. In 2011, there were only eighteen national schools. These established schools have long histories and since independence have tended to serve the elite and are supported by a strong old member network. They include the five which were exclusively for Europeans during the colonial period (Oketch & Somerset, 2010). In 2011, 30 provincial schools were elevated to national status and the MoE intend to increase the total number to 118 in coming years so that there are two boys’ and two girls’ schools in each of the 47 counties. Top-performing provincial schools were selected and received Sh25 million for infrastructure upgrading (Orengo, 2012). From discussions with teachers and local businessmen in Kisii, there seems to be real hope that this move will challenge the educational hierarchy which has dominated Kenya since independence and

challenge the prestigious status of the established schools. There will certainly be demand; competition for access to the national schools has always been intense. In 2010, on average one in 100 primary leavers won a place in a national secondary school (Oketch & Somerset, 2010).

There are many more *provincial* schools; the majority of these are single-sex boarding schools but some mixed schools exist. Through discussions with head teachers in Kisii, it seems as though the average cost for a boarding provincial school is between Ksh 25,000 and Ksh 40,000. Some are also open to day students from the local community and, for now, these students are covered by FSE. Additional fees tend to be applied at a higher rate than for district schools and there are extra costs for more extensive extra-curricular activities which may price many parents out of this market.

District schools are the main secondary schooling outlet for day students serving local communities. These schools are numerous and in urban and more populated rural areas, students tend to have the choice of up to five schools within walking distance. Since the introduction of FSE in 2008, the fees at day district schools are supposed to be non-existent. As discussed below, the cost of FSE is not 'free' and district schools often do not serve poorer local communities where parents are unable to afford the additional fees.

Across all three types of school, teachers are expected to be fully qualified and to be registered with the Teachers Services Commission (TSc). However, there has been a shortage of qualified teachers in district schools across the country in recent years. In my experience of visiting more than one hundred district schools in the Kisii region, I have never visited a school which has its full quota of TSc teachers. Where schools

fall short in numbers of TSc teachers, they will employ teachers that are on the school payroll. These are officially employed by the Board of Governors (BoG) and have tended to be Form IV graduates awaiting university placements. However, given a recent backlog by the TSc in employing graduate teachers, EPAfrica have monitored an increase in the number of teaching graduates who are employed by BoGs on short term contracts.

History of Education: 1963 – 1978

During the colonial period, access to education was limited. The roots of widespread demand for popular education lie in the colonial education system which was elitist and designed to serve the needs of the colonial administration rather than the education of the masses. Until 1962, only the year before independence, education was structured as a tripartite system segregated on racial lines (Somerset, 2009). In the fifteen years before independence, there was an expansion in secondary schooling, from only three secondary schools offering the Cambridge School Certificate Course in 1949 to 23 government-aided secondary schools in 1956, rising to 65 by 1960. Bogonko (1992, p.122) explains that the increase was ‘due to African pressure as they came to rightly associate occupational recruitment, material well-being and social status with the procurement of modern education’; particularly post-primary education. Further widening access to education was an integral aspect of the gaining of public support for Kenyan politicians in the lead-up to independence. As Sifuna (1990, p.161) points out, ‘almost every politician and election manifesto leading to the independence elections had called for more educational opportunities of all types, cheaper or free education, universal primary education, Africanisation of syllabuses and teaching staff and an atmosphere in which the African personality and culture

could flourish'. This is an early hint to the strong relationship that would develop between political leaders wishing to gain political legitimacy and support and key educational decision-making in postcolonial Kenya.

On independence, expanding access particularly at the secondary level to the Kenyan population who had previously been excluded was an important political move for the newly formed government (Bogonko, 1992). The Ominde Commission was set up to make changes to the colonial educational system and recommended that secondary education should be prioritised by the KANU Government for national development. In 1964, there were 40 times as many primary schools as secondary schools but, five years later, while the number of primary schools had increased by one percent to 6136, there were 300% more secondary schools, rising from 151 in 1964 to 601 in 1969 (Ohba, 2011).

In 1961, African leaders met at the Conference of African States on the Development of Education in Africa held in Addis Ababa where the expansion of secondary and higher education was agreed as the priority for national development. Throughout the 1960s, the so-called First Development Decade, education decision-making in Kenya was strongly influenced by international opinion for the role of education in accelerating national development through the production of highly skilled manpower. The emphasis placed on secondary education was also influenced by a survey commissioned by the Kenyan and UK governments in 1963 and carried out by the International Bank for Reconstruction on the economic development of Kenya. The findings pointed to the bottleneck at the secondary level and argued that it was the educational level requiring the most investment (Sifuna, 1990). At low-cost

schools, the fees were scrapped for the higher forms in 1964 so as to increase the supply of middle and high-level manpower (Oketch & Rolleston, 2007).

The curriculum in the 1960s was also diversified to bring in more maths and sciences to support the main aim of providing manpower in professional, managerial and supervisory personnel and skilled workers (Bogonko, 1992). The Ominde Commission highlighted the importance of rehabilitating 'African personality' as it called for African history to replace the histories of former European colonisers and the development of African literature and languages. There are many resonances here with the arguments in *Education for Self-Reliance* of Nyerere (1967) in neighbouring Tanzania. The Ominde Commission also recommended the introduction of UPE with the goal of national unity through reducing the residual inequalities across the country left by the colonial government (Sifuna, 1990). Provision of UPE was one of three long-term objectives of the first post-independence government, although at this stage 'it was not ready to create any illusion that it would provide it free of charge in the short-term' (Oketch & Rolleston, 2007, p.9). It took nearly ten years for UPE to be implemented but in 1973, Kenyatta announced that primary education would be free for students in semi-arid areas and for needy cases throughout the country. This was swiftly followed in the same year with a statement that all fees would be abolished for the first four years of schooling for all students with the instant result that primary school enrolment rose from 1.8 million in 1973 to 2.8 million in 1974. Schools were not able to cope with the swollen enrolment which led to the introduction of a buildings levy fee and enrolments soon fell back to their previous rates (Amutabi, 2003; Muthwii, 2004). Writing in 1974, Court and Ghai highlighted the new concerns in the Kenyan education system that predicated the introduction of FPE, 'as the

numbers of educated unemployed reach serious proportions and lines of social stratification based on differential access to educational opportunity become increasingly clear' (Court & Ghai, 1974, p.1).

At the time of independence, arguably the most important policy decision made regarding secondary education was the introduction of Harambee schools². The Harambee schools movement had its roots in the independent schools movement, especially seen in Central Kenya, during the colonial period (Mwiria, 1990). Parents whose children could not make the grades to qualify for government schools or were unable to raise fees demanded by high cost secondary schools, were encouraged to put resources together under the guidance of local politicians to self-start Harambee secondary schools. By 1973, there were 600 Harambee secondary schools across the country as compared with only 381 government aided schools (Bogonko, 1992). Harambee schools spread unevenly across the country with provinces such as North Eastern and the Rift Valley where there was low economic development and little experience of setting up schools often lacking secondary schools completely (Ohba, 2011).

The Harambee movement took on its own momentum and even as early as 1964, Kenyatta was warning of the impact on quality of fast widening of access; a precursor to a principal concern of balancing access and quality that would characterise the expansion of educational opportunities throughout Kenya's postcolonial span. Speaking at an opening of a Harambee school in 1964, he stated:

² Harambee is a Swahili term which translates as 'let's all pull together' emphasising a sense of community and collective cooperation for education provision.

I would like to stress at this point the need for planning and control of our educational expansion. The vast majority of our people are working constantly to ensure an education for their education. This is good, but if these children go to bad schools, without adequate facilities and without good teachers, the kind of education they receive may not help much after in life. (cited in Mwiria 1990, p.353)

The Ominde Commission was critical of the Harambee school movement and highlighted two key challenges. The first was the poor results by the majority of students from the schools; the second that their creation could produce tribal feelings, disruptive to a sense of national unity (Sifuna, 1990). Amutabi (2003, p.130), more recently, has argued that such a mushrooming of clan-based and politically fronted schools threatened significant societal change and that many were 'unviable economically with few students and run as single stream wastage avenues'. From 1965, the government tried to regain control over the expansion of the educational system by insisting that communities had to raise at least 40,000Ksh before starting the construct a school (Buchmann, 1999). However, this largely failed to constrain the building of Harambee schools as 'the tradition of community independence' ensured that the movement continued at its own momentum throughout Kenyatta's presidency (Keller, 1977, p.91). Under President Moi, the emphasis of Harambee took on a more political tone with fundraising events often becoming events where politicians campaigned for votes; this politicisation undermined the movement and the frequency of initiatives declined nationwide (Buchmann, 1999). In 1988, Harambee schools were absorbed into the public education system in the form of provincial or district schools but, as Bogonko (1992, p.124) has argued, the Harambee spirit continued into the 1990s and has precipitated the erection of many more secondary schools than those built through government efforts.

History of Education: 1978 – 2003

When Daniel Arap Moi became president in 1978, he accelerated the FPE agenda shifting the discourse of education and national development from secondary level down to primary schooling by arguing that ‘the primary stage of education is the most important for any child since it is here that basic knowledge is given to the child and foundations for an economically productive and satisfying life are laid’ (Republic of Kenya, 1979:154 cited in Oketch and Rolleston 2007:11). From 1979, Moi prioritised FPE and gradually moved towards a system where all basic education was free when in 1985 the 8-4-4 system was introduced. The introduction of the 8-4-4 education system is described by Amutabi (2003:136) as ‘the most radical and perhaps mindless change in education in Kenya since independence’. However, as Sifuna (1990) reminds us, this followed in the footsteps of the previous government’s efforts to promote non-formal education and rural development. It was born of the recommendations of the Mackay Report in 1981 which was commissioned as part of the Presidential Working Party on the establishment of a second national university.

In a booklet circulated by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) in 1984 the rationale for its introduction was outlined. The system was designed to promote self-reliance and widen the range of employment potential for graduates from both primary and secondary level. To achieve this goal, it was stated that there was a need for a more relevant and practical-oriented curriculum, more technical and vocational training and equitable distribution of educational resources (Sifuna, 1990). Drawing on Nyerere’s theory of *Education for Self Reliance*, the emphasis on practical and vocational subjects was intended to ‘instil realistic attitudes and aspirations regarding employment in both parents and school leavers’ (RoK,

1989, p.212). The objectives, on the inception of the 8-4-4 system, of the four years of secondary education were ‘to prepare the learner to make a positive contribution to the development of society, to choose with confidence vocational education after school and to acquire attitudes of national patriotism, self-respect, self-reliance, cooperation, adaptability and a sense of purpose, integrity and self-discipline’ (Sifuna, 1990, p.160). In the four years of secondary schooling, students were expected to cover a minimum core of subjects which would provide them with a firm foundation for future education, training and work across the informal and formal sectors. This compared with the earlier version of secondary education in the 1960s which focused on developing manpower in administrative and public sector roles. Box 3.1 shows the subjects that were meant to be offered in all public secondary schools:

Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4
All compulsory	One chosen	One chosen	One chosen
English, Kiswahili, Mathematics, Biology, Physics, Chemistry, Geography, History, Government	Christian religious education, Islamic religious Education, Hindu religious education, Social education and ethnics	Home science, Agriculture, Woodwork, Building Construction, Power mechanics, Electricity, Drawing & design	French, German, Art & design, Music, Accounting, Commerce, Economics, Typewriting with office practice
Total: 11 subjects			

Box 3.1: the 8-4-4 subjects chosen for KCSE exams in 1986 (in Bogonko 1992, p.135)

Before turning to a discussion about the impact of cost-sharing initiatives in Kenya, it is important to note that the Kenyan government’s emphasis on an education system relevant to both the formal and informal sectors was in contrast with limited attention

on vocational or technical education in the global literature (King, 2007a). So, although external influences can be identified in the approach to education, the content of the system itself bore little similarities with the global priorities of the time.

The structural adjustment programmes introduced by the World Bank and IMF in the late eighties encouraged a cost-sharing approach to education. In Kenya, *the Presidential Working Party on Education and Manpower Training for the Next Decade and Beyond*, chaired by James Kamunge, was appointed and, in 1988, recommended a cost-sharing policy. It is well documented that in Kenya, and further afield, scaled-down government expenditure impacted access as the cost of basic education fell once again on parents (Oketch & Rolleston, 2007; Kamunde, 2010). This came at a time when the 8-4-4 system was already placing burdens on parents and communities since ‘parents were expected to buy new textbooks – up to ten titles in the higher grades – while communities were expected to provide workrooms and other facilities for the new prevocational subjects’ (Somerset, 2009, p.242). As early as 1988, the 8-4-4 system has been widely critiqued for being only practically oriented in theory since the government did not put up workshops in every district, instead relying on parents and communities to construct workshops and laboratories as well as equip and replenish them (Sifuna, 1990). The Kamunge commission reported to Moi’s government that the secondary school curriculum was unreasonably extensive and that many schools were unable to build laboratories and workshops, let alone equip them. In fact, it is only since the introduction of FSE in 2008 that secondary schools have received any central funding for the purchase of books and science equipment.

The change eliminated the selective Cambridge O level exam that had been required of all students who wished to continue to upper secondary level and 'signalled greater educational opportunities for all Kenyan children [which], not surprisingly, led to immediate enrolment increases at both the primary and secondary level (Buchmann, 1999, p.102). However, inequalities persisted because the idea of cost sharing meant that richer areas and better-endowed schools had an unfair advantage (Bogonko, 1992). Buchmann (1999) has further argued that the decentralisation policies gave more power to parent teacher associations and school administrators in government and Harambee schools which led to higher fees in better schools, marginalising poorer students whose parents were forced to find them places in lower-quality institutions.

There are a number of other critiques of the 8-4-4 system and its continued legacy that are worthy of mention. By moving to a system which accentuated breadth over depth, there was a wealth of information that students were expected to learn and remember. Amutabi (2003, p.137) has suggested that 'the most professionally hurting, harmful and devastating' legacy of the 8-4-4 system is rote learning 'characterised by unhealthy competition and regurgitation of facts in exams by learners rather than digesting them'. Furthermore, students were expected to score a minimum of a B- in each of the ten subjects they took at KCSE. This was quickly reduced to C+ after the first results revealed that only 4,000 of 132,000 in 1990 were able to achieve this (Bogonko, 1992). Finally, its introduction was widely criticised for its hurried implementation off the back of one government commission which lacked expert involvement (Sifuna, 1990). In 1999, the Koech Report offered a damning assessment of the 8-4-4 system highlighting many of the critiques already mentioned. The report was rejected by the government. In discussing its rejection, Amutabi (2003, p.135)

argues that this was based on political measures rather than a genuine belief in the education system itself:

President Moi identifies with it as his legacy and it appears he is prepared to keep it at all costs. To talk of the failure of the 8-4-4 system increasingly has come to mean talking of the failure of President Moi. The continued insistence on the system by the political establishment despite its many problems is seen by many as a political face-saving gimmick more than a realistic gesture.

Its implementation can also be viewed as an example of the uncritical policy transfer critiqued in Chapter 2 since it heavily resembled a North American 8-4-4 model.

Under Moi, the Kenyan government had a fractious relationship with donors. This may explain some of the disparities between national priority setting and the global trends of the time. The difficult nature of the relationship with donors was particularly witnessed in the later stages of Moi's regime where international disapproval translated into the decline of donor aid from 1990 to 2002. A significant proportion of aid was withheld in the decade and was made conditional on the reigning in of corruption and the introduction of political and economic reforms (Brown, 2001). As the following table shows, by 2002, aid to Kenya had fallen dramatically. For example, in 1990, Kenya received almost five percent of all aid to Africa; by 2002 this had decreased to just two percent. From the arrival of Kibaki in presidential office in 2003, ODA can be seen to increase dramatically and the influence of global educational priorities can clearly be seen.

Year	ODA at current prices (US\$ millions)	ODA at 2008 constant prices	Kenya's share of Africa's ODA (%)	ODA share of GNI
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		(US\$ millions)		(%)
1980	393.44	934.42	3.8	5.84
1985	426.66	1093.96	3.5	7.16
1990	1181.29	1822.73	4.7	15.35
1995	731.36	923.71	3.4	9.18
2000	509.94	745.25	3.3	4.16
2002	378.05	561.78	2.1	2.84
2004	683.73	815.01	2.4	4.14
2006	1021.78	1161.76	1.3	4.33
2008	1527.85	1527.85	3.3	5.66

Box 3.2: ODA: Official Development Assistance; GNI: Gross National Income (adapted from Colclough and Webb 2012, p.267)

History of Education: 2003 – 2011

As discussed in Chapter 2, by 2003, there had been significant changes in the global development order as all eyes became focused on the MDGs which had been introduced in 2000. In 2003, FPE was re-implemented in Kenya with global influences clear to see. However, it is important to note that its introduction was a political decision by Kibaki in his 2002 election manifesto. Similar to critiques of Moi's implementation of the 8-4-4 system, Mukundi (2004, p.239) has argued that the introduction of FPE 'was a matter of political expediency rather than planned education reform'. One only needs to read the Kenyan newspapers and election manifestos of the different political parties in 2002 and 2007 to recognise the national interest in education and its prioritisation for securing votes. In the new school year of 2003, primary schools were deluged with 1.3 million new pupils taking advantage of free education (Branch, 2011). Enrolment was not restricted by age; the film *'The First Grader'* narrates the experience of Kimani Maruge, an 84 year-old man who joined standard one.

Many commentators have highlighted the sense of history repeating itself in the provision of FPE in Kenya and critiqued the imposition of the policy as a matter of political expediency (Muthwii, 2004; Somerset, 2009; Kamunde, 2010). Somerset has highlighted the questionable sustainability of the 2003 FPE policy by analysing the previous FPE movements and showing that additional charges contributed substantially to the heavy drop-out in both 1974 and 1979 (Somerset, 2009). Muthwii (2004), five years earlier, had proposed a similar argument regarding the sustainability of the policy, given its dependence on external donor assistance while also critiquing the lack of focus upon ensuring school attendance and educational quality. Written eight years ago, there could be reason to argue that FPE has been more successful in implementation than Muthwii (2004) envisaged, given that it has managed to survive the removal of DfID funding; although there is much to be said for the need for more concerted funding to ensure quality and equitable schooling for all primary school students across Kenya. This argument also raises the question of the sustainability of FSE.

The arrival of Kibaki in presidential office heralded the beginning of a new era in donor relations in which educational planning underwent ‘a significant turn: the introduction of a more democratically-run government augured the initiation of new relationships with international donors, and a period of much sounder planning was about to begin (Colclough & Webb, 2012, p.267). Perceptions of improved governance, plans to tackle corruption and a commitment to the MDGs all contributed to aid flows increasing from the West. The number of OECD donors doubled from 17 in the 1990s to 34 in 2008; and some non-OECD countries, for example China, have also emerged more recently (King, 2010; Colclough & Webb, 2012). Following the

Paris Declaration in 2005, Kenya's Education Sector support programme (KEESSP) was introduced. By encouraging a sector-wide approach, it was hoped that donor agencies and local partners would come together around a coherent policy agenda fully owned by the Kenyan government. The programme received widespread support from the donor community. For example, DfID announced a £55 million grant to support its implementation in 2005. Colclough and Webb (2012, p.272) have critiqued the KEESSP and the extent to which it can be seen to be Kenyan owned:

The question as to whether aid conditions have been based upon Kenya's own development targets and objectives is...complex. There is an elision here, based upon when targets (and their associated conditions), accepted as a result of international pressure, become truly 'owned' and thus no longer imposed from outside.

Colclough and Webb's analysis thus reveals the paradox between the donor discourse about the need for national ownership of policy and the mandatory nature of the adoption of international policy priorities. In Kibaki's term of office, there has, thus, been a shift from a balancing of national and global priorities to a less balanced platform with stronger external influences. As King (2007a, p.361) has argued convincingly in 2000, Kenya entered 'a world where the agenda and its conceptualisation are much more externally driven'. King's analysis of the Kenyan educational policy history suggests that the current focus on achieving primary education may suggest common ground between national and global priorities and make the policy seem Kenyan-owned when it is anything but. This echoes some of the issues raised in Chapter 2 regarding the power of the development agencies and the ways in which external pressures for UPE have won out over locally-designed and post-basic policies (Hayman, 2007).

The historical trajectory of educational policymaking and priority setting in postcolonial Kenya has been shown in this section to have been both hugely political and influenced by global agencies and actors; the latter of these particularly so in the years since the MDGs were introduced. It is within this policy environment that the FSE policy was introduced and implemented in 2007 with little external donor pressure or funding. This policy is presented in the next section.

The Free Secondary Education Policy and Secondary Education in practice

In the final section of this chapter, I contextualise the study within the FSE policy and the key challenges facing secondary education in practice. As is noted throughout the section, there has been very little written about secondary education in Kenya in the international literature so examples are taken from the primary level with potential implications for secondary education. The challenges regarding secondary education are based on those that have been identified as influential in the work and research that EPAfrica undertakes in rural Western Kenya. These broadly cover the key themes of poverty, gender, health and governance.

An overview of the policy

In November 2007, President Kibaki launched the Party of National Unity's (PNU) election manifesto and his first pledge was that their government would extend basic education to include secondary education; thus making education from the age of 7-18 free. Although fees had been dropped for students at upper secondary for a limited period in the early independence days, this was the first time that FSE had been introduced for all students across all forms (Oketch & Rolleston, 2007). Kibaki stated

his hope that the abolition of secondary school fees would increase overall access by stating that ‘the main objective of providing free secondary education is to ensure that children from poor households acquire a quality education that enables them to access opportunities for self-advancement and become productive members of society’ (speech by President Kibaki, Feb 2008 cited in Ohba, 2009). Funding of FSE is not publicly available. However, it can be surmised that the cost is a considerable proportion of public spending on education. The proportion of GDP spent on education is currently 15% (up from 5.1% in 1980/81). This is higher than any other country in Sub-Saharan Africa with similar GDP per capita (Ojambo, 2009). FSE is currently a four year programme (from 2008-2012) of funding public secondary school education by which the Government gives schools 10,265KSh per qualifying student enrolled per year that is to be spent on tuition material and school operating costs (MoE, 2008).

Free and compulsory basic education for every child is a clause of the new constitution (The Official Law Reports of the Republic of Kenya, 2010). In 2012, the Task Force on the re-alignment of the education sector to Vision 2030 and the Constitution presented their recommendations and asked the key question of whether the Kenyan education system, its institutions and programmes, is fit for purpose including a section on secondary education. Therefore, secondary education at the time of writing is included within the remit of basic education but there is potentially going to be some reforms to the education system which will alter the expectation of all children to attend school until the age of 18.

There is no policy documentation for the FSE policy. Further analysis of this is presented in Chapter 5. However, it is important to note here that it is difficult to identify the rationale for its implementation without official policy documentation. All

students receiving an allocated grant to fund their secondary education is an approach unique within East Africa. Uganda nominally has universalized its secondary education system but only a limited proportion of primary school leavers qualify to receive the stipend based on their primary school certificate score. This was also restricted to allocated public and private schools and was introduced gradually form-by-form. In 2008, early evidence suggested that Uganda had witnessed a swell in students at secondary level with schools offering USE bulging at the seams with up to 150 students in a single class (Penny *et al.*, 2008). As stated above, there has been an increase in enrolment for secondary education in Kenya since FSE was introduced but this has not been at the accelerated rate witnessed in the Ugandan USE schools or that shown in the Kenyan FPE experience.

The 8-4-4 education system remains in place and students are at secondary school for four years. The secondary school curriculum contains very little practical, technical or vocational training. Subjects such as music, art and technology are available at most provincial schools but district schools do not have the teachers, workshops or resources to be able to offer such subjects. The curriculum also reflects recent government priorities such as increasing the science base of secondary school graduates for future involvement in the knowledge economy. The table below shows the subjects that all Form III and IV students chose for the KCSE exam in 2011:

Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4
All compulsory	Two chosen	One chosen	Not widely

English	Christian Religious	Business Studies	available in
Kiswahili	Education	Agriculture	District Schools
Mathematics	History & Government		
Biology	Physics		
Chemistry	Geography		
Total: 8 subjects			

Box 3.3 the 8-4-4 subjects chosen for KCSE exams in 2011 (from discussions with head teachers of case study schools)

To attend university, an average of C+ across all eight subjects is required; to guarantee a government-aided place, a student is expected to score a B+ average. There are two subjects – life skills and physical education - which are part of the school curriculum but are not examined. ‘Life skills’, an official part of the secondary school curriculum since 2008, was introduced ‘to equip students and teachers with the adaptive abilities and positive behaviour that would enable them deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life’ (Kelin-Kenya, 2011). Very little of the theoretical underpinning of the original 8-4-4 system, based on preparation for both the informal and formal economies, can be seen in the current curriculum. Rather, recent priorities have been forced to fit within the 8-4-4 shell rather than recognition that they are incompatible. The Taskforce on the realignment of the education sector has explored the continued relevance of the system for the current economic and social climate.

‘Free’ Secondary Education

As Sub-Saharan African countries have sought to universalize education in recent years, there has been a growing body of literature which looks at just how ‘free’ such education is and examines the impact of additional fees as a barrier to access to free education (Kadazamira & Rose, 2003; Mukundi, 2004). Ohba (2009; 2011) has

written on the subject in relation to FSE in rural Kenya. In data collected from 24 public day and 13 public boarding secondary schools, it was found that students were expected to contribute fees to go towards lunch and school development funds. The average costs fell per student from Ksh 11,717 to Ksh 4,897 in the day schools and from Ksh 20,551 to Ksh 14,857 in boarding schools (Ohba, 2011, p.406). Although this shows that the policy has reduced the fees per student, her findings show that the additional costs for sending a child to secondary school continue to act as a barrier for many poor families and subsequently impacts on secondary school enrolment. Furthermore, she argues that the cost of non-discretionary items such as school uniform, books and stationery are an additional burden that some households cannot bear. This suggests that even for schools which are designed for local communities may still be inaccessible to many poorer parents despite the fact that schooling is supposed to be 'free'. Ohba (2011, p.408) concludes with a proposal focused more on making secondary education accessible:

The abolition of school fees does not necessarily increase access to the poor. In a country such as Kenya where nearly half the population is poor, it might be more effective to introduce pro-poor programmes that target children not currently completing primary education and graduating to the post-primary levels...these lessons from rural Kenya concerning equitable access to secondary education suggest that the policy that focuses on the equal opportunity for all may not necessarily result in equitable access in countries where wide gaps in access already exist.

The stark difference highlighted here between equitable access and free education is important. A further finding from Ohba's study is that many students are not able to attend secondary school regularly because they are expected to contribute to the household income and attend to home chores. Those identified by Ohba (2011, p.406) as most prevalent include fetching water, looking after younger siblings, collecting firewood, working on the farm and cooking. Many of these tasks fall specifically on

the girls; a finding which correlates with research conducted in the Kisii region as discussed in the following section.

The impact of the home environment on student achievement has been highlighted at the primary level by EdQual analysis of the SACMEQ data, with the home environment being a key determinant for education quality for grade 6 learners in Kenya (Smith, 2011; Smith & Barrett, 2011). The analysis for East and Southern Africa more widely indicates that the home environment is a particularly significant factor for the most socio-economically disadvantaged students who are more likely to lack basic resources and be exposed to diseases – two of the predictors for low level literacy and numeracy. In Kenya, students were more likely to score well in an exam if they had access to light in their home to complete their homework. Furthermore, ‘a pupil with a candle/paraffin/oil lighting source for study was likely to score 24 points higher than a Kenyan with no artificial lighting source’ (Smith & Barrett, 2011, p.27). However, it is also significant that students living in a home with access to electricity scored 18 points more than one without electricity. This is just one way in which poverty has been shown to impact on student achievement since the type of access to lighting can be one indicator of the household’s income. Poverty is closely connected to the key themes discussed in the following sections regarding gender and health.

Gender & secondary schooling

As the ElimuYetu Coalition (2005, p.106) have observed, ‘the challenges that confront girls’ education in Kenya include both in-school and out-of-school factors; they span the economic, cultural, social, regional and policy realms. The out-of-school factors identified cover early marriage, female circumcision, the low values attributed

to girls and their education, the unequal gender division of home chores and teenage pregnancy. Given the diversity of cultural and socio-economic influences which contribute to these factors, it is not possible to assume that these are issues faced more broadly across the female school age population in Kenya. However, recent research within EPAfrica, suggests that a number of these factors affect girls attending secondary schools in the Kisii region. The report (2011, p.8) reveals the extent of girls' expectations to engage in home chores with 'domestic responsibilities...cited as a major inhibitor for female students completing homework, and as something which led them to be tired and unable to concentrate while in school'. The report (2011, p.8) also identifies lack of parental support for their daughters' education with one respondent stating that 'from home, you maybe get parents, he or she does not want...a girl to learn...he or she does not pay anything for you to come in [to] school' and the tendency for girls to drop out of school due to pregnancy and early marriage'.

The Elimu Yetu Coalition (2005) also identify a number of in-school challenges for girls. These include the harassment of girls by students and teachers, poor attendance and early drop-out, lack of guidance and counselling facilities and low opinion of girls' performance among teachers. The first of these is something which has been more widely recognised as an issue across Kenya, despite the fact that relationships with students are officially a violation of the teachers' code of professional conduct, whether coerced or consensual (Leach & Humphreys, 2007). Arnot *et al.* (2010) have identified patronage sexuality as a prevalent practice in urban settings across a number of African countries including Nairobi. *Patronage sexuality*, a pattern described as 'well known in that context of little or no family support for education' is common practice for many girls to pay for school fees (Arnot *et al.*, 2010, p.9). It is

important to note that, although, this research was conducted within the time period of free primary and secondary education, there is no mention of correlation between the two. However, given that students are continuing to engage in patronage sexuality for school payments suggests support for Ohba's findings that making secondary education 'free' has not taken away financial burdens on lower income families. Arnot et al. (2010, p.9) also highlight the problem of peer sexuality and the difficulty in analysing the health risks and financial implications since 'the concept of consent becomes problematic where girls encourage intimate friendships but where boys take the lead in determining when, where and how sex happens, overriding, on many occasions, the need for sexual consent by their partners'. Their findings further show that such patronage and peer sexuality is not confined to within the school compound; rather it is an issue which girls also face in the wider community and at home where different forms of violence can be prevalent. Although it is important to note that this work focuses on urban and slum areas, the significance of the findings cannot be confined to solely urban settings.

Research by EPAfrica is currently ongoing regarding the ability, or otherwise, of female students to buy sanitary towels on a monthly basis. Anecdotal evidence from recent years has suggested that girls are regularly missing a number of days of school each month because they will not attend during their period.³ In other research within Kenya and beyond have suggested that girls can miss as many as five days of school every month (Scott *et al.*, 2009; Zanaa, 2011). The barrier that sexual maturation is for educational attainment is one that many NGOs and researchers have advocated in

³ For example, this has been raised by a number of head teachers at the NGO's annual head teachers' conference and has resulted in interventions led by the NGO and the schools themselves to provide sanitary towels for all girls that are regularly missing school.

Kenya and elsewhere for many years. A Forum for African Women Educationalists study in 2007 suggested that absenteeism can be significantly reduced with the provision of sanitary pad provision in Kenya, together with reproductive health education. Provision reduced absenteeism from 4.9 days to 1.2 days per month compared to the control group (taken from Zanaa 2011). This supports findings from a similar study conducted in Ghana where it was found that with access to sanitary towels, girls not only miss less time at school, they also reported 'an improved ability to concentrate in school, higher confidence levels, and increased participation in a range of everyday activities while menstruating; negative experiences related to soiling and embarrassment declined, and measures of well being improved' (Scott *et al.*, 2009, p.2).

The Kenyan government has introduced, or made plans to do so, a number of interventions in recognition of the fact that many girls are not attending school regularly. However, these tend at the moment to be focused on girls attending primary school. The first is a MoE fund of Ksh 240 million in 2011/2012 for the provision of sanitary towels. It is believed that this will benefit approaching half a million (443,858) girls in public primary schools drawn from 82 targeted districts (Kilonzo, 2012). As the Minister of Education explains in a speech published on the MoE website, there is still great need for more funding to make this provision available to all girls who are not attending primary or secondary school regularly across the nation (Kilonzo, 2012). As yet, there has been little research regarding the impact of this intervention as compared with the 'Return to School' policy for pregnant students and young mothers which has received critical analysis. A study by an NGO, the Centre for the Study of Adolescence, estimated that 13,000 girls continue to drop out of

school annually as a result of pregnancy (cited in a report by the Kenya Human Rights Commission 2010, p.15). It has further been argued that schools do not allow these girls to return to school, going against MoE guidelines (although it is difficult to see how strictly these are enforced). While it remains clear that there are significant implications for educational attainment and well-being, there are further health implications of girls hiding their pregnancies in fear of expulsion from school and potentially seeking unsafe abortions (Kenya Human Rights Commission, 2010).

Health and its impact on secondary education

Health and education are, in many ways, inextricably linked. In my experience of working in secondary schools in rural Kenya, student attendance is often sporadic because the young people are either ill themselves or looking after sick relatives. Malaria is the most widespread health concern in Kenya. It is the principal cause of mortality with the majority of the population at risk of contracting the disease (25 million), including in the Kisii region. The Ministry of Health estimated in 2001 that 170 million working days were lost to the disease on a yearly basis (Kemri, 2012). This has clear implications for secondary schooling since both students and teachers often miss school through contracting the disease although there are scant national statistics or academic analysis of the impact that malaria has on educational attendance and attainment. My inclusion of it as a challenge for secondary education is, thus, based more on anecdotal evidence than extended literature. A National Malaria Strategy has been introduced to reduce mortality rates, particularly among pregnant women and children under the age of five. Interventions including providing targeted families with mosquito nets have been widely introduced with significant

donor support but this is still in its early stages and there is limited evidence of the impact.

The most recent statistics that I could find regarding the current HIV prevalence rate is that as of December 2011, there are 1.6 million people in Kenya were living with HIV. This is recognised by the Kenyan government to affect the education sector in a range of ways (Republic of Kenya, 2005 in Kamunde, 2010). Of particular relevance for the secondary level is their recognition that children orphaned by HIV/AIDs will be less likely to enrol in school, while for those with relatives with HIV/AIDs, there will be an expectation that they will stay at home to look after the sick family members. There is also an impact on the teaching force with teachers too sick to work or dying from the pandemic. In recognition of the impact of HIV/AIDs on education, the MoE has developed an Education Sector Policy on HIV/AIDs which aims to minimise the effects of the pandemic on the education sector (Republic of Kenya, 2006). However, there has been limited analysis of the impact of the policy and, in my experience, HIV/AIDs continues to impact on educational attendance, attainment and the wider well-being of many students in secondary schools where I have worked in rural Kisii.

Although malaria and HIV/AIDs are the most significant diseases which impact on secondary education in Kenya, student health is also impacted by a number of other factors which link closely with the issues of poverty and gender detailed above. School feeding programmes have been widely introduced across primary and secondary schools which are, at least partially, fuelled by a concern among head teachers and further afield that many students are not eating a balanced diet outside of school hours (Kamunde, 2010). This is particularly promoted in the more arid areas

where malnutrition is a greater concern; however, head teachers within EPAfrica schools in rural Kisii have highlighted this as an issue for students from the poorest families in their communities. Furthermore, girls who are missing school because of their period, pregnancy or complications of female genital mutilation can all be understood as explicitly health concerns. This is indicative of the wide-ranging and challenging issues that impact on education.

The management of secondary schools

In the wake of the universalisation of primary education, there has been a move across a number of countries to renew decentralisation policies; particularly through the revitalisation of school management committees and increased responsibility on the head teacher in the financial and human resource management of the schools. Kamunde (2010, p.98), in relation to primary head teachers following the introduction of FPE, has argued that 'the expectations of the head became astronomical, undefined, obscure, and complex with workload and responsibility (and all functions) growing beyond all realistic proportions – instantly'. Kamunde further (2010, pp.101-111) identifies a wide range of responsibilities that head teachers are expected to fulfil:

1. Administration and governance
2. Curriculum and instructional leadership and supervision
3. Financial management and accounting issues
4. Access, return, inclusion and discipline related issues
5. Staff recruitment, motivation and development
6. School growth and development planning
7. Community and public relations
8. Miscellaneous additional tasks

This is in combination with the teaching responsibilities that head teachers are expected to continue to deliver. An important finding that emerges from Kamunde's analysis is what he describes as the 'big bang' nature of the implementation of the FPE policy. Head teachers' role changed overnight to take on increased and more burdensome responsibilities while also coping with the great increase in enrolment rates at the start of 2003. He juxtaposes this with the fact that as late as 2006 there were no streamlined or practical policy guidelines; exemplary of the gap often critiqued between policy and practice in educational policymaking. He also highlights the lack of training and support provided to head teachers to cope with these significant changes. This is particularly telling given that there had been investment in this area through the primary school management (PRISM) training programme in the few years before the introduction of FPE. The PRISM programme which was funded by DfID between 1996 and 2000 aimed to strengthen primary school management and ultimately improve the quality of teaching and learning across the country. School training programmes were introduced across five modules of school development planning, management of the curriculum, management of people, management of resources and training of trainers and training skills. This extensive programme was broadly successful in its implementation of school development plans in more than nine in ten primary schools (93%) nationally and resulted in the training of 19,056 head teachers (Crossley *et al.*, 2005). However, as Kamunde (2010) has argued persuasively, the changes for the head teacher role in the light of the introduction of FPE made many aspects of this training incompatible with the new regime and it was not replaced with another, much needed, training programme.

The analysis by Sang and Sang (2011) of school management in a number of Kenyan secondary schools highlights some of the challenges that BoGs face in practice. They describe the decentralisation model for school management to resemble that of the USA and Australia where considerable managerial authority is delegated to local communities but the financing and budgeting of education continues to be controlled by central government purse strings. The largest challenge identified by head teachers was the lack of management skills among governors with approaching half (42%) claiming that board members did not possess the managerial competencies needed to support them in their role as head teacher. Another challenge identified was the abuse of power by governors through specific cases of favouritism, bribery and nepotism in teacher recruitment and the tendering of school provisions. Conflicts and difference in priorities between the head teacher and governors were also cited. Their conclusions suggest that in the county of Trans-Nzozia there is a real need to improve the effectiveness of the board of governors and enable them to take a more active and facilitated role in the management of secondary schools. To enable this, they recommend the development of training programmes for governors that ‘include new subjects which will equip them with basic working knowledge in accounting, planning, financial management and project management’ (Sang & Sang, 2011, p.164). Their findings, thus, echo Kamunde’s call for greater support for school managers – whether this be the head teacher or the board of governors – to enable them to perform the heavy duties required of them.

EPAfrica place great emphasis on the role of the head teacher and the wider school management structure in the delivery of a quality secondary education. In 2009, I adapted the operational model to place improving school management as an essential

aspect of the charity's work. This was based on an assumption that for a sustainable impact to be achieved, this has to be in partnership with a head teacher who works in an accountable and transparent manner with the support of their board of governors and while overseeing a committed team of teachers. In practice, this means that volunteers often work with the schools to put in place systems for stronger accounting, better teacher discipline and community involvement in the school. However, I do not know of any research which has been conducted within the charity or further afield about the impact of FSE on school management structures and capabilities in a similar remit to Kamunde's analysis at the primary level.

In this section, a number of challenges facing secondary education in practice have been identified. There is not space to discuss all the potential challenges that may face secondary education. However, it is worth re-iterating a number of challenges highlighted in other sections of this chapter, Chapter 2 and the literature more widely. These broadly cover the problems associated with using English as the language of instruction, the authoritative nature of much teaching in Kenyan schools and the difficulties for students in achieving against the narrow expectations of assessment through one final exam.

Chapter Summary

Through describing the historical trajectory of secondary education since independence and the contemporary context of secondary education, this chapter has highlighted a number of key themes. In a recent policy climate which has focused, often exclusively, on the primary level, it has been noted that there has frequently been an emphasis since independence on post-basic education. In the same period,

there has been consistently high public demand for education and it has been prioritised time and time again by parents in local communities. Politicians have recognised this which has led to the political instrumentalism of education. Many political manifestos have placed education reform on the centre stage. The importance placed on education must be understood within the historical and contemporary context of elitism and the division in access to quality education.

Participation in educational practice has been shown to have been promoted through decentralisation policies which have had their own challenges but much less participation has been seen in the policymaking process. The lack of democratic involvement also has a long history in Kenya with decision-making for important policies lacking technical consultation and populist participation. Historical analysis has drawn attention to the growing influence of external agendas and actors in educational policymaking in Kenya. This chapter has also served to provide an overview of the varied context of Kenyan political and cultural society which has been a reminder of the complexity of the notion of context which is often used in the literature to mean something homogenous and uncontested. In order to explore secondary education in practice, the next chapter lays out the methodology designed for its deep analysis of one particular context.

Chapter Four: Research Methodology and Methods

Introduction

This chapter describes the research methodology and methods used to plan, collect and analyse my data. The study uses qualitative research, for which the clearest description I have found is by Denzin and Lincoln (2000, p.3):

[Qualitative research]...involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means the qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them.

The chapter begins with the rationale for greater use of qualitative, in-depth and participatory methodologies in research related to educational development in low income countries. It then moves to a discussion of the epistemological basis of the study, grounded in constructivist theory, and gives an introduction to postcolonial theory, before moving to the justification for the adoption of this epistemological framing for the study. The adoption of a two-level case study research design with policy analysis at the national level and an in-depth study in Omwana Secondary School and Eskuru Secondary School in the market village of Inka in rural Kisii (the schools and village have been given pseudonyms) are discussed. The selection of the policy documentation, the participant groups, specific methods and analysis approaches within the case study design are then described before the chapter ends with discussions of ethical and validity concerns.

The case for using qualitative methodologies and participatory approaches in low income settings

Twenty-five years ago, Shaeffer observed that ‘in much of the developing world, educational research is largely empirical and quantitative, characterized by the development of standardized tests and questionnaires, the production of data from large samples of schools and individuals, and the analysis of these data by a variety of statistical methods’ (1986, p.5 cited in Vulliamy, 1990). In many ways, research and evaluation in low income settings continues to be dominated by quantitative methods and positivistic paradigms. In fact, with the widespread take-up of international testing such as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) in the Southern world, it can be argued that research and assessment has become more empirical and context-insensitive. Much research is critiqued for readily adopting Western, and primarily positivistic, over-simplified, binary and oppositional frameworks at the expense of other, Southern-originated and locally developed research projects (Crossley & Watson, 2003).

In line with the literature which critiques the one-size-fits-all approaches to educational development reviewed in Chapter 2, there are many who argue that Western research modalities and processes have been uncritically transferred into non-Western settings (see, for example, Crossley, 2001). Samoff (2007) also draws attention to the limited production and consumption of educational research in Africa and argues strongly that the primary figures that do engage in these studies are in fact the multilateral and donor organisations. Tikly (2004, p.190) further argues for the development of ‘the indigenous capacity for research and innovation’; something

which he argues 'is centrally important if countries are to link education to indigenously determined future development priorities'.

There is, thus, widespread critique of the one-size-fits-all approach to educational development that has been adopted by many of the multi-lateral and bi-lateral agencies. Just as it is believed that one development project or educational policy can be relevant and work in a number of different contexts, it continues that such projects can be assessed by a singular evaluation approach. The emphasis upon quantitative and measurable outcomes has tended to diminish the importance of using other, and more in-depth, approaches in the evaluation of a particular project. This can leave little room for understanding the perceptions, experience or attitudes of those whom the policy impacts. Adopting a qualitative methodology in low income settings can be 'a valuable corrective to the development of policies which disregard the 'realities' of schooling at the grass roots level' (Vulliamy, 1990, p.154). This is in line with the theoretical literature drawn upon in Chapter 2 and my own argument that for a policy to work in practice, the views of those that it will affect should be considered before a policy is written so as to encourage a more relevant policy that is more likely to be owned by the local community. A qualitative researcher can 'search for meaning within the culture under study, in efforts to understand education from the local perspective and in attention to a "holistic" appreciation of a national education system' (Crossley and Vulliamy, 1997, p.9). Using qualitative methods, thus, has the potential ability to explore such perspectives so as to provide more holistic understandings of education and contribute to the lessening of the gap between policy and practice.

In the light of this, it has been argued that a participatory approach has much to offer research that enables participant-driven data to garner more in-depth and grounded analyses of education in practice (Kendall, 2007). Before turning to some of the benefits of such an approach, it is important to note that participatory approaches in development initiatives have been widely championed by the World Bank and other development agencies and have often been critiqued for the lack of genuine participation they inspire (Chambers 1997, 2005). The concept of the participation of local voice in development is primarily linked with the development of both participatory poverty assessments (PPAs) and participatory rural appraisals (PRAs), both of which have origins in the late 1980s and early 1990s. During that decade, 'participation' became a fashionable term within multilateral organisations and large-scale NGOs; a 'formula to remedy past failures ... enthusiastically endorsed ... as the most effective instrument for delivering development (Feeny, 1998, p.9). The dimensions of participation have included appraisals, efficiency, agenda setting, and empowerment. It is the latter of two of these that are of particular relevance to this study. Agenda setting recognises a need to consult and listen to a wide range of voices from the beginning of the formulation of particular policies or development projects. Empowerment has become one of the buzzwords of development in recent years in response to the growing awareness of power relations involved in development research (Mayoux & Johnson, 2007). The anticipation of empowerment is that participation will lead to greater self-awareness and confidence and contributes to the development of democracy.

Some have equated the promotion of participatory approaches with the end of the Cold War and a way for Western ideas of democracy to be implemented in low

income countries. Wilfried Thamwitz, a senior vice-president of the World Bank's Policy Research and External Affairs Department, in a speech to the donor community at the Development Assistance Committee of the OECD in 1990, announced this new approach to development:

The end of the Cold War offers an historic opportunity to shape a new, more people oriented pattern of world security...The World Bank has learned from its experience of development that popular participation is important to the success of projects economically, environmentally and socially (Feeny, 1998, p.12)

The key arguments for participation in development can be generally aligned to the two camps that dominate educational development discourse; human rights and economic. The first is usefully summarised by Kendall (2007) as reflecting both human rights and anticolonial (or postcolonial as I would describe it) arguments. The argument goes that individuals and communities who receive development aid should have a role in deciding what this development may look like. In doing this, it democratises and decolonises development approaches, empowers communities and means that policies are implemented which are relevant and contextually grounded. This is a convincing argument but it is one that exists more in the rhetoric for participative methods rather than in the implementation processes of most participatory development projects. The second, and more prominent, argument is one driven by a techno-rationale for the need to have a 'stakeholder buy-in' so as to correct previous development failures through local ownership. Here, it can be argued that this is participatory in word alone while the former approach encourages a participatory outlook throughout the policy formulation and implementation process.

Despite this 'bad press' that participatory approaches have received in development, they still have much to promise if done genuinely. They allow the potential for the individuals and communities who receive development aid to shape what this

development may look like. In doing this, it could democratise and decolonise development approaches, empower communities and allow for policies to be implemented which are relevant and contextually grounded. Participatory approaches hence offer a possible way to engage local perceptions in the policymaking process and challenge the power relations discussed in the previous section. However, the concept of community participation is one that is widely promoted in the development industry, but as argued convincingly by Rose (2003a) among others, is one that is not well-executed. Some authors have accurately pointed out that for such local voice to be heard, those in power will need to accept different approaches to development that may not necessarily produce models of educational planning and practices that they agree with (Nelson & Wright, 1998; Mosse, 2001). Nelson and Wright (1998) conclude that a fully participatory approach, would likely result in models that, at least partially, do not resemble what those in power expect or want.

Despite these substantial critiques, participatory approaches remain popular in international development and the values and principles of empowerment, together with the legitimisation of all types of knowledge, are ones that are worthy and of particular relevance for this study. They are also widely used in research through approaches such as participatory action research to enable greater involvement and direction from the participants themselves (Whyte, 1991). As discussed below, they are also often promoted in research with children, young people and in communities who are less used to traditional methods such as questionnaires. Furthermore, the adoption of a partly participative research design in this study is in line with the importance placed on participation for defining educational quality in Chapter 2. As Kendall (2007, p.706) explains, ‘much of the work currently done to improve

educational quality is only shallowly intersecting with communities', parents', children's, and teachers' daily educational experiences and desires ... educational quality, as defined by various local and non-local actors, could be strengthened by good participatory approaches'. This highlights the potential that participatory approaches in local communities could have for the raising of the quality of education in Sub-Saharan Africa and supports my rationale for using a participatory-based methodological approach.

The postcolonial paradigm

In this section, I will discuss the main concepts espoused in postcolonial theory and how this frames the study. I have found that much of the postcolonial literature is predominantly theoretical. I purposively present my methodology as postcolonial and so will also discuss how postcolonialism filters throughout my data collection and analysis. As Denzin and Lincoln (2000, p.157) explain:

Epistemology asks, how do I know the world? What is the relationship between the inquirer and the known? Every epistemology...implies an ethical-moral stance towards the world and the self of the researcher.

I am guided by a constructivist epistemology in understanding that how I know the world is dependent on my own social reality since knowledge is something which is contextually constructed. Gill (1995, p.169) summarises this viewpoint as 'knowledge constructs rather than reflects reality ... all knowledge claims are treated with scepticism, and all truth claims are being in principle undecidable, since there is no transcendent standpoint from which 'the Real' can be directly apprehended'. By seeing the world as one of multiple realities, I am, thus, sceptical of the meta-narratives that are so dominant in educational development and, as described below, I

am driven by a postcolonial desire to break down these narratives and include more diverse voices in the formulation of what is important in education.

Taking a postcolonial perspective, for me, means an understanding that knowledge is not only socially but also politically constructed. In a global world order, some people's reality or knowledge is deemed to be more valid than that of another. For centuries, and particularly since the Enlightenment, Western 'knowledge' has been widely understood to be more rational and scientific than 'other' ways of knowing which has often meant that it is deemed more valid (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1997; Tuhiwai-Smith, 2006). As a worldview which is particularly critical of how power impacts on whose knowledge counts, I have found postcolonialism to be useful for theorising whose conceptualisations of quality in Kenyan education are sought and how these viewpoints are constructed as the only reality or way of understanding educational quality.

Postcolonial theory was first developed by writers such as Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1981) and Chinua Achebe (1977) as a critical approach for studying literature and culture in postcolonial settings. The 'post' indicates that it is related to the analysis of countries who are in the aftermath of colonialism but that it also shares some of the epistemological assumptions of postmodernism and poststructuralism. Postcolonialism is best described 'as a critical idiom; through which to analyse discursively the continuing legacy of European imperialism and colonialism and to uncover the oppositional discourses of those who have struggled against its lingering effects' (Tikly, 2004, p.173). A number of postcolonial writers have critiqued the imperial heritage in education. For example, Tikly (1999) and Hickling-Hudson

(2004) have both shown how the colonial education system, and with it the implications for knowledge production and control, in large part remains in many postcolonial countries. This is significant in the light of the compelling argument of Lomba (2005) that colonial epistemologies were closely linked to institutions, including schools, and these discourses served to maintain a level of power and control over the colonised subjects. Of particular note in the Kenyan context, Wa Thiong'o (1981, p.12) highlighted the powerful effects of the continued use of the colonial language in postcolonial Kenya in *Decolonising the Mind* when he chose to write in his own language of Gikuyu and encouraged other African writers to discard colonial languages in their art since 'language and literature were taking us further and further from ourselves to other selves, from our world to other worlds'. By promoting the use of African languages, Wa Thiong'o hoped to 'decolonise the minds' of young Africans who were subconsciously seeing the colonial language as superior. Furthermore, postcolonial critiques do not stay within national boundaries and the legacy on curricula and the education systems. As outlined in Chapter 2, viewing contemporary policy relations as neo-imperial is a useful conceptual tool for critical analysis of Western influences in low income settings.

A postcolonial perspective emphasises the relationship between knowledge and power through exploring the ways in which constructions of knowledge are set within specific power relations and using particular language. The seminal work of Edward Said (1988), *Orientalism*, has had great influence on the postcolonial tradition. His central argument is that the West formulated a particular, and purposively lesser, image of the 'other' in the Orient as a means of communal validation. The construction of the 'other' is a specific way to create meaning for society – it is a

contrasting image of just what that society is not (or what it does not want to portray itself to be) or what Said (1988, p.3) describes as 'a Western style for dominating, restructuring and having authority over the Orient'. Said, theoretically, draws on both Foucault and Gramsci to highlight the relationship between knowledge, language and power and the exploration of the construction of the 'other' as a form of cultural hegemony. The knowledge constructed about the 'other' Orient by those in the Occident serves to legitimate the deployment of Western power. For Said, it is not a coincidence that colonialism and Enlightenment thinking came hand in hand. As the Enlightenment's universal thirst for knowledge and will for totalising and positivistic narratives grew, it fed Orientalism's will to power. In a similar fashion, Comaroff and Comaroff (1997, p.689) have described the construction of Africa in the mindset of eighteenth century Britain, as 'a by-product of the making of modern European self-consciousness'.

Said's discussion of representation as an 'historical fact of domination' is of particular note and is the basis of *The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, philosophy and the order of knowledge* by Mudimbe (1988) which charts the history of the portrayal of Africa in the Western world and uses similar notions of otherness to Said's *Orientalism*. As Mazrui (2005, p.69) reminds us, for both Mudimbe and Said, the other is perceived as 'exotic, intellectually retarded, emotionally sensual, governmentally despotic, culturally passive and politically penetrable'. The discussion by Mudimbe (1988, p.15) of 'epistemological ethnocentrism' is particularly illuminating as he presents a series of examples of Western explorers, missionaries and later colonisers who, within the parameters of colonial discourse which had already been defined, reaffirmed how Africa would become known (and it can be argued continues to be known). A central

aim of postcolonialism is to counter such prevailing models and present (rather than represent) postcolonial voices and alternative 'truths'.

Said and Mudimbe's texts both offer excellent insights to the discourses that shaped the way in which the Orient and Africa were 'invented'. Much postcolonial analysis has focused on colonial discourses and the ways in which language, texts and visual representations legitimised colonial control. However, it has contemporary application in the critical analysis of the ways in which Eurocentric modalities and theories continue to dominate educational policymaking in postcolonial settings. It can be argued that the West continues to exert cultural hegemony by deciding what knowledge is valid. This, as a critical approach, has a lot to offer for interrogating the dominance of human capital theory and rights-based approaches to educational development and conceptions of quality. Its application can further reveal the ways in which reliance on such Eurocentric values and ideals has silenced alternative and potentially more relevant ways of knowing and practising education. Here language is of particular note. As was discussed in Chapter 2, Spivak (1999) describes the ways in which such Western ideals are transferred into low income countries as a form of epistemological violence. Hickling Hudson, Matthews and Woods (2004, p.5) summarise this postcolonial concern between knowledge and power by stating that 'truth and knowledge rest on the power to produce, regulate, circulate and consume information'.

The postcolonial concern with language resonates with poststructuralism. Although I am aware of the paradox of promoting elements of both postmodernism and poststructuralism since these have been critiqued for being steeped in Eurocentric

values, there are some ways in which postcolonialism has drawn on poststructural concerns with language and power. I have found the following quote from *Alice Through the Looking Glass* by Carroll (2003, chap.6) to be very useful in understanding the relationship between language and power:

When I use a word,' Humpty Dumpty said in a rather scornful tone, 'it means just what I choose it to mean – neither more nor less'. 'The question is', said Alice, 'whether you can make words mean so many different things.' 'The question is', said Humpty Dumpty, 'which is to be Master – that's all.

This is one example of what is described by poststructural authors as logocentrism - as the privileging of one term over another so as to construct notions of superiority (Norris, 2002). Poststructural analysis aims to deconstruct such notions as they appear in texts and reveal the values and interests suppressed beneath the surface of the text and the knowledge presented. This resonates with a principal aim of the postcolonial tradition and is an approach which I draw upon for the analysis of the Kenyan secondary education policy documents, as is discussed later in this chapter.

There are clear connections between the prioritisation of local voice and the postmodernist's scepticism with the grand narrative. In *The Postmodern Condition*, Lyotard argued against the potential for a single metanarrative, maintaining instead that one can only tell the small stories from the positioning of individuals or contained social groups (Agger, 1991, p.116). For Lyotard, modernity had been characterised as the time of the macro-narrative and there was a need for a shift to postmodernity and an abundance of micro-narratives. One of the main criticisms of postmodernism is that, although it is helpful to highlight the importance of context and subjectivity, it fundamentally creates exaggerated relativism. Surely not all communities, people or nations are entirely different from one another? Postcolonialism does not tend to be

tarred with the same brush here since few postcolonial theorists would espouse relativism; rather it seeks to hear micro-narratives to break down the power structure represented by the meta-narrative. Thus, the contribution of postmodernism to postcolonialism is an interest in how 'differential experiences of the world are framed by the discourses and practices that constitutes the experience of being ... person of colour at a given historical moment' (Agger, 1991, p.117). In the design of the local-level case study, I also drew on aspects of the interpretive/hermeneutic paradigm in its emphasis on the co-construction of knowledge, specifically related to *verstehen* which Snape and Spencer (2003, p.7) describe as the 'studying people's lived experiences which occur in a specific historical and social context'.

As noted above, postcolonialism is often critiqued for being a theoretical viewpoint rather than a philosophical paradigm that frames the research study as a whole. In the following section, I outline the research design of the study which was devised with postcolonial concerns in mind for framing the research process, especially so in the field. Furthermore, there has been much written in the postcolonial literature for the need to deconstruct the 'us and them' binaries that continue to dominate Western perceptions of Africa. Much of this literature remains at the theoretical level while considerably less has been written about the need to challenge such perceptions (whether recognised or even recognisable) in conducting fieldwork in Africa. At its very basic level, postcolonialism is about power and the continuing effects of previous power structures as they prevail today. My study takes place at both the national and local levels. Exploring how power plays out, at the policy level, while seeking to transfer some of the power to minority voices, at the grassroots level is, for me, not

only a theoretical aim of the research but also something which must be reflected upon throughout the methodological experience.

I, thus, use postcolonial theory as the framing of the study – in the rationale for the research design, reflection upon power relations in the field and for considering power more widely in the research process through, for example, the application of Western ethical guidelines and the language used in collecting the data and disseminating the findings. At the national level, taking a postcolonial approach has meant that I have seen policy as discourse and that the formulation of the policy sits within neo-imperial power relations (Ball, 1990; Tikly, 2004). At the local level, postcolonial concerns with power led me to consider participative methods to allow for participant-designed data. I viewed my qualitative research approach as a ‘participative activity to generate knowledge, a two-way learning process, where the subjectivities of the research participants influence data collection and the process of “making meaning”’ (Shah, 2004, p.552). With this in mind, I turn in the next section to outline the research approach for this study and further explain the rationale for this choice.

A case study research strategy

This study adopted the qualitative research design of a two-tiered case study. This took place at:

1. **The national level:** a critical analysis of quality in the secondary education policy documents.
2. **The local level:** an in-depth case study of the challenges faced in practice and the ways in which quality is conceptualised at two mixed, day secondary schools in one rural community in the Kisii region.

A case study approach is favoured by many educational researchers and is described by one author as 'a prime strategy for developing educational theory which illuminates educational policy and enhances educational practice' (Bassey, 1999, p.1). It allows for a researcher to conduct an in-depth study 'when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context' and explore the complexities of that phenomenon (Yin, 2003, p.1). As such I deemed it to be an appropriate research design given my stated purpose to explore and represent the views of those usually excluded from policy making (Crossley & Vulliamy, 1984; Stake, 1995). This case study was both descriptive and exploratory (Yin, 2003). In the first place, the research presented a narrative account of quality in FSE as described by the local stakeholders in the case study schools. This was deemed to be particularly important since FSE is only in its early stages and so has not been documented fully. However, I also explored the complexities of quality in education and the ways in which local representations compare with national policy.

One of the principal strengths of using a case study approach is the ability to deal with a full range of evidence using many different data collection techniques (Yin 2003). This approach allows for an holistic understanding of the lives of the people in a study from their own perspective, own context and in their own words and concepts (Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2011). The role of a qualitative researcher has been described as a bricoleur – a jack-of-all-trades in data collection. I argue that this was particularly applicable to my role in conducting case study in which I used different techniques and tools to create a bricolage: 'a complex, dense, reflexive, collage-like creation that represents the researcher's images, understandings, and interpretations of the world or phenomenon under analysis' (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, p.4). The

particular techniques which I used – loosely structured interviews, visual participative methods, experiential knowledge, and policy analysis - are discussed at length in the following section.

I entered the field with a roughly-worked plan of the methods that I would use and the participant groups I wished to include in the study. Box 4.1 shows the research plan that I used as my ‘rough-guide’ for framing my data collection. However, consistent with the literature on case studies, I recognised that one of its advantages was flexibility in the field so I was sensitive to the prospect that methods used and sampling could change dramatically.

INITIAL RESEARCH PLAN			
Research Site	Participant Group	Methods	Number
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION	Policy Documentation Analysis		
OMWANA & ESKURU SECONDARY SCHOOLS (SPLIT EVENLY ACROSS BOTH)	Teachers	Observation Semi-structured Interviews	N/A 12
	Form IV Students	Observation	N/A
		Diary-linked interviews Photo-linked interviews	10 10
Board of Governors	Semi-structured Interviews	6	
WIDER COMMUNITY	Parents	Semi-structured Interviews	10
	Local Dignitaries	Semi-structured Interviews	6

Box 4.1: Intended methods

As Stake (1995, p.43) argues, ‘an ongoing interpretive role of the researcher is prominent in qualitative case study’ and my own immersion in the two schools added greatly to my own understanding of the specificities of the local environment and the phenomenon in all its complexity. Malinowski (1922) once famously wrote that the ethnographer should not enter the field with ‘preconceived ideas’ that shut the mind to inquiry. Instead, he proposed that ethnography should be undertaken with a

‘foreshadowed problem’ in mind. This idea was central to the way in which I approached the research problem in the field. However, in my flexible approach I also drew on some of the principles of grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Piantanida, Tananis & Grubs, 2004). Box 4.2 shows the final data outputs of my study. The most significant difference between the two is the inclusion of essays and posters produced by Form I-III students since I had not envisaged bringing such rich data.

ACTUAL RESEARCH OUTPUTS			
Research Site	Participant Group	Methods	Number
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION	Policy Documentation Analysis		
OMWANA & ESKURU SECONDARY SCHOOLS (SPLIT EVENLY ACROSS BOTH)	Teachers (and school staff)	Observation Semi-structured Interviews	N/A 16
	Form IV Students	Observation Diary-linked interviews Photo-linked interviews	N/A 10 10
	Form III Students	Essays	20
	Form I & II Students	Posters	8 groups
	Management Committee (including Head teacher and Deputy)	Semi-structured Interviews	10
WIDER COMMUNITY	Parents	Unstructured Interviews	13
	Local Dignitaries	Semi-structured Interviews	6

Box 4.2: Final outputs

These two sections have given the justification of the theoretical and methodological framework and research design. In the next section, the selection of the case study community and schools is explained before moving to a discussion of the participant groups involved and data collection methods used within this setting.

The two-level case study

The case study design, broken down across the two levels, is shown in Figure 4.1. This shows the participant groups chosen, methods used and analysis techniques employed. In this section, each of these areas is described. First, stage one of the case study – the national level policy analysis – is outlined. This covers the selection of the policy documents and the analysis approach developed. There follows the details of stage two of the case study beginning with how the Inka community and Omwana and Eskuru Secondary Schools were selected. The participant groups, data collection methods and analysis approach are then discussed.

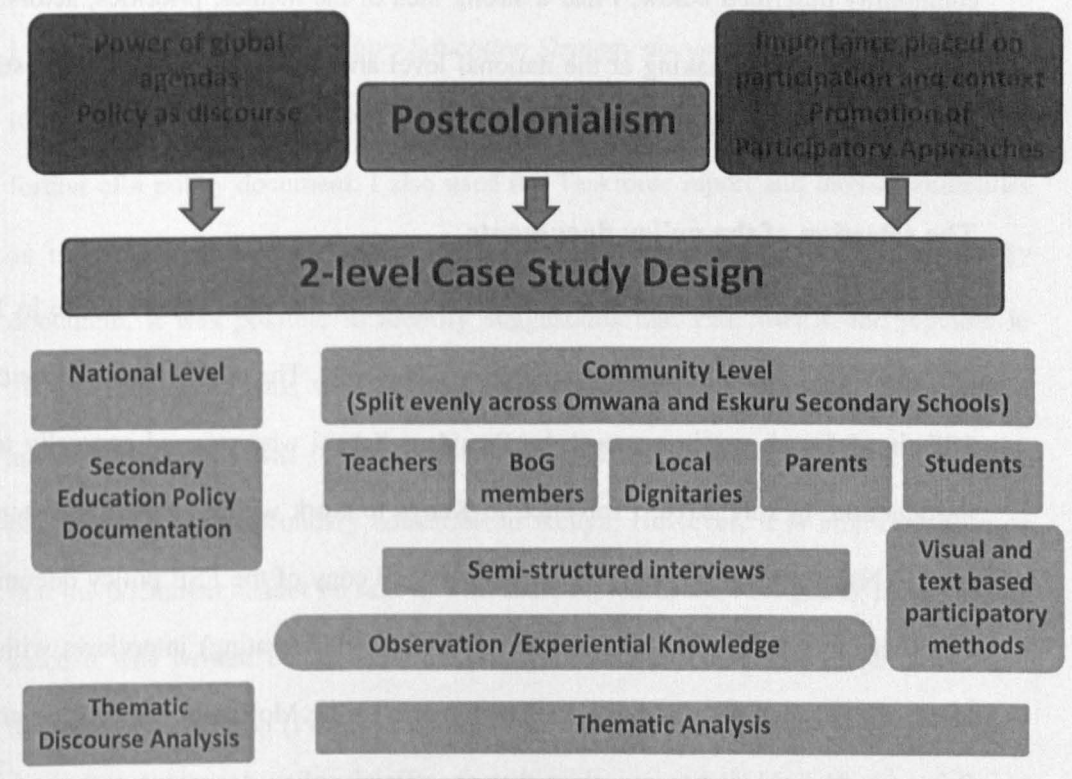


Figure 4.1: Research Design

Stage 1: National Level

Stage one of the case study took place between July and September of 2010. This was the policy analysis of the FSE policy documentation to answer the first research question:

RQ1: How is quality defined in the Kenyan FSE policy documents?

The analysis of the documents and the write-up of the findings took place before stage two of the case study fieldwork began. This allowed me to fully answer my first research question as a stand-alone analysis. I felt this was important to address before I delved into the perceptions at the local level. Therefore, on entering the case study community described below, I had a strong idea of the themes, priorities, actors and influences on policymaking at the national level and this impacted on the questions asked and observations made while in the field.

The selection of the policy documents

I first sought any documentation related to FSE online via the MoE website in June 2010 and was unable to identify any policy documents. The only written reference to FSE that I found was in a speech by President Kibaki who referred generally to its introduction. In July 2010, I travelled to Kenya to work with EPAfrica and stopped over in Nairobi for a few days to seek out a hard copy of the FSE policy document. Through a number of exploratory (and often rather frustrating) interviews with the Head of FSE in Kenya, a number of employees in the MoE and at the Government Printer in Nairobi, it became clear that an official policy document regarding FSE does not exist. Furthermore, there was no indication that a written policy for FSE was in the pipeline and, in lieu, I was given the *Secondary Education Strategy 2007-2010*, published by the MoE (2007a). This is not to say that there is no evidence of the FSE policy initiative in documentation; rather that they are not widely available or used in

practice. There are two written sources. Firstly, the Task Force Report on FSE in Kenya chaired by Dr Eddah W. Gachukia which interviews revealed is a restricted document, not widely accessible outside the MoE (2007b). Secondly, there were the interim Guidelines for the Implementation of Free Secondary Education: A Memo for Head teachers and District Education Officers (MoE, 2008). Head teachers with whom I spoke in the summer of 2010 through my work with EPAfrica, could not remember having seen these guidelines. This either meant that the memo did not reach all schools or that it was not presented in a way which was accessible or meaningful to those teachers whom I met.

I decided to select the *Secondary Education Strategy document* for analysis in relation to Research Question 1 since this was the only document widely available and in the format of a policy document. I also used the Taskforce report and interim guidelines as reference documents. Through a reading of the Secondary Education Strategy document, it was possible to identify suggestions that FSE was in the pipeline in 2007. Furthermore, this was the policy document given to me at the MoE which suggested that this was the main document referred to within the MoE and more publicly regarding secondary education in Kenya. However, it is important to note that the document cannot be said to wholesale represent the FSE policy in its entirety since it was written before the FSE policy came into being and under a different Minister of Education (Professor Saitoti was replaced by Professor Ongeru in 2008). In Chapter 6, the FSE policy is analysed by exploring its lack of existence and through themes identified in the Secondary Education Strategy document.

Analysing policy as discourse: thematic discourse analysis

As shown in Chapter 3, there is a history since independence of numerous policies shaping Kenyan educational priorities. Repeated policy decisions have shifted the ways in which education is practiced, for example, in the introduction of the FPE policy in 2003 which brought with it widespread reform regarding access to primary education (Kamunde, 2010). However, in my experience, Kenyan education policy does not dictate day-to-day practice in schools resulting in a wide gap between policy and practice following implementation. Policy documentation is often not widely available and consensus among head teachers whom I have spoken to is that documents are written more for the purpose of securing donor funding than to shift educational practice. In the light of this and in line with my theoretical position which highlights the role of power in educational development, it is important to view education policy in Kenya as discourse (Ball, 1994). This recognition of educational policy documentation as discursive is central to the design of my analysis approach.

Documents are used in educational research to 'try to gain realistic insights into various contexts, issues and organisations and to analyse and interpret the meanings transmitted by certain types of documents' (Harber 1997). My work is aligned with interpretations of documents that reflect constructivist arguments that texts must be read and understood as representative of 'fields, frames and networks of action' rather than as 'stable, static and pre-defined artefacts' (Prior 2003). Documents, thus, cannot be read without analysing the context within which they are written and the actors who have influenced and written them. In the light of this and my theoretical perspective drawn from the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 and the postcolonial paradigm outlined above, I chose to analyse the secondary education policy documentation using a combination of thematic analysis and critical discourse

analysis. This analysis approach which I developed from these two traditional approaches draws on Foucault's definition of discourse and the assumption that policy is discursive (see Chapter 2 for both). It can be described as a deconstructive and interpretative reading of both the key themes present in the text and the conditions within which the text was written.

The approach I developed combines an identification of key themes with a more abstract analysis of Foucauldian power-knowledge relations through adapting Fairclough's three-dimensional framework as shown below (Fairclough, 1992).

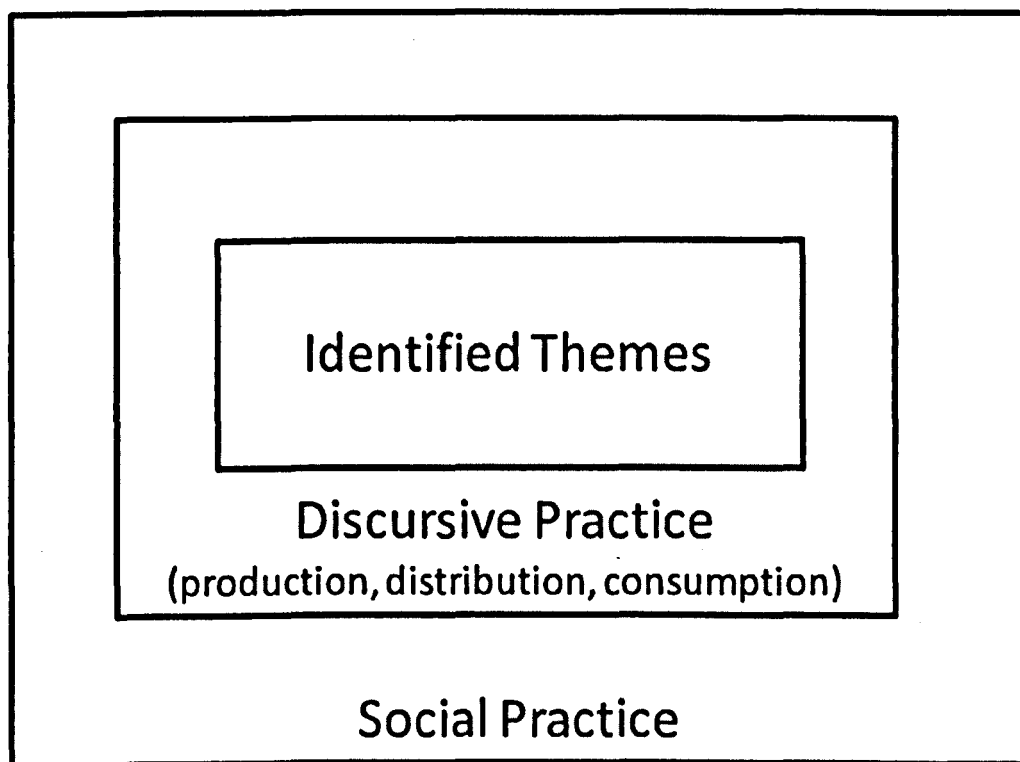


Figure 4.2: A framework for thematic discourse analysis

Fairclough's original framework moves from description of the text, to interpretation, through to explanation. Fairclough calls these (in order) textual, processing and social analyses. My main amendment to this approach was to replace the more linguistically grounded textual analysis with thematic analysis. In practice, this meant first

conducting an iterative thematic analysis of the text drawing on the ideas of hermeneutics (Gadamer, 1976). This meant moving back and forth between the document, the theoretical literature and the themes as they developed. Secondly, the text was analysed within what Fairclough (1992) describes as 'its discursive practice' which means seeing it as something which is produced, circulated distributed and consumed in society. Finally, grounded in Althusser's theory about ideology and Gramsci's idea of hegemony, the social practice within which the discourse is seen to operate was analysed (Fairclough, 1992). This allowed for an interrogation of the themes identified in the text on analysis of the way that knowledge and 'truth' were constructed in the document and a reflection on the underlying and unstated power relations at work in the construction of that text (Mills, 1997).

Stage 2: Local Level

The second part of the case study design involved four and a half months research in the Inka community during May – September, 2011. This meant that I was in the schools for the majority of the summer term (April-August) and I also had three weeks of holiday, during which time I could visit parents in their homes, as well as the local dignitaries. While it was term time, I split my time evenly across Omwana and Eskuru schools. As shown in Figure 4.1, this stage of the case study involved a range of participants and qualitative research methods. With teachers, BoG members and local dignitaries, I conducted semi-structured interviews while with parents, I used very loosely structured interviews. A select number of Form I and II students drew posters and Form III students wrote essays. Form IV students engaged in either photo or diary-linked interviews. I also used observation and drew on my own experiential knowledge of working in secondary schools in rural Kisii. These techniques were used to collect data to answer:

RQ2: What does a quality secondary education look like for a range of local stakeholders?

And its two sub-questions:

RQ2a: What makes a good secondary school?

RQ2b: What are the purposes of secondary education?

And:

RQ3: What are the main challenges facing secondary education in practice in the two schools?

The selection of the Case Study Community and Schools

In 2004, I worked in Tang'ana Secondary School with EPAfrica and lived with a project partner within the market village of Inka for ten weeks. I have continued to visit the school, the community and friends there since, including for example choosing a school five kilometres from Inka to receive EPAfrica investment in 2010. In fact, during my data collection I lived with the family of the ex-head teacher of Tang'ana who has become a dear friend over the past seven years. As discussed below, my experience and position in the community made me more of an insider and I was able to draw on experiential knowledge in my data collection and analysis. Because of these reasons, I took little hesitation in choosing Inka as my case study community. The fact that I was already widely known (by my Kisii name of Nyansiaboka) also helped with securing access to the schools initially and in gaining the trust and confidence of informants during the fieldwork process; particularly with the local stakeholders. The town is approximately twenty kilometres from Kisii town and feels more rural since it is eight kilometres from a tarmac road. The vast majority

of occupants are small-scale (shamba) farmers, growing primarily maize, tea, beans and avocados (more details are given in Chapter 6).

There are six secondary schools that are within three kilometres of Inka market, of which two are provincial boarding schools and so did not fit with my aim to research schools and capture the views of the Inka community. Furthermore, as discussed in Chapter 3, provincial boarding schools have higher fees and so are beyond the financial means of the majority of the local community. I excluded Tang'ana as a possible case study school given that I had previously worked there and there would thus be issues both for validity and ethical concerns relating to power relations. Regarding the former, since EPAfrica's focus is on buying resources with the aim of improving quality, I was concerned that if I were asking questions around quality, some would respond with answers around resources since they may feel that is what I wanted to hear. Of the remaining three schools, two are Catholic and one is Pentecostal. I decided that I wanted case study schools with two different religious sponsors given that my experience with EPAfrica and wider research conducted within the NGO suggest that the religious affiliation impacts the school's approach regarding, for example, the promotion of condom use. Omwana Secondary School is the Pentecostal school. I then chose Eskuru Secondary School as the Catholic school using selective sampling since I knew the deputy head teacher and this would help me to secure access. I wrote to the head teachers of the two schools in March 2011 to ask permission to conduct research in their schools (see Appendix 1). I secured research clearance from the government of Kenya on arrival in Nairobi in May 2011 before reaching the schools and getting head teacher verbal clearance to allow me to research in their schools for a defined period.

The Case Study School Participants

The participant groups included in the case study are students, parents, teachers, BoG members and local dignitaries. I purposively chose to get a wide constituency of participants in line with postcolonial and social justice concerns for more democratic participation in defining policy priorities and educational quality (Tikly and Barrett 2011). Furthermore, as a relative outsider to the community and schools, I did not want to prioritise one group over another based on my own judgment or perspective of who may be the most 'informed' or have the most valid 'knowledge'.

Teachers

It has been argued that there are a paucity of examples in education policymaking which fully incorporate teacher viewpoints despite a number of authors highlighting the importance of teacher involvement in policy development (Hargreaves, 1992; Jessop & Penny, 1998). During the nineties there was a growth in the number of studies on teacher voice and narrative, something which Jessop and Penny (1998, p.391) have equated with an increasing recognition of the integral role that teachers play 'in a changing educational world'. However, in the African context, this has rarely translated into a concrete involvement of teachers in the policymaking process. As Jessop and Penny (1998, p.393) further explain, 'the omission of teacher voice in policy-making continues to represent a failure to understand and take account of endogenous value systems, and to recognise that teachers themselves have explicit and implicit theories about how to achieve sustainable educational change and development'.

Govender's thesis documents the limited extent to which teachers participated in the formulation of the South African Schools Act of 1996. Govender (2009) concludes

that teachers experienced 'dual marginalisation' in the policy arena since there were no opportunities to formally engage in the state policymaking process and they were not represented democratically by the teacher unions. The concept that some knowledge is better than others is also a main feature of this work by Govender (2009, p.i) as it critiques the South African government's adoption of an expert-driven model of policy-making 'wherein the views and contributions of experts are more highly valued than those of ordinary citizens, including teachers'. These examples show the importance of recognising the role of teachers in the fabric of Kenyan schools and involving them in the formulation part of the policy process.

In the light of this, I decided to conduct semi-structured interviews with teachers - sixteen interviews, in total, with teachers and school staff members. I spent three weeks observing lessons and spending time with teachers in the staffroom and alongside them in non-teaching activities. After this, I called a short staff meeting so that teachers could ask me any questions about my research that may have occurred to them during this initial period especially related to ethical issues. At this time, I asked them to tell me if they did not wish to be interviewed. At each of the case study schools, I interviewed four TSc teachers and two BoG employed teachers. With this initial quota sampling, I used opportunistic sampling to choose the interviewees through working together with a senior master at each school, I then organised interviews based on compatibility with the school timetable. Although I had not included school workers in my original plan, my observations and off-record discussions with them made me realise that they had real insight about the school and, often more so than the teachers, about the surrounding community. During August, I interviewed two school workers from each case study school using a similar core discussion guide to the used with teachers.

School management

The importance placed on school management in the delivery of quality education across the global development approaches was outlined in Chapter 2 while Chapter 3 showed some of the challenges facing managers of schools specifically in Kenya. Driven by global trends for decentralisation in educational management, the BoG in Kenyan secondary schools have taken on increased responsibility in the day-to-day management of the school. For example, they have complete control for the school's accounts and teacher recruitment and are therefore an integral part of the school infrastructure (Sang & Sang, 2011). I therefore wanted to interview BoG members to explore their competencies and comfort in this role and to understand their perceptions of quality.

I also included the head teacher and deputy within this category of interviewees since my experience with EPAfrica suggests that it is their roles in managing their staff and the school timetable that defines their position within the school rather than their teaching responsibilities. As discussed in Chapter 3, both the PRISM project and Kamunde's thesis further highlight the importance of the head teacher participating in discussions about educational policy, management and quality within Kenya since they are often excluded from the policymaking process but are subsequently expected to bear the brunt of the implementation of a given education policy (Crossley *et al.*, 2005). In the evaluation for PRISM, the feedback from head teachers was viewed to be important in its successful implementation. One of the key arguments of Kamunde (2010) is that head teachers need to be involved in the reform initiation phase of policy making so that they can own and implement educational change. I therefore wanted to explore both their views of quality that could feed into the initial phase of

the policymaking cycle and their perceptions of the challenges that have come with current policies. I conducted semi-structured interviews with the BoG chairman, the Parent and Teacher Association (PTA) chairman, another BoG member, the head teacher and the deputy of each case study school using the core questions from the teacher topic guide with added questions regarding their own roles and perceived competencies in carrying these out.

Students

While children have long been the subjects of educational research, it is only relatively recently that children have been recognised as participating subjects (Cox *et al.*, 2008). As Karlsson (2001) has further critiqued, there can be a tendency among some researchers to construct children as objects of research rather than participating subjects often precipitated by the fact that learner participation in school-based research is relatively limited. I chose to include students because, as supported by the wealth of data analysed in later chapters, they can bring unique and specific insights...

...about their everyday lives at home and school and their view and hopes for their futures – which can easily slip below the horizons of older inquirers. The omission of these perspectives can easily lead to researchers making interpretations and representations that are very short-sighted and which miss the point. (Thomson, 2008, p.1)

I was acutely aware that as the ‘consumers’ of educational policy and the direct beneficiaries of education in practice, students would have a lot to say about their own education. However, with my experience within EPAfrica, students can be reluctant to share their views or lack confidence to feel that they may be able to say anything that might be useful for me. This was backed up throughout the fieldwork process as students often asked me questions such as ‘is this the sort of thing you want me to

say’, ‘can I take a photo of...’ and ‘I’m just writing about my normal life, are you sure that is good enough’. In the light of this, I chose to use a range of participative methods with students from each of the four classes spanning both secondary schools so as involve students actively in the research project (as described below). Together with the Form IV class teacher and the head teacher of each school, I chose twelve groups of students to draw posters from Forms I and II, twenty Form III students to write essays and twenty Form IV students half of whom were given a camera, the other half a diary after which I conducted interviews as described below. I used some basic quotas to chose the students. This was not in an attempt to get a representative sample but to include a variety of voices across gender and ability. At each school, I had an equal gender split but I had a sample with more high achieving students than an even spread across ability. This was because the class teachers prioritised choosing students that were reliable and these were viewed by those teachers not to include the poorest performing students. It is therefore important to note that the students’ narratives given in Chapters 6 and 7 are the stories of those individuals rather than reflective of students across the spectrum.

Parents

Parents are arguably the largest silent voice in educational policy making in Kenya; something which differs from many other countries, especially in the North. Facilitating parental and wider community participation in education is deemed by many to be an integral aspect of improving educational quality, especially in rural areas (Kendall, 2007). While the MoE may argue that the PTA is representative of parental views in a particular school in the Kenyan context, I wanted to include parents more widely; especially those that may not normally feel comfortable engaging in any school-based activities. For example, I made especial effort to

conduct all interviews in Ekegusii so that I could include non-English speakers (especially grandparents and mothers) who may not normally feel comfortable in expressing an opinion in a PTA forum at the schools. Having said this, I was constrained to a certain extent since it was the head teachers in each school that helped me to identify potential interviewees so I would not wish to overly state the extent to which I was able to access the ‘totally silent’ voices.

Of the ten students identified at each school, five parents were then selected by the Form IV class teacher with my prompting that I did not need parents that were engaged at school, educated or that could speak English. After nine interviews (one of the planned interviews did not take place because of illness) and driven by the grounded theory principle of data saturation, I decided to organise four more from among the ten remaining parents without the input of the class teacher since it was during the holiday period (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The four interviewees stood out as those that spent less time at the school but apart from this, showed no other collective characteristics or opinions. A full profile of the parent participants is given in Box 4.3. Of the thirteen interviews, two were with grandfathers, one with a grandmother, three with fathers and seven with mothers. To protect their identity, grandparents have been classed as papa and mama in the findings.

Parental profile		
School	Pseudonym	Occupation
Eskuru	Papa Samuel	Lumberjack
Eskuru	Mama Susan	Shamba farmer
Eskuru	Papa Dennis	Farmer & Local administrator
Eskuru	Mama Innocent	Shamba farmer
Eskuru	Mama Joseph	Local businessperson
Eskuru	Mama Ruth	Shamba farmer
Omwana	Mama Dorothy	Local businessperson
Omwana	Papa Jacob	Lunberjack
Omwana	Mama Damaris	Shamba farmer
Omwana	Papa Benjamin	Shamba farmer
Omwana	Mama Alfred	Local businessperson
Omwana	Mama Belinda	Primary school teacher
Omwana	Papa Rachel	Shamba farmer

Box 4.3: Parental profile

Local dignitaries

Driven by a personal and literature-supported viewpoint that schools do not operate in isolation from the community in which they are situated, I also wanted to include some members of the wider community in my research sample. Given both time constraints and some reluctance on the behalf of some potential interviewees, I only secured six interviews with this participant group. In these interviews, I explored the insights of local administrators, both personally and in their professional opinion. These were particularly useful in allowing me to place the challenges and expectations that FSE had brought in the wider socio-cultural and economic context of the Inka community. From a practical perspective, they also informed me of the ways that schools are monitored by district education staff and meant I could see the link between the national policy level and the local level where the majority of my data were being collected. The six local administrators whom I interviewed were the District Quality and Assurance Officer, the Area Education Officer (AEO), the District Officer (DO), the District Commissioner (DC), a Clan Elder and the Chief.

The Case Study Research methods

In this section, I outline the research methods – experiential knowledge and observation, interviewing and participative visual and text-based methods – used at the local level and the thematic analysis approach used to analyse the data.

Experiential Knowledge and Observation

As Clandinin and Connelly (1995, p.153) accurately observe, ‘the social sciences are concerned with humans and their relations with themselves and their environments, and, as such, the social sciences are founded on the study of experience’. Alongside the methods outlined below which I used to understand participants’ experiences, a central facet that influenced both the data I collected and how I analysed these data was my own previous experience of working and living in the Inka community environment. Throughout my fieldwork I was building a complex and multi-layered knowledge web but this was built from an already existing knowledge base about the quality of secondary education in the Kisii region. Not only have I spent significant periods of time in Kisii over a period of seven years with EPAfrica, I have also become an identifiable figure both with partner head teachers and among NGO volunteers as a (relative) expert on school assessment. This is both in terms of assessing the suitability of a school for partnership and in advising volunteers related to their work within individual schools. For example, in 2010 I was asked by a project pair to attend a meeting with their head teacher to talk through financial planning processes to help him more efficiently manage school finances. I have visited more than fifty secondary schools in rural Kisii and I have also witnessed the distinct changes in the schools with which EPAfrica has worked over the past six years. This

niche knowledge which is very much Kisii-specific helped me to understand the school contexts.

Drawing on some aspects of ethnographic research, conducting observation allowed me as the researcher to gain an in-depth insight into the schools and the quality issues at play in the classroom over an extended period of time (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). I sat in on lessons and extra-curricular activities throughout my fieldwork time-period but especially in the early stages so as to immerse myself in the day-to-day life of the secondary school. I used my fieldwork diary to document everyday interactions between students, teachers and also the surrounding community (Punch, 2001). This observation in the first month of fieldwork in combination with my experiential knowledge fed into the preparation of interview questions and probes that were appropriate to those contexts. Through observations and my experience, I was then able to use what Davies (1997) calls 'intimate knowledge' to steer interviews rather than following a rigid set of questions in a specific order.

Interviewing

Interviews are one of the main methods used in social research, ranging from structured interviews which are used as a means of eliciting information in quantitative studies to unstructured narrative interviews most commonly used in narrative-based projects (Bryman, 2008; Mason, 2008). In qualitative research, interviews can be a good way of understanding individuals' constructions of reality, experiences and perceptions because they allow for 'participative knowledge construction' (Shah, 2004, p.552). A key differential between the use of interviews in quantitative and qualitative research is the role of the researcher. In the latter, the researcher's views and experiences are central to the interview process of 'making

meaning'. The term 'structured conversation' developed by Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) resonates particularly with my approach to interviewing in the field since it shows the interview as a two-way interaction and emphasises the importance of both participants in the 'knowledge construction'. A number of authors have written about the added dimensions that come with conducting qualitative interviews in settings which call for communicating across cultures. For example, Davies (1997, p.137) emphasises the importance of context:

Interviews in educational research are rarely the stimulus-response, knee-jerk reactions noted in physiology. From the very beginning they are a social event, and governed by a very complex set of social rules, understandings and obligations.

I conducted loosely structured interviews with parents, teachers, the school management and local dignitaries. I would describe the interviews as somewhere between semi-structured and unstructured in their design and I was flexible in the process to move between these different types of interviewing dependent upon the participant. One of the strengths of using interviews as a data collection tool is that it gives great flexibility in the field (Punch, 2001). My interviews, for example, with local dignitaries were more closely akin to a traditional semi-structured interview since I decided to adapt my interviewing approach to be appropriate to this participant group. I also adapted my interview approach to allow the interviews to be, at least partly, participant driven so that the data outputs were not solely based on my own preconceptions. Jones (1985, p.45) explains that 'in order to understand other persons' constructions of reality, we would do well to ask them ... and to ask them in such a way that they can tell us in their terms (rather than those imposed rigidly and a priori by ourselves) and in a depth which addresses the rich context that is the substance of their meanings'. It was also hoped that this would allow for findings to emerge organically during the process (Kvale, 1996). However, I needed to balance this with

the time pressures of often only having 45 minutes for an interview and wanting to have input from participants on a range of areas.

Rather than having a topic guide, I had a number of questions which I aimed to include in each interview dependent on the participant group which I developed following pilot interviews with teachers and parents. For the interviews with teachers and the school management, for example, I used the following question as the frame of the interview which the two of us could hang different themes and concepts from:

1. What, in your opinion are the main challenges facing the school and the students?
2. What do you think are the good things about the school?
3. What, in your opinion, is the purpose of secondary education?
4. And, how would you define a quality secondary education?
5. How far do you think the secondary school system as you see it in this school achieves the purpose and quality education that you have described?
6. If you could make changes to the current system as a whole or just within this school, what changes would you make, if any?
7. And, if you were to design the secondary education system, what would be your key principles upon which you would build it?

The majority of interviews took place in private studies and classrooms on the school grounds. Those with parents and a few of those with local dignitaries took place in homes and workplaces at their convenience. Most interviews were conducted in English with only the interviewee and myself present. I took minimal notes and recorded the interviews for later transcription. All the parent interviews, apart from one, and four of those with BoG members were conducted in Ekegusii with a

translator. As I discuss in the limitations of the study in Chapter 8, this evidently impacted on the validity of data collected. I was not able to source any professional Ekegusii-English translators in Kisii and I had to rely upon the head teachers and friends' recommendations within the Inka community. I secured the services of a first-year undergraduate student on summer holidays (who also happened to be the son of a teacher at one of the schools). Without his assistance, I would not have been able to involve the parent community but it did have practical limitations. He was an able research assistant and learnt quickly but he had no experience of translating and often did not repeat word for word what the interviewee was saying but rather summarized their main points. My inability to conduct the interview in Ekegusii had further clear implications for power differentials and how the parents felt as the one unable to speak English (the language seen to be associated with education and wealth).

Participative visual and text-based methods with students

I conducted twenty diary and photo-linked interviews with Form IV students, aged between 17 and 22. The photo-linked technique I used drew on the data collection method of 'Photovoice' which has been used predominantly in participatory community research to address issues of injustice, inequality and exploitation (Wang, 1999). Participants are encouraged to take photos and share their images and interpretations in focus group discussions. 'Photovoice' has not been widely used with school students so I also consulted other literature which has reflected on using cameras and diaries in research with children and young people (Karlsson, 2001; Sharples *et al.*, 2003; Mizen, 2005). These authors promote the use of participative methods for challenging the power relation between researcher and researched, engaging the younger and more shy research participant, giving children 'a voice' and

constructing new forms of knowledge (Packard, 2008). The choice of using diaries was based on a similar rationale.

It is important to note that although I describe the methods as participative, I did not take a participatory approach in my research and make no claims that my research could have similar outcomes to those hoped for in such studies (Whyte, 1991; Wang, 1999). A fully participatory approach would have involved participation of the students throughout the research process. This would include in the development of the research questions and data collection tools and full participation in the analysis and identification of key themes of the research. Wang (1999) also highlights the importance of the emancipatory aspects of participatory research. Participants can become empowered through the process of designing, collection and analysing data; a principle also at the heart of the promotion of PRAs, as discussed earlier in this chapter. I understand the methods I used to be participative because they involved some shift in power dynamics by allowing students to guide the data collection, through their choices in the data they collected and the form of the interview which followed.

Put simply, the participative techniques that I used offer a combination of participant observation (without the presence of the researcher) and unstructured interviewing. In the latter, I used the photos and diaries as props for these interviews, allowing the learner-initiated images and words to lead the discussion rather than my own preconceived questions. This allowed for participative knowledge construction, as Harper explains (2002, p.23):

My enthusiasm for photo elicitation also comes from the collaboration it inspires. When two or more people discuss the

meaning of photographs they try to figure out something together. This is, I believe, an ideal model for research.

This allowed me to gain insight into their lives ‘beyond the space-time confines of the timetable and geo-space of the school’ where I interacted with them (Karlsson, 2001, p.24). This gave me the opportunity to enter new spaces, including within the school context.

I wanted to understand what was important for the students regarding their education and to do this I felt it was necessary to understand their everyday experiences and priorities. To do this, I not only needed to allow them to document what they viewed to be important but also extend this to exploring the reasons why they had made the choices that they had. As Wang (1999, p.186) has highlighted in connection to the photovoice method, ‘the lessons an image teaches does not reside in its physical structure but rather in how people interpret the image in question’. This can also be applied to the use of diaries since what students chose to record in their account of their day and their subsequent interpretation gave similarly in-depth insights into their priorities and challenges.

The selection of participative techniques, particularly photo-linked interviewing, was driven by postcolonial concerns to break down, as far as possible, power relations. As Schratz and Steiner-Loffler (1998) have found before me in the use of image-based research with learners evaluation of their school environment, by using this technique some concerns related to unequal power relations and language barriers could be addressed. I think the students felt more comfortable in the interviews because they could reflect on their own words and photos. As Karlsson (2001, p.26) has also

reflected, if I had only used my own visual representations of the school this 'approximates the colonial gaze on the less powerful 'other' theorised by post-coloniality scholars'. Thus, by using the images and words of the students together with their own interpretations of these, I could work against the 'othering' of both the learners and the school context as a whole.

At each case study school, I worked together with the class teacher to identify ten Form IV students who were given either disposable cameras or diaries for one week to chart what they deemed to be important to their education. Those with cameras received a sheet on which they could record why they took each photo. I showed them how the cameras worked since most had not used one before (and none had even seen a disposable version). In each diary, I asked students to reflect on what they were doing and how they were feeling. All were given limited instructions to remind them to focus on what was important to them in their education and a letter explaining the purpose of the research and ethical issues including right of withdrawal and the voluntary nature of taking part (see Appendix 1). This was particularly significant considering that their mock national exams were pending and taking part in the study would impact on their time available for revision. All students chose to participate and many clearly enjoyed the process. After a week, I collected the cameras and diaries before developing the photos. These or the diary text were used as the basis for a narrative interview with each student which was designed to be a participative co-construction.

With younger students, I chose creative methods which would be both engaging and fun. This also allowed these younger learners with lower levels of English to

participate in a less intensive process. Twelve groups of Form I and II students drew posters outlining the good and challenging aspects of their schooling. Twenty Form III learners wrote essays about what their ideal school would look like. I chose not to interview them formally but asked students while they were drawing their posters some questions about why they had chosen to draw a certain picture. Students were chosen at random by class teachers (although how far this was at random is difficult to say given that I was constrained by teacher choices so there was a possible bias for more able students).

Thematic analysis

As qualitative research, the data collection methods outlined above resulted in large amounts of contextually laden and richly detailed data. The data were in the form of field observation notes, interview transcripts and visual and text data from the participative techniques with students. I used thematic analysis to analyse this wealth of data. I have interpreted this type of analysis to be a method for identifying and describing a data set into its main subjects so as to offer a rich and detailed analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). A particular strength of this approach is that what a researcher decides to count as a theme depends upon both theoretical and epistemological bases and can be closely connected to the research questions. This approach to analysis allowed for a more holistic presentation of quality for the case study as a whole with themes identified across the participant groups and research techniques.

In practice, I identified many of the key themes during the fieldwork process. Drawing on some elements of the grounded theory approach, I took into account the

main themes emerging earlier in the fieldwork time and allowed these to guide the interview questions for later participants. I purposefully did this in line with both postcolonial and participatory concerns for the research to be defined by the researcher. For example, in relation to Research Question 3 regarding the main challenges facing students, I first garnered key themes emerging from the student-generated data. In the interviews with parents which followed, after allowing for their unprompted views on the challenges facing their children, I then probed for their views on some of the key themes that had emerged from the student data.

Once back in the UK, I looked for fluid patterns across the participant groups and the 'keyness' of particular themes that had emerged while in the field, with reference to relevant literature while relating back to my research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006). I read through each interview transcript and the student-generated data (posters, essays, photos and diaries) twice and on the second time I used different colours to highlight text relevant to particular themes which I had identified in the field and on first reading. This drew on the ideas of hermeneutics and iterative reading (Gadamer 1976). To return to the same example, this meant analysing the interview transcripts from the parents and then returning to the student-generated data and identifying the themes that were most prominent, or in some cases most powerful. This is in line with the principles of qualitative research that findings can be significant for both their breadth (widely cited by many participants) and depth (mentioned by few but in detail). I, then, used flipchart paper with each sheet grouping particular examples, quotes and pictures relevant to an individual theme. Photos of two themed sheets are given in Appendix 2. These themes were then slotted within the two relevant research questions as presented in Chapters 6 and 7.

This section has outlined the research methods and analysis techniques used across the two levels of the case study design, together with an introduction to the participant groups used at the local level. The next section turns to a critical review of my positioning in the field and issues of validity and ethics.

Critical Review

In this final section, I will explore some of the critical aspects of the research process across the key areas of ethics, validity and researcher positionality. Particular note is made in relation to my epistemological and theoretical positioning. This means, I especially consider power relations, and whether Western assumptions of ethics and validity are relevant to research in a postcolonial setting.

Ethical considerations

In this section, I discuss the key ethical concerns with which I entered the field and that I continued to negotiate during that process. These focus on the areas of informed consent, my own access and exit and ethical responsibilities in my behaviour and in writing up my findings.

As noted above, much has been written about the dominance of Eurocentric methodologies and modalities in research conducted in the Southern world and how they are defined by Western value sets (Crossley, 2001). Ethical procedures and values of European and US institutions shape the way researchers conduct research in non-Western contexts. Robinson-Pant (2005) further reminds us that recognising cultural factors also means understanding that these shape the definition of Western research ethics' procedures such as the culture of litigation. Bringing in a postcolonial

perspective, Tuhiwai-Smith (2006) highlights the fact that research ethics tend to emphasise the individual and their own judgements since they are defined in Western contexts which privilege individual rights and decision-making. In Maori society which is more community-based, such an ethical approach is incompatible with indigenous systems. The use of Western ethical principles can thus be interpreted as another example of imperialism.

Ethics is often seen as a set of universal principles that can be applied to every research project irrespective of the vastly different contexts in which researchers are working. In recent years, there has been increasing clamour for ethical principles 'on the contrary [to be] mediated within different research practices (Simons & Usher, 2000, p.1). As an early-career researcher conducting cross-cultural research for the first time from an epistemological positioning which critiques universal one-size-fits-all research, a situated ethics approach is very attractive. It promotes sensitivity to socio-political contexts. This does not mean rejecting dominant ethical codes and practices but adapting them to the particular research context. In the light of this, I aimed to keep to some of the core elements of situated ethics while recognizing that I was restricted by some of the practical elements of conforming to Bristol University official standards.

Before entering the field, I completed an ethical form in discussion with a fellow doctoral student following the Bristol Ethical Research Association (BERA) guidelines (2004) (see Appendix 3). However, as de Laine (2000, p.3) has argued, it is important that:

The researcher [has] some understanding of how to use the code together with other resources to make a decision that is

more 'right'. The individual's intentions, motivations and ways of cognitively structuring the ethically sensitive situation are equally important to ethical and moral practice as are conforming to or violating an ethical code. Ethical decision making includes being consciously aware of one's values, principles and allegiance to ethical codes, intuition and feelings, within a context that is characterised by professional and power relationships.

One of the resources that I could draw on was my own experience of both living in the Kisii region before together with training volunteers within EPAfrica how to behave ethically. Therefore my experience definitely helped me to negotiate ethical concerns but it also gave me the concern about which I reflected most deeply. I was acutely aware of my exalted position within the community not only as a mzungu but also as a previously recognised volunteer and boss of EPAfrica. As of September 2011, I am now a trustee of the charity but in the time I was in Inka I had no formal role within the charity (although I was still widely recognised in Kisii town and by other head teachers as 'Buffy the boss'). I stated (and often restated and restated) my lack of involvement with the NGO within the two schools but I would still often be asked by participants if there was any way that I could influence EPAfrica to partner with their school. I therefore, felt it was my ethical responsibility to facilitate their applications for EPAfrica assistance. I organised and helped the head teachers of each school to formally apply to EPAfrica, stating my presence in the schools on the application forms, and they were subsequently contacted by EPAfrica representatives which helped to disassociate me with the NGO.

Ethically, I sometimes worried that, because of this, participants may have felt compelled to be involved in my research. It would have been naïve to expect that I could fully breakdown the many ways that I could be seen as more 'powerful' by participants; characterised by being the (white) outsider and perceived to be an expert

and/or the (previous) boss. However, I did everything I could to continually reflect on these aspects and how they unintentionally could affect my relationships within the school. This helped me not to remove the issue of power but to keep check so as not to exert or abuse the position that I held both in the school and in the wider community.

In order to secure a research permit from the Kenyan Government, I completed a full application outlining the aims of the study and methods that I would use at the data collection sites. With the backing of a colleague in the MoE, I was successful in gaining the research permit, illustrating governmental acceptance of my research. At the local level, I secured access to the two schools by sending a letter to the head teachers via friends in the community. I affirmed the purpose of my research, the intended methods and participants and highlighted any possible areas of disruption in the letter allowing time for the head teachers to reply with any questions. I also made clear that they continued to have the right of withdrawal. As Oliver (2003, p.40) recommends for qualitative studies that may shift in methodological design while in the field, I indicated the 'anticipated parameters of the research' and gave the head teachers my research plan and possible directions in which the research might develop on arrival at the schools. I made it clear that my presence would disrupt the usual routine as little as possible and that any interviews would be carried out outside lesson time. I also had an ethical responsibility to manage my exit and not to make any promises either of my return or that my research might result in an actual change in that community. Although I may not be able to return to the schools to discuss my findings and conclusions in person, I will send an audience-appropriate report to the

school for the head teacher to disseminate among school members and the wider community.

As shown in Appendix 1, I wrote a letter to parents to inform them of my presence in the schools and to give them the opportunity to withdraw their children from my research. This letter was in English (although I had it in Kiswahili as well) since one head teacher recommended that students would need to translate given that most parents are not literate and the school was reluctant for me to use Ekegusii given that students are not allowed to speak their mother tongue in school. I spent a free lesson with each class of student to explain the different key words, for example, consent and withdrawal. Furthermore I made it clear that it is not important for them to know a great deal on the subject but rather that I was interested in their opinions and that there would be no right or wrong answers. Students in Form IV are a minimum of seventeen years old, with many being in their mid-twenties. I, therefore, felt that it was unnecessary to have extra ethical measures other than ensuring that everything was explained in sensitive manner.

Before each interview, I explained confidentiality, consent, right not to participate and to withdraw (BERA, 2004). I made it particularly clear that they would not harm the research project or upset me if they did not take part. This was, as far as possible, to take away any sense of obligation that they may have felt. For the interviews in Ekegusii, the translator explained each of these and reassured participants that the confidentiality issue extended to him. Participants gave me consent verbally at the start of each interview, recorded on my digital recorder. This consent was for their involvement in the research and for me to use their words (and photos and diaries for

students) in my reporting so I made it clear exactly what participants were consenting to (Miller & Bell, 2002). It was more difficult to gain consent regarding the use of the photos generated by the camera-linked research technique. I asked students for their permission to use the photos they had generated, including those which they and their families featured in. Apart from this, I had to use my ethical judgement as to whether to include photos of others who had not given consent in presenting my research findings. This related to whether individuals could be clearly identified.

All data was stored anonymously on my laptop and an external hard-drive. Any identifying features about the participants were collated on a spreadsheet which was fully password protected. I conducted member checks of transcripts with a handful of participants before leaving the field. Furthermore, while in Inka, I spent a lot of time discussing my emerging findings and interpretations with the ex-head teacher and friend with whom I was living. Without naming participants or revealing anything confidential, I shared my ideas of key challenges and themes and got his informed feedback on whether these seemed appropriate to the Inka context.

Ethical concerns regarding documentary analysis are often given less attention since there is no direct contact with participants. The policy documents used for analysis are all publicly accessible from either the Government Printer in Nairobi or the MoE. A letter explaining the purpose of the research was shown to MoE officials so that they were aware of what the documents would be used for. I have an ethical responsibility to make every attempt to ensure that my research does not have an unwanted effect for the Ministry which means in practice, bearing this ethical concern in mind while

writing the study and, if it had been applicable, removing any aspects that may have been harmful.

Away from the direct participants of my research, I also hold ethical responsibility for two other unrelated groups. The first is the NGO, EPAfrica. Since the NGO is the only wide-spread mzungu (foreigner) presence in rural Kisii, however much I stated my independence from the charity, I was frequently aware that for many (especially in Kisii town) I was still being associated with EPAfrica. I followed their code of conduct regarding my own safety, especially related to the transport policy, both for my own safety but also not tarnish the name of charity by my actions. Furthermore, I had to be careful not to downplay the work that EPAfrica does in my attempt to assert my independence. The second group was my academic colleagues within the Graduate School of Education and further afield to conduct my research in a fair, ethical and culturally sensitive manner. I did everything I could to ensure that the reputation of the academic community was not sullied either in Kenya or through my analysis and presentation of findings and linking my data, interpretation and conclusions so they are justifiable.

Validity concerns

I have used the four criteria for qualitative validity put forward by Guba (1981) as the basis to assess the perceived strengths and potential limitations of my study. Although proposed nearly thirty years ago, they still stand today as discussed by Shelton (2004) in a recent article. These are credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. There are many provisions that a qualitative researcher can take so that their research is deemed credible. Credibility is an evaluation of whether findings

represent a 'credible' conceptual interpretation of the original data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.296). Many aspects have been highlighted in the earlier discussion of data collection and ethics, including my own experience and background, the use of member checking and having a paper-trailed sampling strategy and research design. By including a range of different voices, both from the school and the wider community, I am able to triangulate data so as to 'cross-check' information and conclusions drawn from the data (Shenton, 2004). Findings presented will highlight where certain themes emerged in corroboration of sources. One of the strengths of qualitative research is that negative cases are evaluated and celebrated in that they add to what Geertz (1973) describes as 'thick description'. Therefore, any cases that do not corroborate are also be analysed and included in the presentation of findings.

From a positivist perspective, the main limitation of this qualitative research would be a lack of generalisability in my findings. However, in using a case study and in line with the emphasis in my research on contextualisation, I have sought to maximise 'the ecological validity of the data' and reliability of the findings (Crossley & Vulliamy, 1984; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). Some aspects may be similar but 'although findings are used to challenge certain assumptions held ... [by policy makers] ... no attempt is made to extrapolate general laws or universally applicable recommendations in a positivistic sense' (Crossley & Vulliamy, 1984, p.201). Therefore my aim is not generalisability but the 'reliability' of findings. The assumptions of the MoE that I seek to challenge are that international influences as the most important voices heard when formulating policy. There are insights from the findings that may resonate in alternative settings and be contextually transferable. These fall within the theory in the academic literature concerning the need for more

emphasis on local contextualisation in education policy making (Crossley & Watson, 2003).

One of the main assumptions in quantitative research is that of repeatability. In a qualitative design, the idea that research could be repeated with the same results is neither possible nor desired due to the emphasis on context and epistemological assumptions of multiple realities (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). However, it is important that my findings are deemed to be 'dependable'. The full description of data collection methods and analysis given in this chapter, the use of triangulation, a consistent and clearly-documented approach to selection of themes in analysis are among the ways in which I have sought to ensure dependability in the project. On a practical level, I have stored not only all data collected but also my own reflections in a research journal on decisions taken and steps made, both in the field and during the analysis stage. This gives an 'audit trail' to act as a basis for confirmability in my project. I am aware that in certain quarters of educational research, a perceived limitation of the research would be that I do not seek to be objective; in fact, I am explicitly un-objective. Further, some would argue that the level of subjectivity and reflexivity present in my research and findings could cast question marks over the validity of my findings. I made my own assumptions explicit and continually reflected on these and their potential impact (both positive and negative) on my research.

This act of reflexivity was thus an important aspect of contributing to the validity of the research. I draw on Parker (2005, p.42) in viewing reflexivity as 'an active rebellious practice that drives individuals into action as they identify the exercise of power that pins them into place and the fault lines for the production of spaces of

resistance'. For me, much of the process of reflexivity was in relation to the contradiction of my postcolonial political positioning in light of the fact that I am seemingly distinctly non-postcolonial in my ethnicity, nationality and race. I have been influenced both academically by the authors from my MSc course in African Studies, such as Mudimbe (1988) and practically through my time working for a small NGO in Kenya. It is not possible to consider ethnography in Africa without conjuring up images of the early twentieth century anthropologists that played such an integral role in drawing the 'image of Africa'. I recognised that coming from a country that was once Kenya's colonial power, I could never be fully post-colonial and it is important that I understood and reflected on the power relations that this would bring. The eloquent reflection by Bainton (2006, p.32) resonated with my own view: '[I make]...no grand claim about speaking for 'others', or even to allow the silent voices of others to speak – for their stories are always, inevitably mediated by me ... we are both inscribed by colonialism'.

I feel that I did as much as I could in my research design, use of specific methods and the way that I interacted within the school and community. However, even if this is how I framed my study, for my participants and the Inka community I remained a mzungu. I needed to understand the gap between how I may have seen myself (as postcolonial) and how I was seen (a white person in a rural Kenyan community). Looking back on my fieldwork diary, a common theme that I kept returning to is my concern about being a 'postcolonial mzungu':

How can I be a postcolonial mzungu? Surely this is an oxymoron? Maybe I have been idealising my position as an insider because there are a small number of people who see me as Buffy or Nyansiaboka rather than simply the mzungu. For the vast majority ... I'm simply the land of plenty who they hope can sweep in and make

changes they want personally and at the school...my knowledge is
seen as superior, the outsider who can change their world
(Research journal, 23rd May 2011)

Mzungu can be translated to mean the European and it was very rare for a day to go by when it was not shouted at me. Therefore, despite the fact that I may philosophically see myself as at odds with Eurocentric metanarratives, in the day-to-day processes of my fieldwork, that was not how participants saw me.

Furthermore, I was continually questioning whether I was an insider or outsider in my research. Insider-outsider perspectives are one of the most vibrant methodological debates in social research (Bishop, 2005; Robinson-Pant, 2005; Shope, 2006). There has traditionally been a stark distinction between insider and outsider, akin to that between subjectivity and objectivity. These researchers are increasingly seeing it more as a continuum, in which the distinction is seen as situational, with the status of a researcher as an insider or outsider depending on the social, political and cultural values of a given context or moment. I very much felt that I was on such a continuum and how I felt was dependent on context and who I was with at that time. I drew on my six years of experience working and living in rural Kenya to immerse myself in the community and when I was with close friends and family, I especially felt that I was a relative insider. Furthermore, when the EPAfrica volunteers arrived in Kisii town halfway through my fieldwork period, it was clear that in contrast to their outsider positioning, I was more 'on the inside' since I had greater understanding, experiential knowledge and closer relationships than they did. As one head teacher at the annual EPAfrica conference described me in his welcome speech, 'Buffy, she has known'.

Given this 'intimate knowledge' that I had, I felt that I was more than a white outsider who was not sensitive to the local context; one of my main critiques about many globally inspired initiatives. As I reflected in my research journal in the early stages of my fieldwork, even at that stage I was:

...feeling like a knowledgeable outsider. I'm very much the new 'mzungu' and the first week at school has brought all the normal questions from students - 'what is the weather like in your country?' 'What is your staple food? But they are very happy to leave me to my own devices, letting me wander around and take my own leave so I don't really feel like a visitor (Research journal, 16th May 2011)

Overall, I had to be wary of 'my illusions of being an insider' since I would never be able to see myself or be seen entirely as one and this may mean that there is always going to be some data that I will not be able to access. This was one of the main motivations for using the photo and diary techniques with students since 'the learners in their study were able to participate without having to engage in the complexities of research argumentation and their involvement rendered an authoritative insider view of the everyday workings of a school' (Karlsson, 2001, p.23).

The important point to note here is that throughout the research process I reflected on my positioning and how it may impact on the study's validity. A final significant point is that I have not been able to identify any measures of validity specifically from a postcolonial perspective from which I could draw upon to judge my approach. This relates to the point made earlier that there is little written about postcolonialism as a methodology as compared to a theoretical positioning. In Chapter 8, I reflect upon the limitations of the study of which one is the drawback of little in the way of postcolonial validity checking which is needed if there is going to be a 'decolonisation of methodologies' (Tuhiwai-Smith, 2006).

Chapter Summary

By providing an in-depth description of the research methodology and methods, this chapter has described and rationalised the chosen approach for the study. The research has been situated within the postcolonial paradigm with reflections for its implications as both a theoretical and methodological framing for the study. To enable the aim of comparing national and local perceptions of a quality education, a two-stage case study has been presented as the most appropriate research design since it can be both descriptive and explanatory (Yin, 2003). At the national level, the thematic discourse analytical approach has been explained; at the local level, the selection of the case study schools and participants has been justified.

In the light of the discussion of the value of using qualitative and participatory approaches in low income settings, this chapter has also served to describe the chosen methods - photo and diary-linked interviews, essay writing and poster drawing with students; semi-structured and loosely structured interviews with teachers, BoG members, local dignitaries and parents; experiential knowledge and observation. The final part of the chapter provided an overview of ethical and validity concerns while offering a reflective account of the suitability of their applications in cross-cultural and postcolonial settings. The following chapter moves to a presentation of the policy analysis from the first stage of the case study.

Chapter Five: Educational Quality – Conceptualisations at the Policy Level

Introduction

This chapter documents and analyses the FSE movement at the policy level in order to answer Research Question 1 (see Chapter 1):

RQ1: How is quality defined in the Kenyan FSE policy documents?

As argued in Chapter 2, the discourses of development can often be seen as ‘self-evident’ and ‘unworthy of attention’ (Crush, 1995, p.3). Through this chapter, I argue that these discourses are very much worthy of attention and carry out a critical interrogation of the quality discourses in the national policy documentation (see Chapter 2). Thematic discourse analysis is utilised to gain insight into the policy making process and the actors and influences involved in it. This reveals the ‘voices’ present in the policy and those that are absent. The analysis focuses upon the rationale for investment in secondary education and how quality is defined across key identified themes in the secondary education policy document.

Free Secondary Education Policy Documentation

As discussed in Chapter 4, when I was unable to find any FSE policy document online, I visited the MoE during a fieldtrip to Nairobi in August 2010. It became clear that a FSE policy document had not been produced and, in place of this, a MoE official gave me a copy of *the Secondary Education Strategy Document, 2007-2010* (MoE, 2007a). In this document, there are some indications that suggest that at the time of writing, in September 2007, there were plans to introduce FSE. However, the

document cannot be said to fully represent the FSE policy document because it is written before the FSE policy came into being and under a different Minister of Education (Professor Saitoti was replaced by Professor Ongeru in 2008). The other documents used to triangulate the data are:

- The Task Force Report on Free Secondary Education in Kenya chaired by Dr Eddah W. Gachukia (MoE, 2007b); and
- The Guidelines for the Implementation of Free Secondary Education: A Memo for Head teachers and District Education Officers (MoE, 2008).

The second of these is the brief memo sent to head teachers which was the sole written communication they have received regarding FSE, despite the size of the reform that the policy represents for their schools. The guidelines for the implementation of FSE represent a how-to guide for practitioners. They do not offer insight into the rationale for its introduction. Through my work with EPAfrica, it has become evident that even the most competent of secondary head teachers had initial difficulty in understanding the specific expectations and the burden that FSE represented for them and their schools when it was first introduced. For example, many did not feel that they had sufficient guidance or any training regarding their new financial responsibilities.

The lack of an official FSE policy document could be interpreted in a number of ways. FSE, in very general terms, had been part of the manifestos of the three major political parties in 2007. Once the Grand Coalition Government was formed in early 2008 under President Kibaki, FSE was one of the first policies implemented by the new Government (see Chapter 3). It can be argued, therefore, that the lack of a written policy and its rushed introduction supports the literature that highlights the challenges

for implementation and sustainable success generated by an educational policy brought about by a lack of clear and well-planned policy (Kamunde, 2010). It could further be argued that the lack of documentation suggests a lack of permanency attributed to the project. Given its great cost together with the questionable donor support, it is possible that the Government felt compelled to introduce FSE for political reasons and were waiting to see the effects of its implementation before writing an official policy document. This would represent another occasion in Kenya's education history when a policy has been introduced for a short period in response to political whim, rather than through informed and participative policy production (Amutabi, 2003). The rest of this section uses the *Secondary Education Strategy Document* to interrogate the global influences in its production and consumption.

Key themes of quality in the 2007 Secondary Education Strategy Document

In this section, the key themes related to quality education identified in the strategy document are outlined. These are the purposes of secondary education, measuring a quality education for academic achievement, a quality education for all and enabling quality education through a relevant curriculum.

The purpose of secondary education

At the beginning of a policy document, one would expect to find the rationale or purpose of the policy outlined. The first two pages of the *Secondary Education Strategy Document* provide a section entitled 'the importance of secondary education' which is the only section I can identify that represents a rationale. This section is both broad and entirely decontextualised with secondary education very much spoken

about in economic terms as shown by the six reasons given for ‘the global growth in demand for secondary education’. These are given as:

1. The increase in numbers of students completing primary;
2. A growing demand for ‘new types of skills and knowledge’;
3. A growth in the ‘service sector and its requirement for “knowledge workers”’;
4. Better educated citizens for democracies;
5. Keeping children in school until they are old enough to be legally employed;
and
6. ‘The increasing private returns of secondary education as the labour market demands graduates with a set of knowledge and competencies that can only start to be acquired at the secondary education level and beyond’ (MoE, 2007a, pp.1–2).

The document continues to give a number of additional reasons for the rationale in investing in secondary education which focus on ‘how education at this secondary level contributes to individual earnings and overall national economic growth’ (MoE, 2007a, pp.1–2). Although the emphasis here is economic, other reasons which are mentioned include the development of social capital, gender equality, socio-economic equality and ‘a sub-sectoral bridge’. However, it is important to note that the language throughout this section is in economic terms. For example, the reference to gender equality talks about ‘investments in female education’ and the ‘benefits on women’s own health outcomes from risks of disease’ and echoes the growing emphasis upon social development as an enabler for economic development in the economic approach (see Box 2.3).

This section thus assumes a relationship between secondary education, growth and poverty reduction through statements such as ‘economic growth is shown to have a

positive correlation to years of school attainment' (MoE, 2007a, p.2). This is presented without reference, giving the impression that it is a statement of fact. Rather it is a reference to the seminal 'rates of return' analysis of the World Bank economist, Psacharopoulos. Two of his works (1981; 2002) are given in the references list which should suggest that they have been read as part of the production of the report; however, they are not referenced in the text. Psacharopoulos' analysis is often used within the human capital tradition to legitimate the increased attention given to education (see Box 2.4). However, this thesis relates to primary education and has not been extended to the secondary education sector. It is therefore, misleading to give this as the rationale for investment in secondary education in Kenya.

The following section of the document is entitled 'the importance of a broader perspective on post-primary education' and it continues to give the rationale for investment in secondary education. This introduces a more contextualised perspective. However, there is little which suggests that there has been an in-depth analysis of the current status of secondary education. Rather it reads as a wish list of what post-primary education can offer to the country's development. For example, the first sentence rationalises the development of a broader post-primary strategy because of 'the growing awareness of the potential value to the country of an expanding population with a broad range of skills and knowledge beyond what primary education can offer' without a sense of who has expressed this growing awareness or whether the potential is realistic (MoE, 2007a, p.2).

The main rationale given for the development of a new post-primary strategy is the important role placed on education for Kenya's industrial development in line with

their Vision 2030 of becoming a fully industrialised country within less than twenty years. The main desired outcome stated for a secondary school student is employability so as to produce a crop of potential workers for the hoped for new industries laid out in the Kenya Vision 2030. The following quote indicates the interconnectedness of the two dominant themes of education for national growth and gainful employment:

The country needs a critical mass of Kenyans with general, technical and productive skills if it is to achieve a breakthrough to industrialisation... [who] leave secondary schools with work-related skills which will make them employable or able to be self-employed. (MoE, 2007a, p.3)

It is noted that there is a need to vocationalise general secondary education and ensure that students leave secondary school with work-related skills relevant for employment or self-employment (MoE, 2007a, p.3). The expected outcome of employability is further emphasised in the later section of the document regarding the curriculum. It is stated that it should be tailored to 'prepare the individual for either further education, tertiary education or the world of work and consequently make his contribution to national development' (MoE, 2007a, p.28)⁴.

The development of skills and knowledge for the knowledge economy and new industries thus emerge as the main rationale for investment in secondary education. There are a number of critical points here. What this new type of knowledge might look like or its relevance to the vast majority of Kenyans is not explained. This supports the analyses that argue that the idea of a knowledge economy has discursively permeated education policy documents globally (see Chapter 2).

⁴ The fact that in this quote there is only reference to 'his contribution' has implications for ideas of gender equity in the policy documentation. This is outside the realms of this study but is a potential area of future research.

Alongside this, there is an assumption that the reader will know what some of these terms mean – for example, ‘a knowledge worker’. This suggests that there is expected to be limited readership of the document away from economic specialists. Further, the rationale reads like a wish list of what the government hopes the economy will look like in the future. This suggests external influences and looking elsewhere for success stories in global economic development. Finally, the purposes of secondary education are shown to be broad through the process of decontextualisation. However, at the same time, they are written about within narrow discursive parameters by the economic language used.

Measuring a quality education for academic achievement

There is also a strong emphasis throughout the policy document on monitoring and evaluation for the measurement of a quality education. The measurements cited for a quality education are closely connected to the intended purposes of secondary education and are very much defined in terms of effectiveness. The scholars who are referred to in the introduction to the chapter on quality of education are Heneveld (1996) and Jimenez and Pinzon (1999); specifically, work that they have conducted for the World Bank. Given these references, the reader expects the subsequent discussion of quality to be very much shaped in quantitative terminology. The following excerpt is worth quoting at length since it is a clear example of the economic-utilitarian discourse at influence:

Quality can be assessed in terms of facilities, financial inputs or outputs in examinations or test scores of students, as well as employability and productivity. Quality in education is best reflected in learning achievements of students. A useful analytical approach often used to look at educational quality is to apply a systems approach of input, process and outcome interacting to produce the quality outcome intended from the education programme. (MoE, 2007a, p.18)

The reference to input, process and outcome resonates with the school effectiveness model, especially in the emphasis upon learning achievements as measured by examination scores (Yu, 2007).

The language used here is of specific interest as it creates an impression of a science experiment where the right combination of determinants in the right environment will produce the intended results. Students are just one of a number of inputs – they are not a central feature of the model. The use of words such as effective, assessment and inefficiencies are strongly associated with the school effectiveness approach. Furthermore, the recommended way forward on how to implement the model continues to resonate with the school effectiveness paradigm. Steps taken need to be ‘effective’ so that ‘measures can be implemented’ for ‘maintaining quality standards’ (MoE, 2007a, p.8). There is little emphasis placed on the process of education. The only mention is on the inputs – the students, teachers, curricula, learning materials and physical facilities – being ‘brought together in the right manner and the right combinations via appropriate processes [to] make teaching and learning effective’ (MoE, 2007a, p.18). This ‘transaction’ will lead to the desired outcome of learning achievements. The emphasis upon outputs rather than the processes of education suggests a prioritisation of the economist approach.

A quality education for all

In contrast with the two previously discussed themes, there is an emphasis throughout the policy document on providing quality education for all. Inclusion and equality – particularly in reference to EFA – are frequently mentioned throughout the document. For example, in the section related to the provision of secondary education for

learners with special needs, the international declarations that Kenya has signed are listed followed by the explanation that 'one of the basic and head teacher goals of these international policy documents is to provide quality basic education for all children and in all aspects in the least restrictive environment' (MoE, 2007a, p.39). There is also reference to the World Bank document regarding the head teacher challenges for secondary education (see Chapter 2), of which the first is to expand access to all (MoE, 2007a, p.6). This suggests the global influence of the international agendas and the prioritisation of education for all.

The language used is particularly illuminating as it reflects the most commonly associated with the rights-based approaches. The following quote is indicative of this:

The Government of Kenya regards quality education as a fundamental human right for all citizens, including those with special needs and disabilities. It therefore aims to provide quality education to all children irrespective of gender, ethnic background, colour, race or disabilities...It is therefore the government's intention to ensure that all educational institutions are responsive to the education for all learners including those with special needs and disabilities. (MoE, 2007a, p.38)

The chapter regarding access has many references to the need to address inequalities in the current secondary education enrolment. These include girls, those with special needs and those from the poorest quintiles of the overall population. However, there is little in the chapter specifically addressing equity or seeing it as a part of educational quality. Instead, quality and access are stated as diametrically opposed. This reflects a critique that Unterhalter (2012) has posited regarding the discussions of gender equity in educational development. In the first sentence, it is stated that 'it is generally recognised that unless deliberate efforts are made to address quality and relevance of education in tandem with access and equity, the education system is bound to

malfunction' (MoE, 2007a, p.18). However, the following discussion does not combine the two issues of quality and access; leaving the reader unsure of whether the two are seen as interrelating priorities.

It is important to note, though, that as discussed in Chapter 2, there is little emphasis on secondary education in the quality frameworks related to human rights. There is no recognition in the document that this rationale and the language used that these discussions of quality education are almost entirely taking place at the primary level. There is no consideration of whether in practice a quality secondary education for all may mean something different. In the light of this, it could be argued that the wording here has been uncritically transferred from primary education documents where education for all has been a global and national priority (Crossley & Watson, 2003). The different context of secondary education has not been considered. This suggests the importance of greater consideration of the context of the educational level in the future for developing a relevant quality education.

Enabling quality education through a relevant curriculum

In the chapter regarding the curriculum, it is stated that in order to achieve a quality education in practice there is a need for a number of key enablers at both the policy and local level. The major 'determinants of a quality education' specifically mentioned to enable a quality education are:

- Curriculum content
- Relevant instructional materials and equipment
- Conducive learning environments
- The quality of the teaching force
- Assessment and monitoring of learning achievements

- Addressing internal inefficiencies of education at all levels. (MoE, 2007a, pp.18–19)

The main enabler which is focused upon is the curriculum with a whole section of the policy document dedicated to this topic. Curriculum is described as ‘a pedagogical document that describes the teaching and learning goals as well as the syllabi, but also as an important instrument of education policy’ (MoE, 2007a, p.27). This description of curriculum is taken from a paper written by the World Bank regarding education in Finland. Although the paper is referenced in the text, the fact that it is taken from Finland and may not be a contextually relevant definition of curriculum for Kenya or secondary education is not mentioned. However, this section provides more contextual understanding of some of the current issues and challenges which the Kenyan secondary education is facing and how these are related to the rigidity and academic focus of the current 8-4-4 system. These include the need to be more flexible, to reflect Kenyan values and to promote a wider range of subjects. Although the emphasis here is more contextually grounded, the language used continues to very much reflect global influences. For example, in relation to the lack of ICT in many secondary schools, it is argued that:

To be globally relevant, basic knowledge in ICT is essential. The ability to use the internet should be seen as a basic requirement for every secondary school leaver. The society in all its aspects is now driven by knowledge. (MoE, 2007a, p.30)

This resonates with much of the knowledge economy discourse often promoted within the economist tradition. The emphasis on ICT is also a key component of the discussion of a relevant curriculum, alongside addressing the needs of the individual, it is argued that it should ‘prepare the learner holistically’, to fit into society ‘as a social being’ and prepare the individual to be ‘a Kenyan first and a Kenyan last’

(MoE, 2007a, p.28). These are just four of a long list of expectations of a relevant education but show some reflection of rights-based influences through a more comprehensive model for quality education including political, social and cultural aspects (Robeyns, 2006).

It is important to note that despite the clear resonances here with rights-based priorities, it is often unclear in other parts of the discussion about the curriculum what is meant by relevance. As the following quote shows, it often seems as though relevance (or appropriateness) is used so as not to make any specific statements:

The underlying rationale is that education can be made more relevant in meeting the challenge of national development and improve youth participation in the process by providing them with appropriate production and vocational skills. (MoE, 2007a, p.27)

There is no mention of the differences between what may be relevant between, say, rural and urban areas. Relevant or appropriate seem to be used for 'whatever they may be' rather than entirely in relation to the form of relevance that the human rights discourse espouses. It is stated that a curriculum needs to be address the needs of the country's labour market, be globally relevant and address the needs of the individual. Expecting a curriculum to be relevant at all these levels seems to be a rather counter-intuitive argument. However, this does reflect a trend in some international quality frameworks to talk about relevance and context in very broad terms. For example, the school effectiveness model of Heneveld and Craig (1996) acknowledges the influence of international, cultural, political and economic contextual factors. What appears as a counter-intuitive argument could, therefore, point to the influence of global conceptualisations of quality in the development of the national secondary education policy document.

It is also important to note that although the rights and economic based approaches have been seen as on a conceptual antipole, here a relevant secondary education is also stated as important for the development of individual human capital and national economic growth:

The underlying rationale ... [for making the curriculum more relevant] ... is that education can be made more relevant in meeting the challenge of national development and improve youth participation in the process by providing them with appropriate production and vocational skills (MoE, 2007a, p.27)

Making the curriculum relevant is hoped to enable secondary education to contribute to national development and is reminiscent of the current global trend that places education at the heart of development and poverty reduction. A relevant curriculum is thus discussed in both rights-based and economic language and emerges as a major determinant of educational quality in Kenyan secondary education. However, what is meant by relevance is unclear, as is how curricular changes will be implemented. This suggests that the policy document represents more of a wish list of what an ideal curriculum may include rather than a prescriptive indication of changes to actually make the curriculum more relevant to the multiple needs of the diverse Kenyan population.

Throughout the discussion of quality education across the themes of purpose, curriculum, measurement and inclusivity, there has been clear identification of both the human rights and economic discourses; the latter particularly so. Much of the discussions are decontextualised from the realities of Kenyan secondary education and the document often reads like a case of mix and match from different global discourses. For example, in one paragraph, it moves from talking about quality

education as ‘the discovery of talents....determined by enhanced critical imagination’ straight into the importance of maintaining quality standards at all stages of education with ‘effective steps’ needed to enable this (MoE, 2007a, p.28). Furthermore, discussions often reflect discourses most commonly associated with the primary level and arguably are uncritically transferred into discussions of secondary education. In the light of the identification of these themes, I will now move to the second and third levels of analysis in the Fairclough framework so as to analyse the policy document’s ‘discursive’ and social practices.

The secondary education policy as discourse

The second level of my thematic discourse analysis focuses on the production, distribution and consumption of the policy document (Fairclough, 1992). Regarding production, the identification of themes suggests the presence of numerous global voices in the production of the strategy document. In my experience of reading documents in Kenya, this does not reflect language used on a daily basis nationwide. It has been argued that policy texts do tend to use more structured language which may not resemble everyday language (Ball, 1990). However, I would argue that the policy document can be read as discourse with significant outside influences in its development and production (see Chapters 2 and 4). Although the authors of the strategy paper are given as a number of leading officers in the MoE, it is made clear that the production of the document was helped by ‘the input of various stakeholders and development partners who gave their views on various forums and assisted in the continuous updating of the document; special appreciation goes to DfID and the World Bank for providing technical support’ (MoE, 2007a, p.xii). Strong external involvement in the production of the document can clearly be seen.

It is not made clear who the intended consumer of the document is. The main suggestion given is that the document 'if endorsed by development partners, would help to receive donor support for prioritised actions' (MoE, 2007a, p.6). Furthermore, the content and language in the strategy document takes for granted both that the reader understands the educational development area and knows something about education in Kenya. This determines limited readership of the document; something which can particularly be seen when compared with the language used in the Guidelines for the Implementation of FSE which are clearly addressed to all provincial directors of education, district education officers, municipal education officers and head teachers of public secondary schools (MoE, 2008). These guidelines are very practical in their language and the memorandum format is very different to the lay-out of the full policy document. This suggests that the target audience for the full policy document is not the actors who implement secondary education at a practical level. Bearing all this in mind, and given the involvement of the World Bank and DfID in the production of the text, it can be argued that there is significant external influence in the policy which has implications for the discursive nature of the document.

At the third level of the Fairclough's analysis model, attention is drawn to the two concepts of ideology and hegemony so as to highlight the relationship between texts, discourse and power relations. For Fairclough (1992, p.87), and in line with the literature related to power discussed in Chapter 2, ideology is a construction of reality which is 'built into various dimensions of forms/meanings of discursive practices and which contribute to the production, reproduction or transformation of relations of

domination'. The global discourses, especially that of education for economic growth, that are presented in the secondary education strategy document are often shown to be 'constructions of reality'; thus, encouraging the reader to see these as the 'true' or only way to interpret a particular situation. For example, the rationale for increased investment in post-primary education in economic terms and based on unreferenced rates of return analysis is presented as uncontested fact. Using the authoritative language which the World Bank has been critiqued for using in such an uncritical way suggests that the economic-utilitarian discourse is ideological in framing how education is discussed in the Kenyan context (Samoff, 1999; Jones, 2007). At the policymaking table, secondary education is already been placed within globally decided discursive parameters without the input of any local stakeholders. The lack of wider involvement in the production and consumption of the text highlights the relationship between knowledge production and power (Kress, 1989). The international discourses have provided the structure within which the secondary education policy has been defined; or to use Foucauldian terms the formation of education as an object (Foucault, 1969). This contributes to a policymaking cycle where educational policy is defined by such ideologies within particular discursive boundaries. This predetermines the parameters within which any wider participation and debate could take place; while, a lack of such participation limits engagement and local contextualisation in educational policymaking. The power/knowledge relationship can clearly be seen.

The concept of ideology is closely linked to Fairclough's other primary notion in the social practice stage of analysis – hegemony; a concept which is also central to the persuasive arguments of Said (1988) and Mudimbe (1988) that knowledge was

created about the Orient and Africa through a hegemonic discourse of 'the other' which legitimised an imperial presence (See Chapters 2 and 4). The identification of global themes in the document and the analysis of external presence in policymaking suggest that there is a close association between hegemony, ideology and knowledge production in the Kenyan secondary education policy. As discussed in Chapter 2, one of the main critiques of international discourses is that they are formulated in the West and as Eurocentric discourses they continue to legitimise the neo-colonial agenda rather than being contextually relevant (Wane, 2008). If multi-lateral agencies (notably here the World Bank) have leadership over the knowledge constructed, postcolonial peoples continue to be subject to 'epistemological violence' (Spivak, 1999). This is not to argue that there is no active choice on behalf of the Kenyan education policymakers as to what aspects of the discourses are adopted. There is a level of contextualisation for the Kenyan education system, although this tends to be more at the implementation level than the high-level rationale for the policy. However, it is clear that hegemonic influences have a strong hand to play in the production of the policy. King (2007a, p.359) questioned whether strategies are a 'Kenyan policy or policy for Kenya' in his review of the international agendas' role in national educational priority setting. I argue that, because of the social practices at play in the policymaking process, the resulting strategy is a policy made applicable for Kenya rather than one which is grounded in Kenyan realities.

Only a very limited involvement of local stakeholders can be identified in both the production and consumption of this policy, meaning that there is a lack of a Kenyan voice in the conceptualisation of quality and the formulation of the aims of education. Bearing in mind those at the policymaking table when policies are formulated, it is perhaps unsurprising that what is produced reflects international discourses rather

than local priorities. Head teachers, parents and other stakeholders are left out of the debate. The absence of these voices suggests that more participation from a democratic sample of people at the policymaking table could dramatically shift the power relations and lead to a policy that has greater chance of successful implementation (Crossley & Watson, 2003; Tikly & Barrett, 2011). If various dimensions of context are not a central concern at the policymaking stage, educational policies may not be in tune with meeting the diverse needs of the children they aim to help. My findings suggest that the Kenyan national context does not hold a high enough priority in the secondary education strategy. The similarities with global trends and international educational discourses in the strategy document suggests that rather than looking inwardly to a thorough understanding of the challenges facing secondary education in practice, policymakers are looking outwardly when priority-setting.

Since FSE is only in its early stages, these findings suggest that policymakers could seek to involve more local stakeholders' priorities to improve policy trajectories and increase the chances of successful implementation. However, it must be noted that this does not mean making a policy that is entirely different dependent upon the varied contexts within Kenya; some elements of policies that have been successful elsewhere can be utilised as long as those elements resonate with each particular context and are in line with local priorities.

Chapter Summary

Findings discussed in this chapter have answered the first research question of how quality is defined in the Kenyan secondary education policy document. It has been

shown through a discussion of key themes – relevant curriculum, purposes of education, education for all and measuring quality education – that there is a strong presence of global discourses of educational development in the conceptualisations of quality in the policymaking of secondary education in Kenya. Further, the critical analysis of the policy's production, consumption and distribution suggests that the World Bank and DfID were principal actors at the policymaking table. This is not to say that the MoE are being spoon-fed the latest trend in international educational development and uncritically taking it without a thought for its relevance for the Kenyan context. Rather, it has been argued that the predominance of particular discourses, especially the economic-utilitarian tradition, has led to certain arguments becoming constructions of a particular truth, rather than a single opinion. Trends are, thus, adopted as a standardised blueprint that no-one is expected to challenge (Chabbott, 2003).

This has resulted in little democratic participation in the policymaking process or in defining educational quality which has resulted in a policy that more accurately reflects global trends than Kenyan realities. There is some contextualisation for the Kenyan context but very little is made relevant for the geographical and cultural diversity of Kenya (see Chapter 3). Built on the concepts of participation and context (see Chapters 2 and 3), the community-level findings discussed in the following two chapters will challenge the definitions that have been identified in this chapter and present views which are deeply rooted in relevant and grounded understandings of quality in secondary education in Kenya.

Chapter Six: Educational Quality – Conceptualisations at the Local Level

Introduction

This chapter is the first of two which present the findings from the two case study schools – Omwana and Eskuru – about the opinions and attitudes of a range of local participants – students, parents, teachers, management committee members and dignitaries. It focuses upon answering Research Question 2 (see Chapter 1):

RQ2: What does a quality secondary education look like for a range of local stakeholders?

Following a section which introduces the case study community and schools, the chapter is split into two parts which reflect two sub-questions:

RQ2a: What makes a good secondary school?

RQ2b: What are the purposes of secondary education?

Although at times in interviews these questions were asked directly of participants, many tended to pose responses to my questions about a quality secondary education in terms of ‘a good school’ and measuring it by what graduates of that school would have achieved (both in their examination results but also, as this chapter shows, by a range of other highly regarded purposes of education). Therefore, these are shown to be two integral areas of what constitutes a quality secondary education, alongside community and curriculum related issues. These latter two are the focus of Chapter 7 which follows this one. It is important to note that many participants tended not to be able to talk about conceptions of quality – particularly those related to a good school – without making reference to the deemed successes and failures of their own school. Therefore much of the discussion in this chapter is grounded in the real-life examples

of what is liked, and disliked, of secondary education in practice within these two schools.

Introduction to the Community and Case Study schools

Inka is a large market village approximately 25 kilometres from Kisii town. It was once ten kilometres from a tarmac road making it feel very much in the interior despite its relatively close distance to Kisii town. However, in early 2011, a tarmac road was constructed making it very much more accessible with shared car and matatu services running every one or two hours to town.



Figure 6.1: the tarmac road passing through Inka

The vast majority of the community is engaged in shamba (small-scale) farming since as a local stakeholder remarked ‘the climate is one of the most conducive for agriculture in Kenya’ (Local Stakeholder 6). Most families rely on their farm for their basic foodstuff which includes maize, beans, greens, avocados, sukumawiki (local greens) and fruits with the excess from this stock usually sold in the local market for a small profit. Maize is the largest crop and is almost exclusively farmed for self-consumption and some sales in the local area. Maize is the main part of students’ diet

since lunch consists of githeri, a mix of boiled maize and beans, and their staple supper is ugali (ground maize cooked with water until it makes a dough-like consistency) with sukumawiki. The Kisii region is the largest exporter of matoke (green bananas) to other parts of Kenya and tea is the biggest source of stable income for the community and subsequently is the main income from which parents pay students' secondary school fees. Coffee is also grown on many shambas and some parents use this income for school fees.



Figures 6.2 & 6.3: Community members picking tea and taking it to the tea collection point near Inka Market

Many families also keep a small number of chickens and those who are relatively better off may also own cows and other livestock. Other employment available in the community includes owning small businesses, having a particular trade (such as tailors and carpenters), working as a manual labourer, driving motorbikes (known as boda-bodas and piki-pikis locally) and working for the government (for example teachers, nurses and local administrators). Brewing local liquor (known as chang'aa) is also an increasing source of informal income for many of the parents at the two case study schools.

Most of the local population lives in semi-permanent mud huts with iron sheet roofing. The poorest families will all cook, eat, study and sleep in the same hut. For example the home pictured in Figure 6.4 is the sole residence for a family of nine. It is more common for a family to have a number of huts on one plot of land with, for example, a kitchen separated from living quarters. Wealthier members of the community live in permanent houses and this is deemed by many to signify that someone 'has made it'; as shown by the responses of a number of parents regarding what they hoped for their children in the future that included building themselves 'a nice home' which signified that they 'had a good life'.



Figure 6.4: A 'typical' home in the Inka Community

This short introduction to the local community serves to highlight the particular context within which the case study takes place in. The Kisii region is a context which is rarely documented with very little written about education in the region across the international and national literature. As this brief overview has indicated, this is also a context which is remarkably different to other regions of Kenya that tend to receive more attention, for example the slum areas of Nairobi or the pastoral communities of Northern Kenya. This is a context where water and food is often plentiful; although as shown in the following two chapters, poverty varies meaning that some families do

suffer from lack of basic amenities including food and clean water. There are a number of other ways in which this context impacts on education through, for example, students needing to work on the land. Socio-cultural factors, such as the patriarchal nature of the society, are also shown through these chapters to impact on student achievement and well-being.

Case Study School 1: Eskuru Secondary School

Eskuru Secondary School is one kilometre from Inka Market along a dirt track. It is situated in a valley surrounded by hills, meaning that the land is swampy as is typical in the Kisii region and which can affect the foundations of school buildings. The school shares a sports field with the neighbouring primary school which is often muddy and littered with puddles, especially during the rainy season. Eskuru was founded in 1987 and sits on a small plot. Overall, its infrastructure is relatively poor and this impacts on how some in the local community viewed the school. For example, one local stakeholder (3) shared that s/he thought the school was poor and on probing, this was revealed to be because of its infrastructure as compared with surrounding schools such as Omwana.

The school has five classrooms, one of which has been converted into a computer room awaiting the arrival of computers that were donated to the school in early 2011. Most classrooms are dark and reasonably dilapidated having been built twenty years ago but there are two brighter classrooms (for Form I and II) which were constructed with Constituency Development Fund (CDF) money in 2005. There is a small administrative area with offices for the head teacher and deputy and a tiny bookstore. A store room, similar in size to a classroom, was converted into an informal boarding area for Form IV boys in July 2011. Twelve boys, sharing six single beds provided by

parents, sleep in this room but currently there are not resources or facilities for this to become a permanent arrangement.

The school compound has a free-standing staff room and a poorly-equipped laboratory both of which were built in 2002 and 2000 respectively using PTA funds. The laboratory lacks gas and running water. There is also a temporary kitchen, a small plot for growing sukumawiki as part of the school agriculture project and separate pit latrines for boys, girls and teachers. The head teacher and BoG have agreed that the next PTA development project will be the construction of a library which includes a study area. In 2010, the school secured electricity and many students arrive early at school to make use of light given that they do not have electricity at home.



Figure 6.5: Eskuru Secondary School

The school is Catholic sponsored but there is minimal involvement from the local diocese. There are ten teachers, all of whom are male. Seven are TSc employed leaving three that are on temporary contracts from the school's BoG (see Chapter 3). Most teachers take on other responsibilities alongside their teaching. For example, the Maths/Physics teacher is in charge of debating and guidance/counselling. There are five members of support staff, which is the smallest number that I have known in my

experience in district secondary schools in Kisii. There is a cook who is in charge of cooking the students' lunch, staff lunch and preparing tea for staff on arrival in the morning and during morning break. The librarian is the groundsman and the day watchman. There is also a typist who doubles as the accounts' clerk and head teacher's secretary, a laboratory technician and a night watchman.

School enrolment is 160 students with more boys than girls (85 and 75 respectively). The student population has stayed steady since 2008 when it increased from 115 to 157 believed by members of the BoG to be in light of the introduction of FSE. There is a school policy to encourage girls to stay in school, especially those who become pregnant, and, against the norm in rural secondary schools in Kenya, there is gender balance in the later forms. The school operates a strict entry policy. The minimum score that a student must secure in their KCPE exam to qualify for entry to Form I is 170 and in the current Form I the highest mark was 320. To enter Form IV, a student must get a D+ and only students that have been in Form III in Eskuru can qualify.

As Box 6.1 shows, the school day is both long and full with the official timetable between 6.30am and 6pm. Students are also given homework assignments and will do schoolwork in the evening at home. This bears many similarities to other secondary schools where I have worked in rural Kisii but there are three ways in which the school differs from the norm. The first is the peer maths programme which was recently introduced during lunch hours with the purpose of improving maths results. The debating club which runs on Tuesdays is particularly lively and encourages contributions from students from all four classes on a range of topics. The evening

prep session usually takes the format of student group discussion time for revising particular topics from the day.

Eskuru School Timetable	
6.30am	Morning Prep
7.20am	Assembly (school or class dependent on the day)
7.50am	Morning lessons (with two ten minute breaks)
1pm	Lunch
1.20pm	Peer maths programme
2pm	Afternoon lessons
4pm	Games/Debating/Clubs
5pm	Evening Prep

Box 6.1: Eskuru Secondary School timetable

The school has a good reputation within the local community as the best district school regarding academic performance. Many parents and local stakeholders remarked that the school is ‘coming up’ as can be seen by their improving mean score results in KCSE over the past three years, as shown in Box 6.2.

Eskuru Secondary School – Mean Score Results by subject			
Subject	Year		
	2008	2009	2010
English	4.116	5.250	4.500
Kiswahili	3.372	4.275	4.679
Maths	2.163	2.900	2.929
Biology	2.938	3.385	4.429
Physics	3.818	10.000	4.500
Chemistry	2.953	4.775	4.071
History	2.821	5.936	5.227
Geography	4.067	5.667	4.000
CRE	4.093	4.533	5.542
Agriculture	3.600	5.065	4.700
Business Studies	3.588	6.889	5.625
TOTAL	3.372	4.550	4.564

Box 6.2: Eskuru Secondary School KCSE results

The BoG has a development plan and had put certain measures in place in the hope of scoring a mean score of 5.00 in the 2011 KCSEs. This plan includes the maths peer teaching programme during lunch hour and morning and evening preps. The head

teacher at Eskuru was spoken about in largely positive terms across the student, teacher, management and parent bodies. He was described as a committed head teacher who led by example and ensured high standards of discipline. The fact that the school is achieving improved exam results was attributed, at least in part, to his management skills. Discipline is very strongly promoted at Eskuru since the management believe that it 'goes hand in hand with good performance' (BoG 5, Eskuru). The teaching staff, management committee and students were unanimously proud of the disciplinary record of the school; participants often commented on the perceived link between the school performing well and the level of discipline maintained.

Case Study School 2: Omwana Secondary School

Omwana Secondary School is situated on the tarmac road which links Inka and Kisii town, making it easily accessible. There are two secondary schools between Omwana and Eskuru so they do share some catchment area but are not generally regarded to be in direct competition in attracting students. The school infrastructure is very good for a district school and the majority of the building work has happened in the last three years. In 2008, Omwana secured a MoE grant of 1.5 million KSh to construct the laboratory shown in Figure 6.6 and a large company donated 2 million KSh to rehabilitate the classrooms and school compound.



Figure 6.6: Omwana School Laboratory (Taken by Hannah, Omwana)

There are nine classrooms, of which one is used as a staff room and another is awaiting the arrival of computers from the same source as Eskuru. The administrative area consists of a bookstore and offices for the head teacher, the deputy head teacher, the school secretary and the accounts' clerk. On the school compound there is also a small agricultural plot, pit latrines for boys, girls and teachers, a volleyball pitch, a rainwater container and a large kitchen. The kitchen was built in 2007 by the PTA and has two energy-saving stoves. The school shares a football pitch with the neighbouring primary school and has a fence and large gate, which is manned by the day watchman.

The school is sponsored by a protestant branch of the Christian church⁵. The school population is 240 students with 129 boys and 111 girls. As with Eskuru, it goes against the trend of girls dropping out earlier than boys with an equal ratio of boys to girls in Form IV. It is registered as double-stream but only operates as this in Form III where the 83 students are split randomly into two classes. Form IV has 65 students

⁵ There are only a small number of secondary schools in the Kisii region that are sponsored by this Christian sect so I have not included the sponsor in case the school could be identified.

and should be divided but is not because of the lack of teacher resource. Forms I and II have enrolment in the 40s which suggests that the school will revert to being single stream since demand is not there for the school to be double stream throughout the classes.

There are ten TSc teachers, of which one is on maternity leave. The head teacher rarely teaches so there are only eight with teaching duties. These teachers are supplemented by three BoG teachers. The school also employs ten support staff: a cook, a kitchen hand, a lab technician, a typist, a librarian, an accounts clerk, a groundsman, a gatekeeper, and two night watchmen. The school day follows a similar timetable to Eskuru with a number of key exceptions (see Box 6.3). The first being that students arrive slightly later for school and evening prep is often cut short or poorly run. The school does not have any functioning clubs or societies and more emphasis is placed on attending church than at Eskuru, from 4-5pm two days a week. Students get an hour longer for lunch than at Eskuru and this is often even longer because teacher lunch is often behind schedule.

Omwana School Timetable	
6.45am	Morning Prep
7.45am	Assembly (school or class dependent on the day)
8.30am	Morning lessons (with two fifteen minute breaks)
12.40pm	Lunch
2pm	Afternoon lessons
4pm	Games/Debating/Clubs
5pm	Evening Prep

Box 6.3: Omwana Secondary School timetable

Box 6.4 shows the mean score in KCSE for the past three years. Results fluctuate and are consistently lower than at Eskuru. Maths, Biology and Chemistry seem to be

particularly challenging. As an example, a score of 2.386 in Chemistry corresponds to an average of D-.

Omwana Secondary School – Mean Score Results by subject			
Subject	Year		
	2008	2009	2010
English	3.170	3.971	3.341
Kiswahili	2.434	4.176	3.795
Maths	1.226	2.529	1.977
Biology	2.327	3.000	2.538
Physics	3.333	4.200	4.000
Chemistry	1.769	2.735	2.386
History	3.129	4.654	4.200
Geography	2.667	4.667	3.111
CRE	3.270	4.385	4.541
Agriculture	3.271	4.500	3.667
Business Studies	3.000	5.500	3.765
TOTAL	2.472	3.882	3.318

Box 6.4: Omwana Secondary School KCSE results

The school has a more relaxed entry policy than Eskuru, accepting students that other neighbouring schools may not take throughout the classes. Students are allowed to enter Form I with a KCPE result as low as 100 which is the lowest that I have known in my experience in the Kisii region. The BoG members are aware of the challenge that this brings to the school:

[The biggest challenge...] is the entry behaviour. When they come from primary, they come with very poor marks and I do not think that they appreciate what secondary education involves, also they do not have the language capacity.

(BoG 1, Omwana)

However, they are also reluctant to turn away students as there are no other secondary schools in the surrounding area that will accept them and the Head teacher believes that it is the Government's intention with FSE for all students to go to secondary school regardless of ability. The head teacher is not strict about students' progression

through classes and especially entry into Form IV; something about which one teacher was particularly critical:

Here, students are lazy and they do not work but the administration allows them to continue from one class to another. So they keep on moving without working hard until they enter Form 4 and then they are scoring Es. That is purely on the administration because they can be strict on these students.

(Mr Joshua, Omwana)

The head teacher's approach to student progression was just one aspect of his leadership which was questioned by participants. Not all offered negative assessments. Some parents and teachers spoke of him positively as a 'big man' in the school, local community and as a pastor of a church in town. A few students were positive about his oratory skills and his desire to help all students to achieve through regular student and parent speeches. He was also merited for the external sponsorship that the school had received in recent years. However, across the parent, student and teacher groups, his management skills and commitment to the job were called into question. For example, Mama Dorothy (Omwana) described him as 'a bit lazy but he is ok'; a common assessment by parents and other members of the local community. It was also widely noted that there was a lack of discipline in the school, regularly explained by the frequent absence of the head teacher from school. The important point is that the often negative perception of the head teacher impacted on participants' views of what makes a quality education. As shown in the following section, discipline, financial management and a strong leadership are all deemed essential aspects of a quality school.

The case study schools compared

From an outsider perspective, there are many similarities between the schools, especially in comparison with the larger provincial and national schools in Kisii town

(see Chapter 3). Both schools are lacking in resources and teachers, operate a similarly long school day and cater for students of varying ability from a local catchment area. However, the schools also have a number of key differences which are important to note since they impact on participants' discussions of a quality education as outlined in the following section. These main differences relate to:

- *Academic achievement:* Eskuru scores significantly higher in the KCSE results, although this can to some degree be explained by their more exclusive entry criteria at both Form I and for progression through to Form IV;
- *Management:* the head teachers received very different appraisal, particularly regarding their leadership and financial management; and
- *Discipline:* Eskuru has much stricter discipline measures than Omwana across student behaviour, timetabling and student progression from one class to the next.

The differences in these schools are not atypical in my experience of secondary education in the Kisii region where I have witnessed a wide range of proficiencies and resources across management, teaching and infrastructure. The specific context of each school represents unique challenges. This variation of education in practice is not witnessed in the policy documents where education priorities and procedures are spoken about in a uniform and one-size-fits all manner; an issue which has been widely critiqued in educational development (see Chapter 2). This in-depth introduction of both the schools has provided the context for the findings presented in the next section about what constitutes a quality school. As noted above, discussions of a 'good' or 'bad' school were often asked in abstract terms but most participants tended to reflect on the positives and negatives which they experienced or witnessed in their own school setting.

A quality secondary school

In this section, I outline the key elements of 'what is a good secondary school' based on data related to school-specific questions in interviews, references in student-driven findings and my observations of the schools. The key themes identified focus on management, discipline and resources.

Head teacher with strong leadership skills who acts as a role model for teachers and students

Good school management was seen by many teachers and parents as a key aspect of a quality secondary school. In most cases, management was primarily equated with the head teacher despite the level of official responsibility which is placed on the BoG. As noted above, the leadership skills of the head teacher at Eskuru were widely attributed for the improvement in academic results. The enabling role of the head teacher was also identified at Omwana. For example, Mama Belinda argued that for a school to perform well, a strong head teacher was needed. It emerged, across the participant groups, that the strength of a head teacher was related to their ability to act as a role model for students, maintain discipline and encourage teamwork among the teaching and support staff. This resonates with much of the World Bank literature which emphasise the importance of good governance and leadership for the effective management of a school (Cuadro & Moreno, 2005; Hanushek & Woessmann, 2007).

At Omwana, in reference to the current head teacher, three teachers argued that a head teacher should be a role model for students to follow. Madame Eve (Omwana) observed that the head teacher was often absent from school which impacted on students' behaviour since they 'know he is not around, they see that and they do not come or sometimes they come in turns...this is not a good example to follow'.

Similarly, other teachers remarked that they took it upon themselves to arrive early for school to set the right example to students that you need to work hard and be punctual to achieve your goals. Local stakeholder 4 spoke more generally about the need for the head teacher to act as a role model to students because of a lack of role models in the community for whom young people can look up to.

The head teacher, as a strong leader, was seen to be an important enabler for a co-operative working environment in the school. One Eskuru BoG member (3) explained that the school was aiming for academic excellence and this was not 'easy to get unless there is cooperation, commitment and other things between staff, stakeholders, teachers and students'. The head teacher at Eskuru stated that his role was integral to enabling quality education in the school and explained that he had faced a major challenge when he joined the school in building teamwork among the teachers; he believes that along with discipline, good teamwork is behind the academic improvement of the school. The deputy head teacher endorsed the need for the head teacher to have strong leadership skills and admired the improvement in recent years in terms of staff unity.

For many participants, strong leadership was thus an integral cog in enabling the effective running of the rest of the school to enable a quality education in the school. There are two important implications of this emphasis placed on the head teacher. The first is that it supports or notes the international quality frameworks which place emphasis on leadership for quality education (Heneveld & Craig, 1996; Hanushek & Woessmann, 2007). However, it also highlights the need to understand the school context and adapt policies to enable their successful implementation. Regarding the

role of the head teacher, this particularly supports the work of Kamunde (2010) who has argued for the need to offer greater training to develop the capabilities of head teachers to cope with the ever increasing demands that have accompanied the introduction of FPE; in this case the need for training is extended to the secondary level and can also be seen in the following section regarding the wider management of the school.

Transparent and Accountable Financial Management

The emphasis placed on school leadership for a quality school also extended to financial management. As discussed in Chapter 3, the BoG has ultimate responsibility for the school management of every Kenyan secondary school; introduced with the aim of encouraging greater community participation in schooling and increased accountability and transparency (Sang & Sang, 2011). In both the case study schools, participants rarely mentioned the role of the BoG in discussions of the day-to-day life of the school. Although both BoG chairmen visited the school regularly (perhaps twice a month) and understood some of the challenges facing the school, they did not appear to have the same level of insight as the head teachers; and many of the teaching staff. All BoG members that I interviewed appeared to be committed and enthusiastic about improving the quality of education in their respective schools, although there was some concern raised as to whether they had the general capabilities to take on the role and the lack of specific training that they received. This is a finding which resonates with previous research about school management in Kenya (Crossley *et al.*, 2005; Kamunde, 2010; Sang & Sang, 2011).

There was some mention of poor financial management at one of the schools, although the details of this particular case have not been included to protect the

identity of those in question. The details are also largely not relevant here; what is that the matter was raised in reference to what makes a quality school with all those who mentioned the possible poor financial management stating the importance of strong management in a quality school. Transparency and accountability were both cited by these participants and more widely. A key point here is the role of the BoG in holding the head teacher to account and the example of possible financial mismanagement serves to illustrate key procedural and management issues. There are four signatories to the school accounts; all of whom review how the head teacher, as the main financial manager, spends both government and community funds. FSE money is delivered directly to a school bank account, from which the head teacher withdraws funds as and when it is required. This means that both the head teacher and the BoG are accountable for any misspent money. Parents and teachers expressed concerns about the fact that the BoG chairman at Omwana was illiterate and may not be able to read the accounts and/or know if the head teacher were misusing funds. I asked three BoG account signatories across the schools if they felt comfortable in understanding accounting; all stated that they knew generally but did not have any specialist knowledge. An Eskuru BoG member (4) who is a signatory to the account explicitly stated that often they had to trust the Head teacher in managing the school finances. BoG member 5 at Omwana specifically stated that s/he would like the opportunity to train in accounts.

The issue of accountability can also be seen in the lack of a functioning complaints procedure since this again relies upon the BoG. One local stakeholder (3) explained that if a head teacher is not performing, the BoG can demand for him to be replaced since the BoG are 'the managers of secondary schools'. However, in practice this does

not happen. As Mama Belinda (Omwana) highlighted, the BoG chairman is closely connected to the head teacher (as one would expect in a small community) and so it is difficult to approach the BoG chairman to raise particular concerns. Strong financial management with clear procedures to enable accountability and transparency is perceived to be central aspect of a quality school.

The emphasis placed on accountability resonates to some degree with the work of Hanushek and Woessmann (2007) which promotes this a key element of a quality education. However, it also shows how these ideals, so widely promoted in the international literature and used to rationalize decentralisation policies, need to be supported in practice for successful implementation. It suggests the potential need to reassess decentralisation policies to include appropriate training so that the principles of transparency and accountability can be realised in practice rather than remaining an externally imposed ideal. It also supports the literature which has critiqued the rolling out of decentralisation policies in the Kenyan context (Buchmann, 1999; Kamunde, 2010) and further afield (Bray, 2003). This, in particular, adds weight to the argument of Sang and Sang (2011) whose study showed that the largest challenge identified by head teachers was a lack of management skills among the BoG.

Importance of school discipline

One of the most commonly cited aspects of a quality school across all participant groups was that of school discipline. Although this was often in response to the current situation at each school, participants linked these back to more general discussions of a quality school. For example, parents at both schools felt that discipline was very important with many seeing it as 'the key to success' (Papa

Benjamin, Omwana). This was also seen a key trait among the Eskuru BoG where one explained why the school promotes good discipline:

In a school system, for any meaningful change to take place in a school, it has to be well-disciplined. A student has to at least know what he is doing. When it comes to academic performance and achievement, if a student is well-disciplined then they will perform well. Even if they are of low ability, when we have instilled discipline, they achieve much higher. What I can say is that discipline is just the key. We are even developing these people for the life after school so when someone is disciplined, he will learn that discipline is good and he will go out there and live a disciplined life.

(BoG 1, Eskuru)

Students at Eskuru regularly cited discipline as an important aspect of a quality school with six of the Form III ten essays on the subject of the 'perfect school' reflecting positively on discipline in their school. Daniel (Eskuru) begun his essay by saying that 'the most perfect thing in our school is respect and discipline among the students and teachers' while Julie (Eskuru) praised the 'maximum discipline in the school' since Eskuru is 'the only school where rules and regulations are being followed by the letter'. The last of these quotes particularly highlights the different approaches to discipline shown by the two schools since at Omwana, by contrast, teachers and parents bemoaned the lack of a school disciplinary policy or rules and promoted discipline as a necessary element of a good school.

Compared with Eskuru, only one essayist at Omwana mentioned discipline. Phoebe (Omwana) requested that the school think about improving discipline so that 'we would be performing well in our grades and improving our academic performance'. Three Form IV students also linked discipline and academic achievement. This was particularly in relation to the impact of ill-discipline on their ability to study. For example, Dorothy (Omwana) took the photo shown in Figure 6.7 with the caption

‘some student in Form IV class are fond of fighting and quarrelling thus taking our attention and making us not to concentrate’.



Figure 6.6: A case of ill-discipline (Taken by Dorothy, Omwana)

Ill-discipline at Omwana was also noted by parents with three specifically noting instances of students who were allowed to come and go during the school day. One Omwana BoG member (4) spoke at length about the problems of discipline at the school which s/he believed to be well-known in the local community. S/he argued that discipline would be something that needed to be changed for quality education to be achieved at the school:

S/he feels like if s/he were head teacher, s/he would sit down with the teachers, give out the rules and ensure they are being followed. S/he would make sure s/he would be the first one here in the morning to make sure that the teachers and students are here and work is being done. S/he would also ensure all the students are in class before time and a clear timetable so the students know what they are supposed to be learning.

This quote shows that discipline is interpreted as more than just students behaving in class; it also means having a structured and disciplined approach from the school management to timetabling and for teachers and the head teacher to act in a way which students will look up to. However, the prevalence of discussions about it among participants at each school suggests its importance in definitions of a quality

education. This may resonate with the 'orderly school environment' promoted by Lockheed and Verspoor (1991) but it mainly reflects the local culture and participants' priorities. In the next section, the importance of a safe school environment is highlighted and the tension of ensuring discipline if corporal punishment is discouraged is discussed.

Safe school environment where well-being is promoted

In the child-friendly literature, emphasis is placed on the school as a safe and healthy institution. Safety, security and psychological well-being are deemed to be as important as pedagogical practice and learning resources (UNICEF, 2009). There is little access for students to health services within the school environment. For example, at Eskuru, the laboratory assistant looks after the small supply of first aid products but is not trained in first aid delivery. The head teacher acknowledged that there was no funding available to cover the costs of training and/or more supplies. I showed him the child-friendly manual which has been given to all Kenyan primary schools. The gap between what is available in relation to health and well-being and what a child-friendly approach would expect is significant. However, as this section shows, participant perceptions of a quality education resonate with many aspects of the child-friendly model with key elements including access to safe drinking water, clean latrines, a safe school environment and access to guidance and counselling facilities.

Students at both schools highlighted health issues within the school and their impact on their education. For example, two students took photos of the latrines at each school because they thought they were dirty and too few in number for the student

population including Damaris (Omwana; see Figure 6.8) who explained that the toilet was an issue because ‘you can get diseases from them because they are very dirty’.



Figure 6.8: Dirty latrines, (Taken by Damaris, Omwana)

Other students also commented on the lack of toilet paper; learners are expected to bring paper from home and often cannot afford to do so. Access to clean drinking water was an issue at both schools. Water is primarily provided through a rainwater tank. While water drunk by teachers is boiled, students drink the water directly from the tank untreated. At Eskuru, students were often requesting to drink the water in the staffroom because they did not want to drink untreated water. Dorothy (Omwana) took a photo of the school tank (see Figure 6.9) and explained that ‘the water is dirty so it may affect us with some diseases...like TB’. When rainwater is not available in drier months, students are sent to the river to collect water; something which some students acknowledged meant that there was often a shortage of water for students with some health implications. Brian (Omwana), for example, remarked that ‘if it doesn’t rain, then we serve our lunch with our plates unclean’.

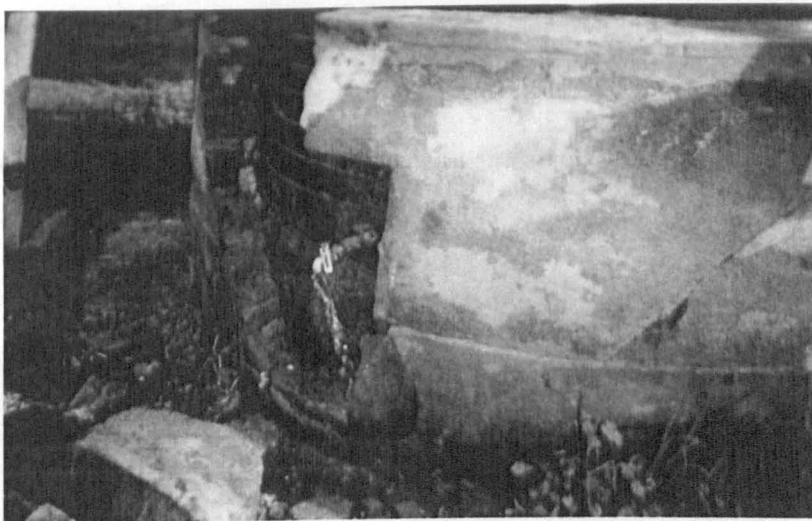


Figure 6.9: The school water supply, (Taken by Dorothy, Omwana)

Although sanitation and water were rarely mentioned by teachers, they joined students in highlighting the importance of access to guidance and counselling services for looking after student well-being. As Mr Peter (Eskuru) explained, there is a shortage of guidance and counselling staff with the time to be able to focus on students and an office to deal with confidential issues. Guidance and counselling teachers at both schools shared this concern and proposed that a quality secondary education is one where such facilities are available. One teacher explained that a student had recently admitted that he felt like taking his own life and the teacher had not known how to react. They did not feel that they currently had sufficient training in the area. Students also wished for such services with one student remarking in his diary that it is good when teachers offer advice about how to cope with difficulties (Duncan, Omwana).

With the great importance placed on school discipline and the link with high performance, it is perhaps not unsurprising that a few students questioned the methods by which discipline was enforced. Freedom from violence in a school setting is one of the clear rights in education professed by the rights-based approach to education

(UNICEF, 2009). Corporal punishment was not widely used in either school but it was utilised as ‘a final straw’. There was only a handful of students who felt that there was too much corporal punishment in the school. One of the poster groups drew the challenges that they face at school and in the picture shown in Figure 6.10, the student is clearly cowering scared and crying while the teacher stands over him with a cane.

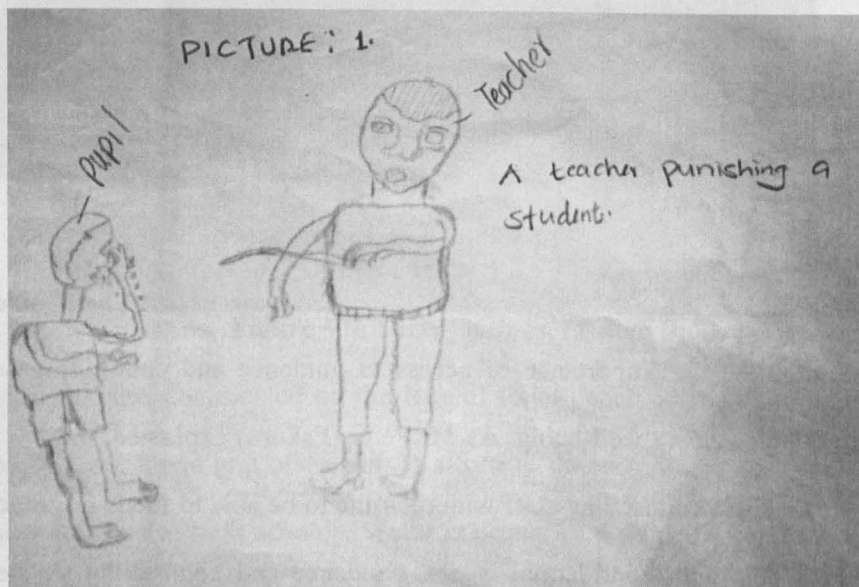


Figure 6.10: Corporal Punishment, (drawn by Group 3, Form I, Omwana)

A Form III student went further to state that the heavy punishments given out at school had ‘made many of the students to drop out of school’ (Moses, Eskuru). However, some teachers at Omwana felt that the lack of caning was a factor contributing to the ill-discipline in the school. Therefore, it would be inaccurate to state that the removal of corporal punishment was a widely-shared aspect of a quality secondary education among students or the participant groups more widely.

It is important to note that discussions about student fear for safety were not restricted to the school grounds and the impact of the local community on students and their well-being is discussed at length in Chapter 7. These discussions further emphasise

the importance of making the school one place where students can feel safe and access counselling services. The importance placed on safety and well-being for a quality school is an interesting one because it offers much resonance with the rights-based models, in particularly the child-friendly literature (UNICEF, 2009). However, there are also elements – such as a promotion of the continued use of corporal punishment – which are in direct contrast with this literature so it is important not to overemphasise the ways in which these discussions may reflect similar priorities.

School which is well-resourced

Students, teachers and BoG members frequently referred to the need for more resources in their schools. Through the introduction of FSE, all government secondary schools have a significantly better resource base than in 2007. At both Eskuru and Omwana students were able to access books and partake in some science practicals. Teachers recognised that there was a distinct improvement compared to previous years but still pointed to the importance of resources for a quality education. FSE funds are specifically given for books and permanent science equipment. The schools are expected to supply chemicals and other expendable items. As one science teacher explained, this impacts on students being able to practice experiments regularly:

There is a lack of resources here. When you look at the resources here they are scarce. The lab is incomplete. Sometimes you may wish to do an experiment and you look for even the chemicals and they are not there so it is a real challenge to even be able to do an experiment.

(Mr Joshua, Omwana)

Mr Peter (Eskuru) shared a similar concern at Eskuru where he stated that ‘our laboratory is poorly equipped so there are some practicals that we are not able to carry out during our teaching and learning process.’ Having a fully stocked laboratory was

also a priority shared by many students. Form II students at Eskuru drew their perfect school with all depicting a well-resourced laboratory as the picture below shows:

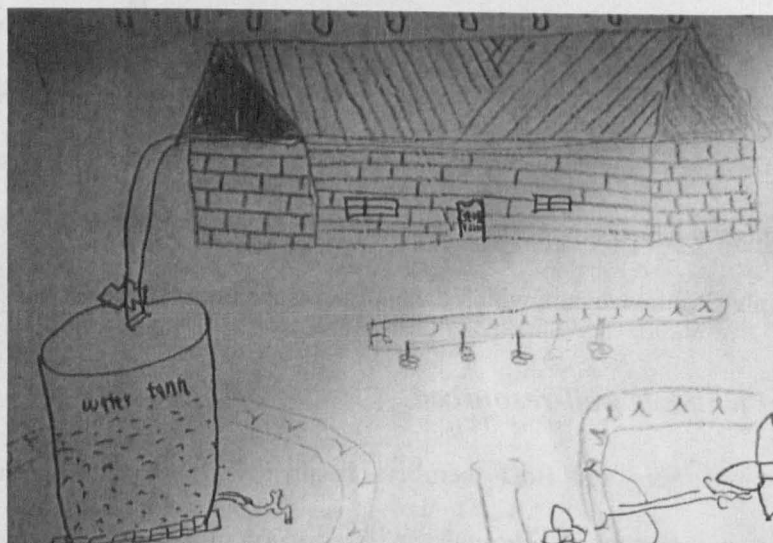


Figure 6.11: The perfect school laboratory (drawn by group 2, Form II, Eskuru)

Access to books for use in classrooms and student independent study was deemed by many to be an important aspect of a quality secondary education. This was particularly true among those who promoted a more interactive and embedded approach to teaching and learning (see Chapter 7). For example, Mr Dickson (Eskuru) wanted there to be more books available in the library so that when ‘they have assignments, then it will be easy for them to refer; they do not just rely on the teacher, it would enable them to do more research on their own.’ Students also felt that a library was important to their education. Susan (Eskuru) took a photo of the library and explained that ‘it is important to have a library in school to assist the students who are not able to purchase at least a textbook...there are some families where you get that there is no money to buy books so the library helps them.’ Other students were satisfied with the number of books available but wanted a library space where they could continue their personal studies.

The key aspects of quality school promoted across the participation groups are summarized in Box 6.5.

KEY ASPECTS OF A QUALITY SCHOOL
Head teacher with strong leadership skills who acts as a role model for teachers and students
Transparent and accountable financial management
Excellent school discipline
Safe school environment where well-being is promoted
Well-resourced

Box 6.5: Key aspects of a quality school

There are many resonances with the school effectiveness literature as it is used in low income countries (see Chapter 2). For example, the World Bank report on secondary education promotes effective school governance to ensure a safe and well-disciplined school environment (see Chapter 2). However, it is important to note that this literature reduces education to primarily just mean schooling and assumes that an effective school is the main enabler of a quality education. In contrast, a quality school was just one of four key areas identified by participants which come together to create a quality education. The second of these, the purposes of secondary education, is discussed in the next section.

The purpose of secondary education for holistic development

Across the participant groups, quality education was often defined in terms of its purpose and outcomes. Although the tendency to talk about measurable outcomes resonates with the school effectiveness literature (Levin & Lockheed, 1991; Heneveld & Craig, 1996), it also reflects the national and local context in which there is great

emphasis placed on examinations and the role of secondary education to pave the way for students to progress to further education (see Chapter 5). As is discussed in the Chapter 7, the overemphasis on examinations as the only output or measure of a quality education was widely critiqued, particularly by teachers. As this section shows, the purposes of secondary education were also talked about in more general terms of the sort of person that a secondary school graduate should become, echoing some of the four pillars of Delors (1996).

With only two exceptions, teachers highlighted the perceived problems with the current curriculum for its overriding emphasis on academic studies at the expense of holistic development of secondary students. Despite the varied academic performance of the both schools, this view was shared across the teaching bodies. Those at Eskuru were proud of the improvement in academic results within the school but as one BoG member (1) shared, the purpose of education was 'not just academic excellence' but 'to bring up a child who is wholly-developed, academically, morally and socially.' A number of teachers referred back to the introduction of the 8-4-4 system and its intended output of making 'a student an all-round person' (Mr James, Eskuru). These teachers argued that there was a gap between the original intentions of the 8-4-4 system for holistic development and the current emphasis solely on academics, as Mr Paul (Omwana) explains:

We are only stressing the academic area and we have now forgotten these other areas, the social, the emotional and such aspects. We are only looking at the child dependent on academic performance. If you have not performed well, you are condemned, you are nobody. Someone gets an E, they are useless. Someone who has an A, that is brilliant... we are not producing an all-round person.

Rather than the perceived narrow focus of the current curriculum, there was a sense across participant groups that the purposes of a quality secondary education should widen to enable holistic development across the key identified themes of social, moral, political and academic areas. Although, by necessity, this section is separated into a number of sub-sections, for most, there was a range of interlinking purposes of secondary education so they should not be read as mutually exclusive.

Social and moral development

Many participants spoke about the role of secondary education for skills development with a quality education being one which gave students the necessary skills both for work and life. This related to vocational skills but also social ones. Teachers tended to talk about these in specific terms. For example, Madame Louise (Omwana) highlighted the importance of secondary education for developing communication skills. She argued that 'it is important to give students time to share with us...so they are developing their social skills... it helps them to gain courage and be exposed so they can handle situations outside of school.' Parents, on the other hand, spoke of social development in more general terms and related to the type of person they hoped their child would become. Each parent articulated this in slightly different ways, but all wanted their child to be self-sufficient, beyond just material matters. Papa Jacob (Omwana) explained his hopes for his son's future following graduation from secondary school:

He feels comfortable in the way he manages himself, he can support himself and his family without much strain.

Does he mean only financially or in other ways as well?

Not only financially, he will also know how to do his accounts maybe, look after his family and also he feels that if he had a job through studying that will keep him busy and he will avoid bad companies like becoming a petty robber.

Papa Jacob, thus, envisioned a future life for his son as one where he was not only financially secure but also where he has a good quality of life. A similar expectation of secondary education to enable social development was shared by a number of BoG members. For example, one Eskuru BoG member stated that (s)he thought that secondary education should allow one to carry on life better. (S)he further explained that this meant 'being able to look after their family better' and chastised what he deemed to be 'unlearned men in society who harassed their wives' (BoG 4, Eskuru). Being able to look after yourself was also explained in health-related terms. For example, five BoG members believed that one of the purposes of secondary education was to develop life skills such as how to manage oneself and one's health. This was supported by some parents – for example, Mama Alfred (Omwana) who articulated a good life as having 'good health and [being able to] wake up every day for his work.'

The purpose of secondary education was placed in direct contrast with that of primary schooling by many participants. They felt that secondary graduates should have developed particular skills to enable them to be socially developed and self-aware. For example, three BoG members shared that one should be able to recognise the difference between a primary and secondary graduate by how (s)he carries him/herself in society; they know how to 'handle themselves in a more social way with the others' (BoG 3, Eskuru). Teachers also highlighted the difference between primary and secondary graduates as shown by the following quote:

We should look at their social development as well. For example, if someone came here and they did not know how to dress, if such a person can now dress and brush their shoes, keep their hair, keep their body clean, know how to put on a neck tie, know how to speak some words in English and do some basic mathematics, such a person has been changed. Even if a primary graduate got 400 marks and could not continue to secondary and you compare them with a

secondary graduate who had scored 110, you should be able to tell the one that has had a secondary education.

(Mr Paul, Omwana)

Another key signifier of social development was seen in terms of an individual's ability to cope with any challenges or difficulties that they may meet during their life. This was particularly articulated at Omwana, perhaps reflecting the lower perceived ability of students and a sense that the current emphasis upon academic excellence and assessment was impractical for the students at this school. For BoG member 1 (Omwana), secondary education needed to inculcate heightened self-awareness so a graduate is able to address the challenges of life and to make relevant and informed choices in response to these. Madame Eve (Omwana) similarly shared that learners should be 'able to learn how to live with the current society...they should be in a position to adjust to the changing situation.' For Mr Thomson (Omwana), this was as important as scoring highly on examinations:

Quality education to me means...a student is able to embrace change in any situation. And, then a student must also be able to live positively with other people around them...You can have some students who are going to live out there positively with other people and they will have learned as much as those with an A plain.

It is interesting to note that some participants thought about how these translated into specific outcomes and outputs of a quality secondary education. BoG member 1 (Eskuru) deemed that the measure of whether a student has received a good education is their ability to understand and live in society rather than an examination score. (S)he spoke at length about the need for secondary education to 'wholly develop someone academically'. (S)he explained that, in practice, this meant making the syllabus more relevant for students to understand life and in the future to be socially and morally developed. To be able to 'understand life' was an outcome also posited

by Omwana BoG members who described social outputs that could be measured in particular subjects. For example, one felt that secondary education should keep 'the learner informed on current affairs and aware in history, maybe how the government was run, and in sciences on how chemicals react, how these detergents we use at home work and so on' (BoG 5, Omwana).

As discussed in the section on discipline above, morality is an important trait in the Inka community and many teachers and BoG members felt responsibility for the moral development of the students in their school. For example, one Omwana BoG member (4) placed emphasis on the teaching of life skills for a student to be able to 'manage herself...to be able to know what is right or wrong.' Discipline in the international quality literature is usually confined to its role in ensuring effective teaching and learning (Lockheed & Verspoor, 1991); here, it also has an important role to play in teaching young people 'the right way' to live and behave in society. Thus, moral development is a principle component of an holistic education for a well-rounded individual as Mr Dickson (Eskuru) explains:

It should provide all-round education, morally, socially, psychologically and mentally.

What do you mean by morally?

It means to make a student well-behaved; a student with good morals, behaviours and actions.

Moral development was particularly highlighted among participants at Eskuru perhaps because discipline was identified as an essential aspect of the school's perceived improvement. The following excerpt from a teacher interview is worth quoting at length for the importance placed on moral development by Mr Evan (Eskuru):

What do you see as the purpose of secondary education?

It assists people to have moral values....it assists you to know the environment throughout the world. It assists you to know what is happening.

What do you mean by moral values?

The kind of skills that someone can learn which can assist him or her to stay well. If you have moral values, you know how to treat people, if somebody has abused you and you are well learned you don't just react. You know how to bear with that person. If you have moral values, you know this is the right thing that I am meant to do. If I have a family, I look after them. In African society, men are somehow difficult people to handle. But, when you are learned, you know what you are supposed to do.

For Mr Evan, having a sense of morality is important for knowing how to best live your life and treat those around you. Teaching moral values is deemed by these participants to be an essential, but currently largely missing, part of the secondary curriculum. Moral development is, thus, an important and contextually grounded purpose of secondary education shared by many of the participants.

Good citizen

Closely linked to the prioritisation of moral development, there were a number of teachers and members of the management committee who reflected on the role of education in developing well-rounded citizens. This was explained as graduates who would both contribute socially and economically to their local community and be proud of their national identity. Mr David (Eskuru) spoke at length about his desire for education to develop a tolerant society:

What do you think is the purpose of secondary education?

To equip learners with necessary skills that can enable them to be productive citizens, to mould their character to acceptable standards in the community, and to enable them to socialise with other citizens to achieve national unity.

To be a citizen means...

To be patriotic. To be Kenyan.

Other teachers shared this civic purpose for secondary education to enable national unity by acknowledging students' lack of exposure to other parts of the country and

alternative cultural norms. One Omwana BoG member (2), for example, promoted the importance of school trips to encourage students to be able to 'interact and relate with people from other parts of the country'. This would enable graduates to 'become better citizens; people who sees things.' Students also expressed their aspiration for taking tours in their essays 'since touring is a part of learning...the school is supposed to take students out so they can learn more' (William, Omwana).

The purpose of developing good citizens was not only for national unity but also for their role in the local community. A good graduate is perceived by some teachers as one who can contribute to the community and live positively with others. The following quote from Mr Thomson (Omwana) is indicative of the importance of social and moral development for the production of a well-rounded citizen who is respected in the local community:

Someone who is able to love others, he is able to be honest, he has those values of integrity. He is a person who is able to be strong within the community and he will be able to also pass onto others what he believes is best.

Mr Thomson (Omwana) extended his argument to say that secondary education should teach a student to be able to embrace change and respect the views of others in society. In this way he could become a leader in the local community and 'be able to accommodate the views of other people so that he is not able to push down his own views and policies.' This echoes the importance placed on being able to cope with challenges discussed earlier and the views of three Form IV students at Eskuru who thought that developing leadership and communication skills was an important part of their education. This was shown by the photos they took of debating club which they then explained:

Debating club is a club which enables one to develop that skill of oral communication...It is important...so if one after school, maybe he may go out to the community, he may be chosen as one of the community leaders or in future he or she may be chosen as the minister of parliament.

Innocent, Eskuru

The importance placed on political participation and developing a tolerant citizen is perhaps not surprising given the great interest in local and national politics which I witnessed in the school staffrooms and the wider community. For example, I was party to some reflections on the impact of the post-election violence on national unity and the migration of those from surrounding ethnic groups to Kisii, one of the few regions which remained violence-free in the aftermath of the elections (see Chapter 3). Teachers and students were proud of the lack of violence and the tolerance shown in their region and did not want to see national violence again at the 2013 elections. Developing tolerance and patriotism can, thus, be understood as both local and nationally relevant priorities for secondary education responding to the contemporary context. Although there is some mention in the international literature of political context, this is another element that is a priority in the Inka community that is not widely found in discussions of quality education.

Skills development for future well-being and self-reliance

Practical or vocational skills development was frequently mentioned in response to questions about possible reforms to the curriculum and there were some participants who thought that there should be more emphasis placed on skills development as a purpose of secondary education. It is important to note, though, that for many vocational education was often cited as a tertiary education opportunity rather than

alternative provision at the secondary level. However, for a number of teachers, the development of practical skills, particularly for self-employment, were deemed an important purpose of a quality secondary education:

If they are trained in practical education, they will be able to employ themselves. They will seek self-employment after school. They will come up with a way for students to have skills in practical areas, so then after school they can do their own things without waiting to join colleges.

(Mr Dickson, Eskuru)

This view was shared by other teachers and BoG members, particularly at Omwana. It was argued that a graduate should be able to 'rely on himself or herself, not necessarily just employment after school' and be 'equipped with skills so that they can make it on their own' (BoG 2 and Madame Louise, Omwana). Two teachers spoke with much pride of a graduate from the school who had made a healthy business after he was laid off from a local factory with a small financial pay-out. He used this money to buy a television and DSTV subscription⁶. He charges a minimal fee for community members to watch premier league football matches and makes a good income. The focus on self-reliance was reflected in parental definitions of a quality education. As Mama Damaris (Omwana) explains, financial well-being is an important outcome of secondary education. She simply argued she wishes her daughter to have 'a good life, a nice life; [one where] she is able to sustain herself and not be dependent on her parents.'

The concept of self-reliance and the role of education in preparing young people to engage in the informal economy has long been prominent in the Kenyan education

⁶ DSTV is the equivalent of Sky in Kenya and provides more live premier league football matches than are available on UK television. On average, during the football season, there are 4-5 premier league games shown on DSTV every week.

system (see Chapter 3). For many participants, it was a foundational concept that had been misplaced in recent years. One Omwana BoG member (2) was particularly supportive of a realignment of the current system so that it is more relevant to local economic realities:

You are exposing them to opportunities after school. If they don't get employed, they can do some farming, they can start some businesses like those who do business education...they can do something that can sustain them on their own...they are exposed so they should be able to do something that is income generating so they are not just idle.

Mr Thomson (Omwana) also spoke at length about why education for self-reliance continued to be relevant for Kenyan students in the current national context:

In our country, the economy cannot support employment for all these people. So, we have found that there are some people who have been to university and they are staying out for 4-5 years and they are saying that they are looking for employment. He is waking up in the morning and he is on the streets looking for employment. If this person could have had that belief that this knowledge is not supposed to assist me to get a white collar job, then this person can engage in other activities like farming.

This highlights the frequently cited tension between educational aspiration and probable reality. The teaching and management bodies may see developing students for self-reliance as a priority given that the majority of graduates will need to engage in the informal economy; however, students aspire for the small number of white collar jobs. As discussed in Chapter 7, this often leads to a sense of failure among graduates who do not feel that they have achieved their singular goal of university entrance. Therefore, it is important to note that education for self-reliance may have some supporters among the teaching body, but this may not receive widespread support across the local community and among the students or parents.

Many participants offered negative perceptions of small-scale farming; one local stakeholder spoke candidly about how many in his constituency did not view farming as a business opportunity and wanted their children to support them by gaining permanent employment in, for example, the government (Local Stakeholder 4). When I asked an Omwana BoG member (3) what his wife did for a living, I was told that she did not have a job and ‘was just a farmer’. Such a negative perception was highlighted by Benjamin (Omwana). He had written in his diary that he felt very bad attending to the shamba; in interview, he said that he found it to be very difficult work – ‘digging is bad; that is why I aim to be an engineer...I am saving my life.’ For Benjamin, and many other hugely ambitious students, the main purpose of secondary education is gaining sufficient grades to continue to university and into formal employment, as shown in the following section.

Education for formal employment and higher education

Although for students gaining entry to university was a priority, the teaching and management bodies tended to view secondary education’s purpose for preparing students for further education as one aim, alongside those already discussed above. As Mr Julian (Omwana) observed, the current education system is based on the assumption that all students will continue to higher education and formal employment and that ‘they are not told of any other reason why they are in school.’ All teachers recognised the need for secondary education to prepare students for future formal employment and/or higher education opportunities. Mr Thomson (Omwana), for example, showed such a balance in his assertion that students should learn ‘how to

live with people, to associate, to communicate; and also to enable to one to continue for further education and studies.'

One teacher at Omwana could only see the benefit of secondary education for its bridging between primary and tertiary education (Madame Beatrice, Omwana). Mr James (Eskuru) and BoG member 3 (Omwana) supported this sense of secondary education as the link to higher education. BoG member 3 (Omwana) stated that he thought 'secondary education is important because it is a measure, it seems like one to select the students for their specialisation area so they will be able to go onto other institutions where they can specialize.' While Mr James (Eskuru) saw the purpose of secondary education as to gain knowledge and:

to enable students to realise their potentials because you realise this is the area where they now specialise from here going to university or college of his or her own wish. It is at this point where they identify what they are best at, a student who wants to study law, they can take that route of law. A student who wants to become a doctor, can follow the route of medicine. A student who wants to become a teacher, can become a teacher.

The choice of white collar jobs in this description must be noted as illustrative of the high level of expectation for secondary education in moulding future professionals. This is despite the likelihood that this will not be possible for almost all graduates from these two schools. This was not true of all teachers and BoG members. Mr Evan (Eskuru) stated that 'for those that it is relevant for, then it is to prepare you for university or other further education; for those who are not able to go onto university, they are able to contribute to society'; Similarly, Eskuru BoG member (1) showed palpable pride in a graduate from the school who he had seen in Inka market running a stall after attending a lower level college:

I want to talk of students who have joined these middle level colleges. There is a boy who cleared from here three years ago and he went for this computer course. He is in Inka market, he has opened a shop, he has his own computers...we want to bring up people even if they don't qualify for university but at least they have skills to enable them to survive life.

As discussed above, parents prioritised the future well-being of their child and expressed quality education in terms of what could prepare students for this. Four parents specifically related this to gaining formal employment as a university graduate. As Papa Samuel (Eskuru) simply surmised, 'a good education leads to a good job and so good money.' In fact, two Omwana parents felt that graduating from secondary school was not enough because 'you will not get a job after Form 4 without going for further studies'; 'just clearing Form 4 is not a good education'. (Mama Damaris and Mama Dorothy, Omwana). Mama Belinda (Omwana) strongly believed in the strength of education for gaining formal employment, even for those who are not able to reach university:

[secondary education] is a climbing ladder because a learner cannot move from primary to university, he has to pass there.
What about those who will leave Omwana with maybe a D-, is the purpose of secondary education then different?
Someone with a D-, he or she will be taken somewhere and start from even a certificate course...Those are supposed to join other courses like masonry, carpentry, things that will support them.

Mama Belinda was one of just a small number of participants who referred to the educational avenue of secondary continuing to vocational/technical schooling but all of these spoke of it as a viable option for those who were not able to attend university.

This section has laid out the interlinked purposes of education expressed by local stakeholders in the two case study schools across the four areas shown in Box 6.6.

THE PURPOSES OF A QUALITY SECONDARY EDUCATION
Social and moral development
A good citizen
Skills development for future well-being and self-reliance
Formal employment and higher education

Box 6.6: Purposes of secondary education

The complex presentations of the aims of secondary education suggest the promotion of a holistic education. I will end this section with a quote from an Omwana BoG member (1) who articulates the varied and intertwined aims of secondary education:

The purpose is to give secondary schooling which prepares them for further education and for other tertiary, intermediate level colleges and other certificate courses and to make them appreciate knowledge, to self awareness, to be a person that uses knowledge for self-actualisation. Basically, secondary education is a level where if students finish at the end of Form 4, they have the knowledge, the self-awareness, the right attitude to live and make informed choices...after Form 4, we expect them to be able to interact properly, across the board.

This, thus, illustrates the diverse desired purposes of secondary education and how they differ from primary education; the immensity of the task of designing a curriculum to reflect such diverse aims should not be underestimated.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has introduced the case study community and schools and presented the findings related to Research Question 2 regarding what a quality secondary education looks like for a range of local participants. This was across the sub-questions of what

constitutes a quality school and the purposes of a quality secondary education. A perceived quality school has been shown to be one which has a head teacher with strong leadership skills, who acts as a role model for teachers and students; transparent and accountable financial management; excellent school discipline; and a safe environment where well-being is promoted and well-resourced. Some resonances with international quality frameworks have been drawn out, for example the importance of governance in that of Hanushek and Woessmann (2007) and a safe school environment in the Child-friendly literature (UNICEF, 2009). However, all aspects of a perceived quality school have been shown to be relevant to the local socio-cultural context and community priorities. This is particularly seen in the emphasis placed on school discipline.

The purpose of a quality secondary education was discussed in terms of holistic development with many participants calling for reconceptualisation along the lines of wider outcomes. Key desired areas focused on social and moral development, a good citizen, skills development for future well-being and self-reliance and for formal employment and higher education. These desired outcomes reflect some of the local priorities which were revealed in the discussion of a quality school. Examples include the close links, and potential contributory roles, that can be seen in the importance placed on school discipline and moral development and effective leadership and social development. The relationship between the different identified elements of a quality school continues into the following chapter where issues such as the emphasis on examinations and the influence of community factors are shown to offer significant challenges to enabling quality education in practice in the case study schools.

Chapter Seven: Challenges to Secondary Education in Practice

Introduction

In the previous chapter, the main aspects of a quality education were presented across the identified themes of a quality school and the purposes of a quality secondary education. This chapter turns the attention to the challenges for delivering a quality education in practice. This is in order to answer Research Question 3 (see Chapter 1):

RQ3: What are the main challenges facing secondary education in practice in the two schools?

The challenges facing secondary education in practice which act as barriers to the attainment of quality education in the two case study schools are discussed across curricular and out-of-school factors. It is important to note that it was difficult to separate findings across the second and third research questions and some of the challenges at school level such as poor management or lack of resources were covered in detail in the previous chapter.

Curriculum as an enabler for quality education

In this section, the main perceived curricular challenges are discussed covering the interlinked themes of the size of the syllabus up to Form IV and the overloaded school timetable, the reliance on rote learning, often by necessity, the overemphasis on fact retention and recall in examinations and the perceptions of failure that many feel who do not achieve highly in the KCSE. The section concludes with a summary of the key elements that can be interpreted as the curriculum which can enable a perceived quality secondary education. This is based on the cited curricular challenges together with relevant aspects from Chapter 6.

Overloaded secondary syllabus

The length of the school day and an introduction to the syllabus have already been discussed in chapters six and three respectively. Many participants highlighted the challenge that the overloaded syllabus represents for both students and teachers. In the space of two weeks, students sit exams in eight subjects in which questions can be asked that relate to topics from throughout the four-year secondary school period. In each subject, there is, to an external eye, a substantial range of topics included in the syllabus; often not covered to sufficient depth by teachers who are under pressure to keep up with the demands of simply covering the basic facts. This has consequences, in both the case study schools, for the quality of student learning and their 'all-important' examination achievements. However, it also impacts on the well-being of the students, most clearly seen in the Form IV diaries. Box 7.1 shows a diary extract from one of the student's diaries. It offers an intimate glimpse into the long and arduous day of Duncan, an industrious Form IV student who takes every opportunity he can to take up private studies despite challenges that he faces in finding the time and peace to do this because of the disturbances he says he experiences from his family and fellow students.

MONDAY	What are you doing?	How are you feeling?
Before school	I wake up at 4.00am. I organise for my private studies until 5.30am. I take 5 min to reach school.	I feel well because I am making my future to be good. I feel good when I walk small distance.
When you arrive at school – 11am	I arrive at school at 8.00am because in the weekend it was nice for me to talk to parents	Life at school is more important than at home because when you are at home you find yourself involving a conflict with your parents or your brother and sister.
11am-1pm	I attend class lessons and I have learned Kiswahili and my private studies	Studies are the key for our lives because in some years coming you can not be employed without certificates. NB disturbance from my fellow students e.g. making noise.
1pm-2pm	I was taking lunch (giteri) and I enjoyed lunch with my students	I am feeling okay because I have negotiated with my friends and I wish all things to be okay as the day will end
2pm-4pm	Attending afternoon sessions and having discussion with my deskmate about private studies	When students disobey teachers in class or cracking jokes. I will understand better certain subject when I discuss with my deskmate
4pm-6pm	I will go to relax for 10 minutes and come back to read my set book. At 5.00pm to 6.00pm time of notes writing	When you read alone, you understand better according to the environment you stay
After School	Preparing for my supper before 7.30 and I will do my private studies and other homework given from school	Doing some work which is not good to do according to my form. I will not have enough time to revise my work. Being sent far away by parents to collect something at night or late.

Box 7.1: Diary Extract (by Duncan, Omwana)

This extract also offers insight into the role of the home in acting as a barrier to education, a theme picked up in the following section. The following quote comes from another student at Omwana. The language which Geoffrey (Omwana) uses is particularly emotive and emphasises the negative effect that the prescriptive and long timetable has on a student's desire to learn:

As you can see, each time you see we are forced to follow all of the timetable which is a bit difficult because each and every time we are supposed to change this to this, if you are not doing this, there is a punishment, you are punished, if you try to come late, you are given a punishment, generally in school, it's a bit, actually it is like a punishment.

Geoffrey uses words such as forced and repeats punishment three times in one sentence, indicating that this is what he associates with schooling. Given that students

tend to be in school for more hours of the day than not, it could be posited that the burden has a real emotive impact on the student.

The challenging size of the syllabus was identified by many of the teachers and BoG members. However, it was usually discussed in relation to teaching demands rather than a challenge impacting on students and their well-being. Very few pointed to curriculum developers and policymakers; rather the fact that the syllabus was not being covered was due to either the deficiencies of teachers or the perceived low ability of the student intake. For example, one Eskuru BoG member (2) put the responsibility on individual teachers stating 'there are some classes where the [teachers] are so much behind so they are not covering the syllabus as expected.' However, among the Omwana BoG, a different perspective was offered in which it was the shortage of teachers that was to blame. This led to a sense among students that teachers are always rushing through the syllabus. The following quote is from a Form IV student who had achieved a B+ in his end of year Maths test in Form III but shared with me that he is now struggling to understand the topics that they are covering in Form IV:

You've said here *moving faster to get through the syllabus*, do you feel that sometimes you are running to keep up with the syllabus because you say it a few different times?

You know there was a time that I was sick and it took almost 3 weeks until I was back in school...it was malaria but when I recovered and I came back to school, I discovered that they have gone ahead and you know the teacher cannot get back for the sake of only one person.

(Thomas, Eskuru)

Maths results in KCSEs are the poorest of all subjects at both schools (see Boxes 6.2 and 6.4) and I have seen the majority of students struggle with the subject during my seven years of working in schools in Kisii. Thomas' experience is a pertinent example

of how the size of syllabus, and the need to keep up with it, leads to students often missing key concepts and scoring poorly in their examination results. Teachers are not given the time to return to such key concepts as they 'move faster to get through the syllabus'.

The overloaded syllabus also means that there is less time put aside for extra-curricular activities with games and clubs time often sacrificed for students to revise independently, particularly in Form IV. The school timetables shown in Boxes 6.1 and 6.3 show that there is one hour set aside each day for sports, clubs and societies; the commitment to such activities, however, differs greatly across the schools – a trend that I have witnessed across secondary schools in the Kisii region. This is often because of lack of human resource to manage the activities and funds to enable students to attend competitions. Based on my previous experience in other district schools in the surrounding area, I had expected students to bemoan the lack of funds for attending regional and national events. However, the importance placed on extracurricular activities focused more on student well-being in the normal school day. Across the student groups, it was clear that involvement in extra-curricular activities was not only fun but also had a real benefit to their in-class studies. Damaris (Omwana) explains why she has chosen to take a photo of the games field as an important aspect of her education:

They are happy when it is games time. They jog around and play around and they freshen their minds and when they go to class, they are able to capture everything that they are being taught because their mind has been freshened.

Joseph from Eskuru was renowned within the school for his drama and poetry skills.

Innocent (Eskuru) took his photo with the caption that 'he is able to entertain us and

make us happy....which is important in our life.’ In a school day which is packed full of lessons and students furiously studying, the importance of such light relief should perhaps not be underestimated since ‘you can learn in school the whole day, it is good to have activities’ (Samuel, Eskuru). In the current climate, however, students tend to learn all day with little time left for these activities which are deemed by students to be such an important part of their education.

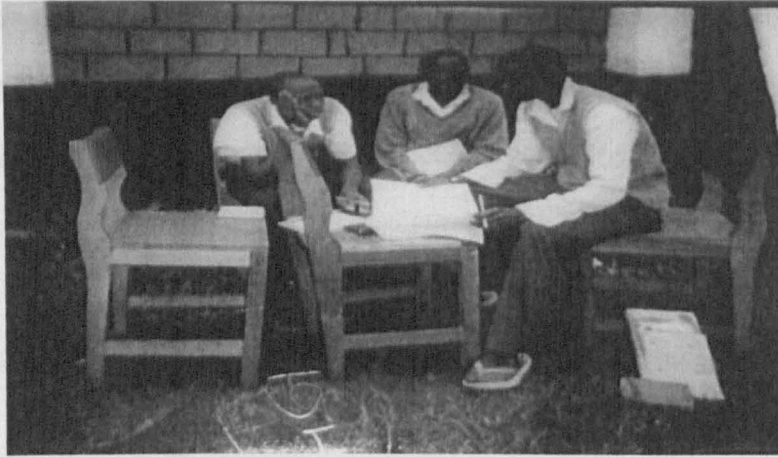
Reliance on Rote Learning

In Chapter 2, the uncritical transfer of learner-centred pedagogy and the critiques of its promotion in low income countries were reviewed. For example, Chisholm and Leyendecker (2008) argued that it is often not implemented across Africa because of the classroom contexts, often due to the size of the class. The findings presented in this section, suggest that the uncondusive context is curriculum-based through the size of the syllabus and the need to get through it.

Mr David (Eskuru) is a teacher with more than twenty years of experience but little overt enthusiasm for his role. Observation of his lessons revealed a teacher who was following very strict guidelines for what he needed to cover. He copied word-for-word from a textbook onto the blackboard the key facts on a certain topic, students in turn copied the words into their exercise books. Through what he learnt in his teacher training, he is aware that this is not ‘the various methods that are supposed to be used in teaching.’ In our interview, he relayed to me that the major challenge that he faced was rushing to complete the prescribed syllabus: ‘the problem that is there is the content – it has to be completed in a very short time.’ This is just one example of how teachers are simply not able to cover the syllabus at the rate that is expected of them and using the range of teaching methods that they feel they should be using; and for

those that do, I would argue that the students are not able to fully digest the sheer amount of 'knowledge' that they are supposed to learn on a daily basis. Almost all teachers, to varying degrees, discussed how the current teacher-led pedagogy, alongside the focus on academic subjects and exam-orientation made it difficult for students to achieve the purposes of education that they had espoused in Chapter 6. One of the small girls that I lived with in the village would tell me every morning before I left for school 'soma kabisa'. Literally translated, this means 'learn completely'. As one teacher at Omwana observed, there is the first challenge of covering the whole syllabus and then the next challenge is 'ensuring that they have understood the content which is in that syllabus' (Mr Joshua, Omwana). I would support this teacher's sentiments and argue that by having an overloaded curriculum, students are unable to 'learn completely'; often leading to results that they and others deem to be poor.

More participatory approaches to education were promoted among teachers and students and it became evident, particularly from the student-initiated data, that space for independent learning and group discussion were integral to a quality education. However, this did not need to be within the confines of class time; rather many promoted such learning in the little free time that they had during the school day. Great importance was placed by the Form IV learners on being able to revise, work independently and with fellow students for their own achievement. It was also clear that this is the kind of learning they most enjoyed. I could choose a quote from any of the interviews with the Form IV students, but the following is most indicative of how learners feel about working both independently and with other students.



Why do you like doing group discussion?

I like it because through group discussion, I believe I have made it...in group work, they will elaborate more than the teacher. He or she talks 25%, 75% are part of my own work. So during group discussion, I am able to grasp something new.

Figure 7.1: Discussion group (taken by Hannah, Omwana)

Many students, particularly the more committed, tend to use their extra-time, for example during lunch hour, games time and after school, to engage in this type of learning. The lack of time for discussion was also noted by some teachers. Madame Faith (Omwana) reflected that there was not time in class for students to do ‘practical work and give them problems to answer, you should give them group work and discussions’ but that there is ‘not enough time for discussions’ both in and out of class.

As outlined in Chapter 6, Eskuru had introduced a peer learning scheme for maths which was very well received by students and teachers alike. This is an excellent example of how one head teacher has taken initiative outside the tight prescriptions from government guidelines in order to support students in an area which they find particularly difficult. However, it should be noted that this scheme is compulsory and takes place during the lunch hour; the only time when students could relax and/or

conduct personal study. Therefore, despite its merits as discussed here it is important to reiterate that it is forced into a slot in an already overburdened timetable. The following quote is exemplary of the positive response to the peer learning sessions:

You say many times in your diary that you enjoy the peer teaching. Why?

Most of the topics backwards from Form 1, Form 2, Form 3, there are some topics that I didn't get it clear and now when the students explain it, they explain better than the teachers did before. Somehow when they are explaining, this makes me to get more clear and into deeper.

(Ruth, Eskuru)

Maths results in both internal and national exams had improved at Eskuru and teachers cited that they saw a difference in both student engagement and their achievement. This could, then, be an important lesson for allowing some room in the timetable for school-level initiatives; particularly those which are seen by students and teachers alike to improve outcomes and also the development of the skillset which participants believed to be one of the purposes of secondary education.

The reliance on rote learning, something which I regularly observed in classes across the schools, is a curricular challenge to quality education in practice despite the weight rights-based and learner-centred approaches carry in the theoretical discussion. It is a pertinent example of the need for a joined up and holistic approach to understanding education quality across policy, school and curriculum design and how particular approaches cannot be put into practice without a conducive classroom and curricular context. This supports the literature discussed in Chapter 2 critiquing the gap between policy and practice (Holmes & Crossley, 2004; Kamunde, 2010).

Over-emphasis on examinations

In line with the concerns that the current secondary education system is too focused on future employment in professional careers and progression to higher education, many teachers and BoG members voiced the critique that there is too much emphasis on examination results as the nationally espoused measurement of a quality education (see Chapter 6). Three teachers at Omwana were particularly critical of the strong relationship between perceptions of quality and examination scores. For example, Mr Julian (Omwana) criticised the curriculum for being too exam-focused with the result that the whole system is focused on 'passing, just passing.' Alternative measurements more in line with holistic development were put forward by some. For example, one Eskuru BoG member (1) acutely pointed out that a quality education should be measured not just by students passing exams but also by whether graduates are 'going to be useful in life.' There was also a concern raised that the current examination system did not measure whether students had acquired knowledge or developed skills. Doing well in exams reflects more a student's ability to retain information than to display cognitive skills. This concern closely resembles the World Bank's secondary education document (Cuadro & Moreno, 2005). Mr Thomson (Omwana) shared this observation and the lack of coherence with his desired holistic approach to quality education:

What has happened is that the curriculum we have right now is exam-oriented. It is not centred on developing the learner or making them an all-round learner. We are just focused on the exam. If a student scores an A in Maths then we respect the student. We are focusing only on performance.

Students, then, are judged by their ability to retain and present facts in an exam situation rather than on a wider skill set. Teachers are also judged on the exam results;

something which concerned three teachers. For example, Mr Peter (Eskuru) felt that this further compromised his flexibility in teaching approaches. He bemoaned the pressure on teachers to achieve favourable examination results for students in their class. Since their promotion is assessed by how they perform. He believed this means that teachers are driven to get good results and ‘forget about the other relevant issues for an individual to develop....we teach for the sake of examinations.’ Mr Evan (Eskuru) shared this critique and stated that all teachers are trying to complete the syllabus as quickly as possible so as to allow time for revision and tutoring in exam techniques.

The subject of life skills was introduced to teach students transferable skills relevant for life outside of school (see Chapter 3). The rationale for adding these to the curriculum clearly resonate with the desired purposes of a quality secondary education discussed in Chapter 6. It could, then, be surprising that so many teachers and management committee members do not believe that these skills are taught in school. From my observations, it is not at all surprising because the lessons of life skills are rarely taught. There are slots officially on the timetabling schedule but the lessons are often used for revision of another subject and syllabus catch-up, particularly so in the lead-up to internal and external exams. The subject of life skills is not examined so it becomes disposable in the face of examinable subjects; this is despite the great support given for the skills to be taught for a more holistic approach to a quality secondary education. This is another clear example which suggests the importance of a coherent strategy for any reform so as to create an enabling environment for such reforms.

Exam orientation and academic focus leads to students' perception of failure

Looking at the range of challenges that each learner faces in and out of school, an outsider perspective may suggest it is unsurprising that they struggle to achieve high enough grades in their KCSEs to continue to university. However, students interpret this as 'failure' or that they did not work hard enough. Achieving a high grade is seen to be something that all students should be capable of, if only they work hard enough. Although this could be interpreted as a positive environment for learners to reach their best, I would argue that it makes the vast majority of young people leave school feeling like 'failures' and that they did not do enough to achieve their goal. Furthermore, it means that they are studying for hours everyday, sleeping often for only four hours a night and still feeling like they are not doing enough. There is a tradition in Kenyan schools, and one that I have particularly noticed in the Kisii region, for students to repeat years of schooling; this is often the case in Form IV where you will find students who are repeating the year and their KCSEs since they are sure that they will be able to get a B+ if they work hard enough. Very able students, who for whatever reason are only getting a C which would qualify them for many college courses, are repeating and continuing to 'fail'.

All of the Form IV students that I interviewed, in different ways, expressed negative thoughts about themselves. They thought that they could try harder in class or study more at home as though they were defining themselves by the grade they were given; perhaps because this was the main indicator used by teachers and parents to define them. Faith is an example of this. She is a shy girl who comes out of her shell while singing in the Young Christian Society choir and playing netball. She is a games

perfect and also enjoys listening to debating, although she is reluctant to speak because of shyness. She enjoys English and Kiswahili but finds Sciences difficult. Her diary (in Appendix 4) reveals a girl that is repeatedly self-critical, deeming it to be her fault that she is not getting higher marks; particularly so in sciences. Regarding Biology, she comments 'in practicals I am ok but coming to theory I need to pull my socks up - I am average'. She also describes Chemistry as a 'bad subject that makes school to be bad at times' and questions whether she puts 'a bad attitude towards it' (Faith, Eskuru). In our interview, she came across as low in self-confidence and it was clear that her low marks in science subjects were making her feel unhappy at school. I could chose to discuss a number of the other students but this snippet from Faith suggest the psychological effects that the size and breadth of the syllabus has on students who then feel they are failing, despite their many attributes. As one of the Eskuru BoG (1) discussed at length, the examination-oriented nature of the Kenyan secondary school system, and focus upon academic subjects, is the context for this feeling of failure among students:

They only look at academic excellence. If you fail in the exam, then you are condemned...After Form IV, they are forgotten, no one thinks of them...The problem is that the opportunities for succeeding in life are cut short, the moment that they fail.

This BoG member, thus, highlighted the need for secondary schooling to be a formative experience in seeing a quality education as one that encourages self-worth.

BoG members often lecture students on the importance of working hard to improve their performance. However, some teachers and officials at both local and national government offices do not recognise the hard work that students put in and keep rigid definitions of 'intelligent' as one that achieves well in the KCSE. At the local

government education offices, I was told that one of the main reasons that students were not performing well was because they were not trying or that they did not have a clear vision; in contrast to the examples of students discussed above:

The learning attitude of our students is negative in most cases because some of our learners even when they are going to these secondary schools, they don't have that vision of what they want to be in future. They are just going to secondary to pass time up to Form IV.

(Local Stakeholder 3)

At the MoE, when I shared some of my findings with a senior official, I was told that that the students cannot be working hard if they are achieving a D. This suggests that there is a need to understand the policy and curriculum initiatives which lead to students performing badly and for this to be more widely understood by government officials and school members. Furthermore, it suggests the importance of listening to learners' experiences in the development of the curriculum to enable a curriculum which is relevant to its students.

Curricular reform for a quality secondary education

In the light of these curricular challenges, a quality education can be defined as one which is enabled by curricular reform across the following key areas:

1. Smaller syllabus

In the light of the challenging size of the current syllabus, curricular reform to decrease it would be well received across the participant groups. This is both for the number of subjects that students are expected to study up to Form IV and the amount of content in each subject's syllabus. To address the first, a number of teachers promoted a widening of the syllabus at lower levels and specialisation in technical, science, arts or languages/humanities by Form IV. Two teachers argued that this

would allow for students' skills and capabilities to be recognised earlier and developed. Three others thought it would allow for more practical training and skills' (both vocational and social) development. To address the second, it was proposed that subjects needed to be widened but that the syllabus of individual subjects needed to be narrowed. One teacher believed that this would be a way to counter the current culture of fact retention and display in the exams that was so widely critiqued across the participant groups. Almost all teachers and BoG members stated that they thought that Form IV students should have a narrowed syllabus allowing for some specialisation.

2. More interactive teaching methods and space in timetable for student discussion

A quality education for many participants could be defined as one which allowed for quality learning, or the ability to 'learn completely'. Allowing time in the school timetable for 'internalised learning' was deemed by some teachers to be an enabler for achieving quality educational outcomes. Fifteen of the Form IV students whom I interviewed spoke about their support for group discussion and peer learning; many specifically mentioned that they would like more time to be able to revise, work independently and discuss their work with other students. The current timetable is too busy to allow for in-depth discussion and peer learning. Reforming the curriculum to allow more personal and collective learning would be very well received by students across the case study schools and is one way in which the curriculum could be adapted to match the desired wider outcomes that participants perceived for a quality secondary education (see Box 6.4).

3. Recognition of wider goals of secondary education beyond scoring successfully in examinations

It was widely felt that the content was too wide and having one exam at the end of four years means that there is too much information for students to retain. A number of teachers and BoG members thought that specialisation by Form IV would allow for students to internalise their learning rather than the fact retention of a large amount of information. BoG member 1(Omwana) specifically argued that the curriculum should be reformed to enable a 'quality education [which] must cut across, and it will cause someone to inquire more, to ask more, to be interested in more...it must bring out the best in somebody.' This is in line with the purpose of secondary education for holistic development discussed in Chapter 6. Some alternative measurements were put forward such as that a graduate can live well in society. However, the purposes tended to be spoken about as general outcomes which are more difficult to measure.

4. Space for extra-curricular activities and non-examined subjects in school timetable

The emphasis on exams and size of syllabus has been shown to act as a barrier for the inclusion of other activities in the school timetable. There is often not enough time put aside for extra-curricular activities and non-examined subjects. These were seen by teachers and students to be, in varying degrees, essential aspects of a quality education. For example, extra-curricular activities were seen by many of the students as important for the element of fun and relaxation; thus making it an essential component of a quality and holistic secondary education. The subject of life skills matches many of the aspects of what participants thought were lacking from the current curriculum such as learning to live with challenges. Curricular reform to allow time for this non-examined subject to be given appropriate attention in the school

timetable is one way in which a more holistic education could be provided in the two case study schools.

If these reforms were made, the curriculum could be an enabler for a quality and relevant secondary education and in line with the purposes outlined in Chapter 6. This section has focused on the curricular context and the challenges that it represents for the provision of a quality secondary education in the two case study schools. The following section moves to the community context and the ways in which out of school factors present many students with challenges which affect their ability to achieve a quality education.

Out of school challenges to Secondary Education

As was shown in Chapter 2, there is little emphasis placed on out-of-school factors in the educational quality frameworks. The EdQual framework is the first to highlight the importance of context as both a barrier and enabler of quality education (Tikly & Barrett, 2011). This section supports a context-led quality framework by showing the importance placed on home and community factors for student well-being and achievement. Although across the participant groups perceived contextual challenges were highlighted, this section mainly draws upon student-generated data since they have direct experience of these barriers to their education. By way of introduction to the complexity and interlocked nature of the challenges that many students face, Box 7.2 presents a glimpse into the issues that one student admitted to facing. While Grace was asked to write about her impressions of 'a perfect school', it is indicative of the impact being a single mother has had on her life and education that she chose to write on this topic instead. It offers a glimpse into the specific and interrelated challenges of poverty and pregnancy. However, it is also worth quoting at length to introduce the

wider attitudinal challenges that she faces, shown for example by her admittance of shame.

I used to work hard in my learning so that I may achieve my goal to become a doctor... From the time I started my secondary education I have found many challengers. I have tried to come out of it but unfortunately it is so difficult to come out of those challengers. Surely when I was in form one I did not even know that boyfriends are existing but when I started walking with peer groups that were having boyfriends, they tell me to accompany them to have one boy. I decided to have one boy whom I love so much and that thing made me to concentrate with that boy so much than my studies. I love that guy like a thirsty land in the real sense he used to tell me he love me so much and further more he gave me a lot of money for my own purpose, like buying *always* and other items of that were necessary for a girl to have on that particular moment. I loved that boy until form two. I always took much time thinking about him rather than studying.

The boy used to tell me that he has right to marry me. In good or bad lucky I became pregnant when I was in form two in the year 2009, I drop out of school because it was shameful to go to school having pregnancy. Bad lucky the boy rushed away from me, he no longer need me, he did not even what to attend me, he started having another relationship with another girls in other villagers, he did not assist me anything. I struggle alone until my birth, I gave birth and born a son, who was so handsome...I stayed home for six good months without going to school until the sixth month when I decided to go back because I was already having a vision that I needed to fulfill in my life. From that time I decided not to have any boyfriend until up to this time. For this mistake which I deed I went down to my parents and asking them to forgive me. And I decided not to repeat that mistake anymore. I forget my problems and I concentrated with my studies.

Box 7.2: Extract from Grace's essay (Form III, Omwana, my underlining)

This is just one example of a learner who faces interlinking out of school challenges in achieving a quality secondary education. The four main challenges facing students at both schools discussed in this section are poverty, an unconducive home environment, alcohol and sex.

Challenge 1: Poverty

Ohba (2011) has shown that Kenyan FSE is only nominally free; in reality, there are a number of additional fees that students are expected to contribute (see Chapter 3). At both schools, parents are expected to provide fees for activities, preps and lunch; furthermore, in Form IV there are examination fees. The low income of the households of many students at both schools means that the payment of fees acts as a

significant barrier. There is still much research to do to explore how far poverty is preventing students from attending secondary school. The focus in this section, is the short and long-term absenteeism which is primarily driven by the fact that students are regularly sent home for money to cover these fees. As one of the teachers at Eskuru explained:

Most students they are unable to afford payment of fees. That causes problems, for example, the provision of uniforms and lunch materials...that is the most important challenge they face...others can be sent away for fees and stay away at home for several weeks. There are others that are very bright but they are not able to provide things that can be described as very basic – for example, five tins of maize a term, two tins of beans a term...that one makes them miss so many things during the course of study.

(Mr Dickson, Eskuru)

As this quote indicates, and it was regularly corroborated by concerns shared with me in the staffroom, this is a real challenge for many parents to cover the cost of what Mr Dickson is calling ‘very basic’. This was also a challenge that students highlighted, as the following photo and explanation displays:



The government has said that there is subsidizing of the secondary education but yet you still see that students are being sent away so this is another challenge that students are facing. Students wake up and come to school and on reaching school they are told to go back to collect school fees. And then there is another challenge that you miss the lessons of the day.

Figure 7.2: Students being sent home for fees, (taken by Samuel, Eskuru)

As the photo shows, students are leaving with all of their belongings indicating that they do not expect to return to school on that day. This impacts on the quality of education provided at the schools since on these days when students are sent home the teaching schedule is severely disrupted. Given the discussion earlier of the challenge of the size of the syllabus, it is clear to see the importance of this for the delivery of the curriculum in the two schools. However, the issue of being sent home for fees also has other ramifications, for example related to ill-discipline and engaging in sexual activity; something which parents, teachers and BoG members posited as serious challenges to the students' education. Students also missed schooldays regularly to be able to work on their family shambas. This was particularly during harvest time as Mr Paul (Omwana) explains:

Because of poverty some students are made to do some manual work for pay, they go to harvest tea so they can get the required learning materials. Some will stay at home because of child labour; doing some work in the villages.

One boy in Form III who was the head of his household having lost both parents to HIV/AIDS, also admitted to working on other land as a daily-paid labourer in peak times to be able to raise money to cover his own and his siblings' schooling costs.

The interlinking challenges of poverty and absenteeism particularly affect the girls. Discussions in the staffroom at Eskuru suggested that girls are more likely to be asked to stay at home to help with chores and looking after young children. Furthermore, there is the monthly challenge that periods represent as one local stakeholder explains:

[the girls...] face a lot of challenges...like sanitary towels and such kinds of things, they fear telling their parents about these things. Some of them use very crude methods of protecting themselves, they don't go to school during that time because until that period goes down.

(Local Stakeholder 2)

As with discussions about sex, a topic I return to later in this chapter, girls were reluctant to talk about challenges that they may face regarding being able to afford sanitary pads. Therefore, the fact that female students did not mention lack of sanitary products cannot be seen as indicative of it not being an issue. A female teacher at Eskuru shared with me that the girls will tell her that they are lacking 'inner clothes and...Always' (Madame Elizabeth, Eskuru). Teachers and BoG members stated that girls were often missing; something which I observed on a regular basis in classrooms. The deputy head teacher at Eskuru could not say for sure that girls were missing because of their period but he, off record, admitted that it was a logical conclusion but that he would not be aware because the girls would not be open with him about it. As discussed in chapter three, in other studies it has been estimated that girls can miss as many as five days of school every month (Scott *et al.*, 2009; Zanaa, 2011). My observations of the attendance register and snippets of conversations would suggest that some girls at Omwana and Eskuru may be absent for as long as this on a monthly-basis.

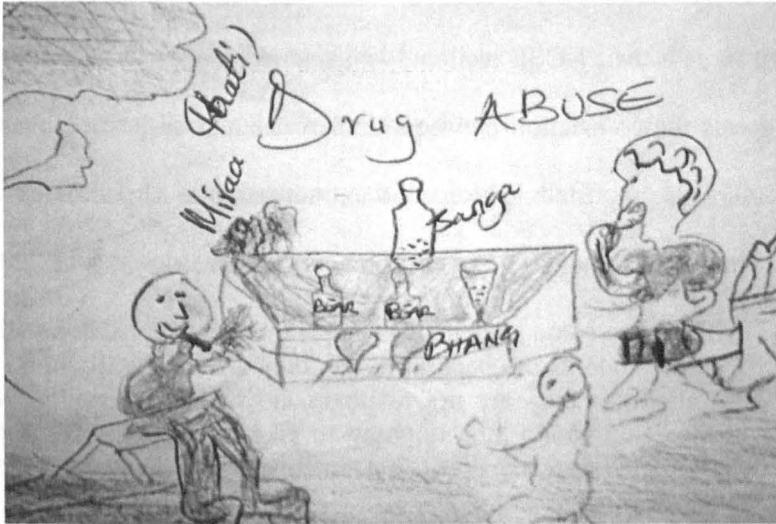
Therefore, in different ways, these findings support Ohba's thesis that attending secondary education continues to be a financial burden on many households. Further to this, the evidence suggests that poverty is impacting on student ability to attend regularly because they are sent home for fees, have to work instead or, for girls, are unable to afford sanitary towels. When put together with the challenging size of the syllabus and sense that students are always rushing to catch up, even when they are in school regularly, this can be seen as a major barrier for students to engage fully in a quality secondary education.

Challenge 2: Alcohol consumption

Chang'aa, the locally brewed liquor which is legally distilled and sold across Kenya, has become increasingly popular in the Inka community (see Chapter 3). The consumption of chang'aa among Inka community members was deemed by many of my participants to be one of the major challenges affecting the school, students' home lives and the wider community. The connection between education and alcohol consumption is not one that has been widely noted in the literature but it was one of the most commonly out of school challenges identified by participants. As one local stakeholder (4) tellingly observed early on in our interview without prompting, 'the main challenge with my area is this local beer.' The prevalence of chang'aa and the perceived challenge that its consumption brings was a surprising finding since it is not a problem that I had encountered in my previous experience in the Inka community or the Kisii region more widely. When I lived in Inka in 2004, I was often told that the consumption of chang'aa was deemed to be socially unacceptable and it was something that happened in hidden spaces, marginalized from the mainstream community. In the intervening seven years, it seems to have become more of a cultural norm, something which BoG member 2 (Eskuru) associated with its legalisation and wider availability. S/he continued to elaborate by linking the perceived frustrations that parents are facing which leads them to 'decide that they will resort to excessive drinking to forget their problems.'

It is evident, particularly in the data collected from students, that parents drinking chang'aa has a challenging effect on the home lives of many learners across the two case study schools. All three of the Form I poster groups independently included pictures of family members drinking and/or the subsequent acts of domestic abuse as

perceived challenges to their education. The image below shows a mother and father who are partaking in a range of drug abuse, including bhang (marijuana), busaa (locally brewed beer) and chang'aa (spelt janga by the students). The text which accompanied the drawing is particularly telling of the personal impact that alcoholism has on either themselves or what they have witnessed in their surrounding community.



On the side of parents – challenges facing at home

Some parents don't take their children to school, because they spend a lot of money on drug abuse....some homes there is no food, house and even clothes to their children. Instead using money to taking children to school they misuse them. Some parents they fight when they are drunk so they make their children run away.

Figure 7.3: Drug abuse (drawn by Poster group 2, Form I, Omwana)

During my time in the case study schools, I was made aware on a number of occasions that some students had very challenging home lives, often precipitated by alcohol use. When I asked the guidance and counselling teachers and BoG members about particular cases of which they were aware, most of them mentioned situations which were closely linked to alcohol among the examples:

Some mothers come and they say that their husbands harass them, beat them up, make noise all night. In fact, there is a girl in form 4 who tells me that when the father is drunk, he makes noise the whole night. She can't read, she can't sleep, he makes noise the whole night long. When he is not drunk, he is good. When he is drunk, he makes noise from 7 o'clock.

(BoG 1, Omwana)

This highlights the level of disruption that having an alcoholic parent has on an individual's ability to study at home; something which is widely felt to be integral for a student to pass their KCSE well and is discussed further in the following section. It also suggests the connection between alcohol use and domestic abuse; a association which others also reported. The second extract refers to a specific case of a Form IV student who it is insinuated is neglected by his parents:

There are some students whose parents are drunkards so when these students are back at home, they are always fighting. Or sometimes they are not at home, no one is worrying about what this young man is going to take for supper. It is a real concern. And they are not interested in how the boy is performing.

(BoG 2, Eskuru)

This participant was not the only one to assume that some students suffer neglect in their homes. It was, in fact, a common association for teachers and BoG members to make assuming that 'because of the alcohol influence, he just leaves that child along because he doesn't care' (BoG 4, Omwana).

I was aware of some students who lived in homes where chang'aa brewing was the major source of income. Teachers posited that this gave the students a more difficult home environment since chang'aa dens are usually at the homes of the brewers. Two teachers ascertained that some students live in a home where 'chang'aa is prepared so they are likely to take it' (Mr Joshua, Omwana). As one local stakeholder (4) observed, 'you find small boys are involved in drinking and maybe they come out of

school, you might get that person from there they are staying, their parents are easily to allow them to drink as a tradition.' This seemed to be the case regarding one student at Eskuru who the teachers and management held particular concern. The student's father had died recently and the sole income for the family came from the mother's brewing of chang'aa. Teachers had noticed a significant decrease in his grades which was attributed to his regular absence and it was common knowledge among students and the staff that he was taking chang'aa. Crucially, the teachers and BoG felt powerless to help the student, other than through discipline and a degree of support. This is not something that any of the school staff have training to deal with nor does the school have the resources to give one-to-one care and guidance to respond to the child's needs.

The challenge of chang'aa was also one which fell within the school's physical boundaries. One local stakeholder (2) with responsibility for the wider district describes alcoholism among teachers as a problem particularly affecting the Kisii region:

[Teachers drinking is] ...a serious challenge around, even right now in our district here, we have experienced many teachers being counselled for their drinking, it is a serious problem. It is a very serious problem in this region as it really interferes in the teaching of those particular teachers.

One or two teachers at both schools drank, although there was great variety in responses regarding the severity of their alcohol problem among other teachers, the BoG and even students and parents. For example, some teachers and BoG members said that these teachers did drink but that 'we have not experienced any embarrassing situations such as coming to school drunk or not being able to discharge his teaching responsibilities' (BoG 2, Omwana). However, others, pertinently those outside of

positions of responsibility and so perhaps less wary of giving the school or particular teachers 'a bad name', posited that these teachers can come to school drunk, often 'smelling' or seeming 'off' (Madame Eve, Omwana). Since teachers are responsible for the welfare of students while in school, it can be argued that these teachers cannot do this since they cannot take responsibility for themselves while inebriated. Furthermore, their decision making is clouded and slow meaning that student welfare may be at risk. It is interesting to note that while a number of parents seemed aware of this problem among teachers, neither BoG reported complaints from parents regarding their behaviour. This supports the proposal put forward relating to a quality school (in Chapter 6) of the need for an effective and transparent complaints mechanism to enable parents to question the quality of the teaching and management staff. This is one way in which greater parental involvement could improve the quality of education as is promoted in the EdQual context-led framework (Tikly, 2011).

Challenge 3: Unconducive Home Environment

The third perceived and linked challenge identified for students is an unconducive home environment for independent study. The work of Smith and Barrett (2011; 2011) analyses SACMEQ data to reveal that the home life is a significant factor for disadvantaged learners since they are less likely to have basic resources and have access to light in their home for independent study. My qualitative findings suggest that secondary school students deem a lack of lighting source for study to be a significant challenge to their educational attainment. One of the consequences of the size of the curriculum and the negative attitude towards students is that all the young people who participated in my research felt the need to study for three to six hours every day. Although both the case study schools have electricity, it continues to be

rare for homesteads to have electricity. Students are, therefore, dependent upon lighting paraffin lamps or candles to work at home; or else walk at 4.00 am to school in the dark. A form IV student at Omwana took the photo shown in Figure 7.4 and explained that she had chosen to take it because ‘it had no paraffin to use...this one makes us fail, when we want to study we find that we can’t because there is no paraffin to provide light’ (Damaris, Omwana). Three other students also took photos of their lighting situation at home, each one indicating that they struggle to complete their homework and revision because of this factor.



Figure 7.4: Kerosene lamp as a light source (taken by Damaris, Omwana)

Two of the Form IV students at Omwana were visually impaired; one took the photo shown in Figure 7.5. The photo shows his mathematics revision book and calculator ready for him to do his six calculations that he told me he does every day to ‘achieve high’ and the ‘small lamp which hurts [his] eyes’ (Alfred, Omwana). Teachers corroborated the fact that this very able student has an undiagnosed problem with his eyes and is long-sighted. He lives alone in a single hut with his grandmother who is

not able to afford to buy him glasses. This offers a stark example of the educational and health implications for socio-economically disadvantaged learners.



This situation is not conducive for my studies. I prefer the larger lamp than the one photoed. It affects me since I am determined.

Figure 7.5: Working at home by candlelight (taken by Alfred, Omwana)

Another challenge that faces learners in studying in their home environments is needing to do home chores, both within the house and on the shamba. Many students raised this as a challenge they faced. For example, one essayist explained this challenge: ‘back at home parents are needed not to have many work to the students because there are some students in fact when they went back home alot of work is waiting for them until even the time for reading & studying is not enough for them’ (Betty, Eskuru). Another example is Hannah (Omwana) who felt that it was important that she helped her grandparents with chores because they were elderly and relied on her assistance. She took three photos related to home chores describing these as a challenge to her being able to do schoolwork at home including Figure 7.6 shows her helping her grandmother cook dinner.



Figure 7.6: Helping with chores at home (taken by Hannah, Omwana)

Other students cited home chores including working on the shamba, cutting napier grass, feeding the animals, cleaning, cooking and doing errands for their parents. Some students reported that they spent two or three hours every evening doing such tasks; however, there was one student who only spent half an hour each evening. This accentuates the problem of little or no light by which to work since priority will be given to finishing home chores during daylight hours. The majority of parents were aware that this represents a challenge for their children and two parents told me that they had taken the chores away from their (grand)daughters so they can concentrate on studying in the lead-up to their KCSE exams.

The final element of an uncondusive home environment that six teachers and management committee members discussed is that of food poverty. The need for parents to contribute to the school lunch programme and the challenges that this brings for the school management and for students who are sent home for fees is one

that I have observed for many years in the Kisii region. Financial constraints at both schools were leading to students going without lunch:

These students they have to pay for lunch. For example, yesterday I saw that students were not given lunch because they had not paid for that. If you are given lunch, attention in class cannot stay without food.

(Mr Evan, Eskuru)

This becomes particularly concerning given that the issue of food poverty and hunger also extends to the home environment. As Mr Julian (Omwana) stated: 'they do not have enough to eat at home so they come to school hungry; by the time they get their lunch you find that they are very hungry and grasping what is taught in class is also a problem.' Some students are, therefore, going without much food at all. This has clear indications for their health and welfare but also leads to low concentration in class, as another teacher and three of the Form IV students observed. If learners are coming to school with little food in their stomachs, this is a clear way in which the home environment affects their learning. These findings support Smith (2011) and Smith and Barrett (2011) regarding the importance of a lighting source at home but also expand this to include more elements that contribute to the uncondusive home environment.

Challenge 4: Sex

In Chapter 3, the particular challenges facing girls in attending and achieving at school were outlined through research by, among others, the Elimu Yetu Coalition (2005). Many different members of the school community acknowledged that girls face particular challenges which can affect their educational attendance and ability both in and out of school. In this section, I focus upon the impact of sex, particularly of an involuntary nature, on the female students within the two case study schools.

The prevalence of sexual expectation and exploitation by members of the wider community, and in some cases of the school, are shown to have a great effect on the young girls in question. It must be noted that the effects of the 'culture' of sex that I observed, and that my participants discussed, is not restricted to the girls but it became evident that they tend to feel such effects more strongly because of the accompanying challenges of pregnancy and vulnerability. As one local stakeholder (2) eloquently observed, the 'girl-child is an endangered species' in the Inka community since their childhood is often cut short by expectations to engage in sexual behaviour at a young age. In this section, the barrier that risky sexual behaviour was perceived to present for the young girls at the two case study schools are discussed.

The Inka community represents a contradictory environment for young people when it comes to sexual behaviour. Secondary school students are repeatedly warned of the perceived ills that accompany sex by their teachers, parents and elders and members of the wider community. It is prohibited among students and they are told that being sexually active is not compatible with achievement since it shows that they are not being serious enough about their studies. However, it is often those that are giving out the warnings who are openly engaged in promiscuity. For example, in Eskuru, discussions in the staff room often revolved around the sexual encounters of teachers. Furthermore, if condoms are mentioned at all to students they are spoken of as the last resort for students (and this tends to be by one or two lone voices within the schools). This is despite awareness of HIV/AIDS, its prevalence within the community and the widespread knowledge of how it is transmitted.

Within this contradictory environment, it became evident that many girls throughout the classes were engaging in sexual behaviour, often risky in nature. One of the mothers at Omwana mentioned that sexual relationships between students was a problem at the school and when I asked how big a problem it was, the response was that it was huge, accompanied with big hand gestures and laughter. She continued to say that there are a number of girls dropping out of school because of pregnancy, while there are others in school with children (Mama Dorothy, Omwana). An interesting difference between the schools is that it appears that the majority of relationships that girls at Omwana engage in are with fellow students while at Eskuru, interviewees suggested that most girls are having sex with (and getting pregnant by) members of the local community. This may be explained by the different levels of discipline instilled in each school, as discussed in Chapter 6.

Girls becoming pregnant while in school was a challenge that was widely shared with me across participant groups. Students, primarily talking about others rather than themselves, mentioned it as a major problem that girls faced; particularly as one which leads to absenteeism. All three of the Form I groups who were drawing posters about the challenges students faced mentioned girls getting pregnant, as shown, for example, in Figure 7.7:



Figure 7.7: Getting pregnant, (drawn by Poster group 2, Form I, Omwana)

Tellingly, these students (who are as young as thirteen) made the association between sex and pregnancy, suggesting that there is a high rate of unprotected sex among these young people. At both of the case study schools, there were more than ten girls, that I knew of, who were either pregnant or had a child. In Form III at Eskuru, there was the largest proportion. Of the twenty girls in the class, BoG member 2 estimated that six had children while another two were currently away from school with babies. The essay written by Grace quoted earlier at length above gives a fascinating insight into the causes and attitudinal outcomes that accompany young girls getting pregnant while in school. Other students in both schools also wrote at length about the challenges that girls faced in their class, of which one of the most frequently cited is pregnancy. For example, five of the ten essays from Eskuru include discussion of the challenges that girls face including 'pregnancy, abortion and school dropped out this make the performance of girls to be lower than that of boys' (Michael, Eskuru). The very fact that there are six students in Form III in one school with children, suggests that Eskuru is carrying out a successful policy for reintegration of young mothers. However, they receive very little support from the government in relation to training for guidance and counselling for young mothers or to allow more flexibility in their learning.

In the majority of cases, the potential dangers that accompanied sex, especially for the girls both with students in the schools and members of the wider community, were not mentioned across the participant groups. Most notable of these is the patronage and peer sexuality of students at both Eskuru and Omwana which was raised by three teachers and one local stakeholder. For example, Madame Eve (Omwana) thought

patronage sexuality was the biggest challenge facing female students saying that 'most of them are doing it for commercial purposes, even young girls as young as in standard six, you buy a girl a dress, some shoes and they go in for sex'.⁷ One local stakeholder (4) shared his bemusement that he often saw 'these people who are learned...at times they contribute to affect these girls because usually they use their money to confuse them, to take them on tours'. The following quote, which others in the community anecdotally corroborated, is the most shocking example I came across of patronage sexuality for female students within the case study schools:

Even the community is sexually harassing the students. Like these days, there are several cases of pregnancy.

And why do you think it is harassment rather than consensual?

They have realized their weakness which is poverty. A man might give a girl 1000Ksh and he tells her that she has to do anything. There is a case of a man who died recently of AIDS, maybe four months ago. He was issuing girls with 1000 shillings and they nicknamed him 'ingiri', meaning 1000. He was a local man.

He was sleeping with students from this school?

There were some girls who went with him after being given that 1000 shillings. So they take advantage of the poverty.

(Mr Colin, Eskuru)

Drawing on other examples, it seemed to be most common for students to engage in sexual activity with men from the local community in exchange for presents and material goods that they, or their parents, were unable to afford. Madame Elizabeth (Eskuru) was a regular confidante of female students at Eskuru and she spoke at length concerning the girls' challenges regarding purchasing of sanitary towels and underwear. An Eskuru BoG member (5) also posited that boda-boda drivers also pose a risk since 'they carry around the girls for free in exchange for sex.' This suggests

⁷ Primary schooling is from standard 1 – 8 so those in standard 6 will, on average, be 11 or 12. However, given that students regularly start primary school late and repeat, students in standard 6 may be as old as 16.

that it is the girls' desire to pay for fees and attend school that is a major driving factor in their decision to engage in patronage sexuality. They may be focusing upon the short-term need to attend school, and not missing days when they are on their period for example, rather than contemplating the effects on their long-term health and well-being. This complex link between risky sexual behaviour, vulnerability and educational expectations is something that needs further research.

As discussed in Chapter 6, safety while in school was deemed a key aspect of a quality education, particularly so among students. The risk of patronage sexuality was also evident within the school compound. In Kenya, as in most countries of the world, relationships with students are a violation of the teachers' code of professional conduct, whether coerced or consensual (Leach & Humphreys, 2007). They are rarely reported, despite being widely known about among the teaching and management staff. This can very much be seen in the case of Omwana and Eskuru where such relationships were openly discussed but when I asked for specific cases, they were usually professed in the past tense:

What about relationships with teachers? Have you ever known that to be an issue for the girls?

Some years back yes, but this year that issue has not been tabled to me. Previously, it has happened. One student reported to me that she was in love relationships with one of our staff and then later she had a baby.

How long ago was that?

Maybe one year or one and half years ago. The kid was born January last year.

By a teacher who is currently teaching here?

Yes.

(Mr Peter, Eskuru)

It is possible that the teachers were protecting their peers and not divulging such information accurately. Support staff tended to be more open with me about the nature of such relationships. It must be noted that the majority of what is heard about

teacher-student relationships is based on rumours, as one teacher at Eskuru explained. The teacher goes on to describe how he interacts with community members who say 'you cannot stop us from doing it when teachers are doing it' (Mr Thomson, Omwana). Three of the ten essayists in Form III at Eskuru relayed similar anecdotal stories of relationships between teachers and students:

Our sisters here at school face great challenges from male teachers. But this issue is not only faced at this school only but also in different schools around. You find a teacher involving himself with love affairs with these girls and finally they pregnant them. In fact I tend to laugh when I see a teacher in front of students addressing them to away with the love affairs with strangers outside the school compound. I normally ask myself: does it mean that this love affairs have an impact on academics? How would a student involving with love with teachers listen to him when teaching in class?

(Richard, Eskuru)

I heard the same rumours regarding three teachers at Eskuru from such a variety of sources that there is some evidence that there was some sexual interaction between teachers and students at the school.

Across all the interviews, there was an apparent lack of parental knowledge (or willingness to admit knowledge) and engagement in their daughters' sex lives. Any discussions about sex and contraception were uniformly uncomfortable; probably more so because my translator was both male and from the local community. However, it is possible that parents were aware of their children's sexual relationships but were unwilling to share this with me because of how it may reflect on them. For example, one mother told me that she was sure that her daughter was not having sex but two different management members told me that the girl had recently had an abortion arranged by her mother. Given that abortions remain illegal in Kenya it is perhaps not surprising that her mother did not wish to share this information with me.

The reluctance to talk about sex and contraception at home only emphasises the need for school to be a place where such information and support can be found.

The challenges related to sex discussed in this section are manifold and represent a great barrier for educational participation among girls. This supports the findings of the Elimu Yetu Coalition (2005) but suggests that some problems are more pertinent at the secondary level; an area that would require further research. It also supports findings from Chapter 6 that promote the importance of a safe school environment for the young people in the Inka community. Here, this means one where girls do not feel under pressure sexually, either from teachers or fellow students, and one which is welcoming for those who are pregnant and/or with young children. I would also argue that the discussion in this section, and the preceding ones about alcohol and the home environment, support participant desire for the need for an effective guidance and counselling service in the school to support those who may feel under such pressures. This is just one way in which the four sections - out-of-school factors, curriculum, purposes and school – are interlinked to enable a holistic and quality secondary education.

Chapter summary

Through a discussion of the challenges facing secondary education in practice, a number of key barriers to achieving quality education have been identified at the curriculum, school, community and individual levels. A key finding to emerge that has not been widely cited in the international literature is the influence of out-of-school factors and how they impact on educational well-being among students across the case study schools. It has emerged that further research is needed to understand

how far these factors are more relevant to secondary education than the primary level and the implications of this for equitable secondary school access and achievement.

The importance of a joined up approach at the policy level to enable quality education in practice has also been stressed in the light of the perceived challenges that students and teachers face in implementing the curriculum; for example, in the incompatibility of the need to rush through the syllabus with expected learner-centred pedagogical approaches. The recognised challenges faced from the community and policy levels have been identified as key aspects of a quality education, alongside the quality school and purposes of a quality secondary education revealed in Chapter 6. The following chapter brings together the findings from the local level (from Chapters 6 and 7) and compares them with those identified in the national policy documentation (from Chapter 5) by way of concluding the empirical part of the study.

Chapter Eight:

Educational Quality - Comparing Local and National Perspectives

Introduction

This chapter brings together the key findings from Chapters 5, 6 and 7 and makes some key comparisons between the locally and nationally conceptualised ideas of educational quality. These are discussed across the key themes identified at the local level across the school, purposes, curriculum and out-of-school factors, together with the underlying concepts of participation and context. In drawing these comparisons, the chapter reflects on the aim of the study which has been to document local conceptualizations of quality in secondary education and compare and contrast these with those identified in the national FSE policy documentation (see Chapter 1) and gives some conclusions.

Key findings

This section presents the key findings from chapters 5, 6 and 7 which have in turn answered each of the three main research questions which guided the study. Chapter 5 explored the ways in which educational quality is defined in at the national policy level to answer Research Question 1:

RQ1: How is quality defined in the Kenyan FSE policy documents?

It was revealed that no official policy documentation has been written about FSE and it is argued here that the lack of a written policy reflects its rushed introduction in the light of its political expediency and raises question marks about the permanency of the

initiative. In its place, thematic discourse analysis was applied to *the Secondary Education Strategy Document*. Four key themes related to educational quality were identified as a relevant curriculum, the purposes of education, education for all and measuring quality education.

Through a critical interrogation of these themes, it has been shown that quality is primarily defined in decontextualised and internationally inspired terms with the influence of the economic-utilitarian tradition as particularly strong but the rights-based approach can also be identified in the language related to education for all. These discourses of quality have been shown to be so dominant that they are presented as constructions of truth; the only way in which quality can be defined. This has supported the literature which argues that development discourses have become standardised blueprints in low income countries which no-one is expected to challenge (Crush, 1995; Chabbott, 2003; Samoff, 2007). Furthermore, thematic discourse analysis revealed both the involvement of external actors in the policy document formation and an intended limited readership of the document. This did not include practitioners who were left out of both the policy document's formulation and dissemination.

There were two Research Questions which were explored at the two case study schools and the Inka community:

RQ 2: What does a quality secondary education look like for a range of local stakeholders?

RQ 3: What are the main challenges facing secondary education in practice in the two case study schools?

Box 8.1 summarises the four sections that have been discussed at length in Chapters 6 and 7 which together make up a locally conceptualised quality education. Although the four sections were discussed under four separate headings and in relation to both Research Questions 2 and 3, it has emerged that they are very much interconnected. For example, many participants promoted the importance of realigning the curriculum so that it more closely matched the espoused purposes of education for holistic development. This resonates with much of the EdQual context-led framework which highlights the ways in which the policy, school and community factors interact in different ways to enable or act as a barrier to a quality education (Tikly, 2011).

A quality education is:	
<i>Provided by a quality school with:</i> A head teacher with strong leadership skills who acts as a role model for teachers and students; Transparent and accountable financial management; Excellent school discipline; A safe school environment where well-being is promoted; Good resource base.	<i>Enabled by a quality curriculum with:</i> A smaller syllabus; More interactive teaching methods and space in the timetable for student discussions; A recognition of wider goals of secondary education beyond scoring successfully in examinations; Space for extra-curricular activities and non-examined subjects in the school timetable.
<i>For holistic development with outcomes of:</i> Social and moral development; A good citizen; Skills development for future well-being and self-reliance; Engagement with formal employment and higher education	<i>Compromised by out-of-school challenges related to:</i> Poverty; An uncondusive home environment; Alcohol; Sex.
Underpinned by mechanisms to enable participation in defining what a contextually grounded educational quality looks like	

Box 8.1: A quality education defined by Inka community participants

Regarding Research Question 2, the two main aspects of a quality education put forward by participants focused on the school and purposes of secondary education. A quality school emerged as a key aspect of a quality education across the participant groups with many articulating education solely in terms of the school. Key themes which emerged focused on good leadership – across the head teacher and the BoG – and discipline. A safe school environment and access to resources were also widely cited, particularly among students. Some of these aspects are also present in the international school effectiveness (Levin & Lockheed, 1991; Heneveld & Craig, 1996) and child-friendly (UNICEF, 2009) literature but they have been shown to be very much contextually grounded – particularly so the emphasis placed on discipline both for student achievement and their moral development.

A clear finding, especially from teachers, was that the purposes of secondary education needed to be widened beyond the perceived narrow parameters of success in academic examinations. Teachers, in particular, promoted a reconceptualisation of the purposes of secondary education along the same lines as the original rationale for the 8-4-4 system (see Chapter 3). In practice, for some, this meant the reintroduction of vocational subjects, while for others it was the development of foundational skills through ‘deeper learning’. It was felt that this would enable graduates to better engage in the range of formal, informal and educational opportunities as were possible in the local and national context. Another contextually grounded purpose of education is to develop a good citizen who will contribute to national unity; the lack of which was blamed for inter-tribal clashes following the 2008 elections (see Chapter 3 and 6).

Regarding Research Question 3, it has been shown that some of the major challenges facing secondary education in practice are imposed from above through policy and curricular decisions. Across the case study participant groups, but particularly in the student-generated data, the challenges faced in implementing the curriculum for a quality education were highlighted. The size of the syllabus leaves little space for personal study, revision, discussion or sleep; all of which were shown to be important aspects lacking for student achievement and well-being. The emphasis placed on doing well in examinations – both for students aiming for elite university places and teachers whose promotion depends upon it – was particularly criticised for encouraging a culture of teaching the facts rather than ‘deeper learning’. This also impacted on extra-curricular activities and non-examined subjects, such as life skills, which were marginalised in the school timetables to allow for more revision time to catch up on the syllabus.

The student-generated data has shown that many face significant out-of-school challenges which act as barriers to achieving a quality education. Student diaries, essays, posters and photos all brought to life the barriers that students face everyday in school attendance, educational attainment and their own well-being. These barriers were particularly highlighted in their challenging home lives where poverty, an unconducive home environment, sex and alcohol often act as interlinking barriers to achieving a quality education. As noted in Chapter 2 and Chapter 7, the recognition of community and home factors is something only recently promoted in the international literature and my findings support those of the EdQual framework which places community as an integral cog of educational quality (Tikly, 2011; Smith and Barrett, 2011). Each of the four key areas of the school, purposes, out-of-school factors and

curriculum have revealed a number of implications for policy and practice, as will be discussed in Chapter 9.

Comparing National and Local Conceptualisations

This final section ties together the findings from both the national and local analyses by comparing the locally grounded conceptualisations of educational quality with the principles identified in *the Secondary Education Strategy Document*. Alongside the four identified themes which have been the focus of Chapters 6 and 7, context and participation have emerged as key underpinning concepts. These are, thus, included in the five-part framework shown in Box 8.1 and in the themes which separate this final section.

Quality school

The first identified aspect of a quality education across local participants was the school, with some defining education almost exclusively in terms of the school. This was particularly in relation to school governance, the leadership of the head teacher and discipline. The importance of school resources and a safe environment were also promoted, especially among the student population.

In contrast, there is very little written about the school in the discussion of quality education in the national documentation. The school is only mentioned when it comes to specific interventions. For example, it is stated that targeted teaching and learning materials should be provided to needy schools but these are only referenced briefly and it is not made clear how these connect to broader discussions of quality education (MoE, 2007a, p.9). Furthermore, the document refers to the need for provision of materials in poorer areas to be offered alongside 'encouraging parents and

communities to provide infrastructure and operational costs' (MoE, 2007a, p.6). This continued promotion of decentralisation policies and cost-sharing does not reflect an understanding of the contextual challenges presented by poverty discussed at length in Chapter 7.

The lack of emphasis on the school in the national documentation is perhaps surprising given the identification of strong external and economist influences in the writing of the document. This would suggest greater recognition of an effective school for a quality education. However, it does correlate with the lack of emphasis placed on the processes of education so prevalent in the international literature, particularly so in that from the World Bank of the 1990s and 2000s which Rose (2003b) has described as the promotion of a 'black box of education'. The school is seen as an essential aspect of educational practice in the national policy literature but a quality education tends to be discussed in terms of how it can be measured, for example, in the inputs-outputs model quoted in Chapter 6. It is important to note, however, that across the national and local discussions of the school, there is little emphasis placed on the processes of learning in classrooms.

Purposes of secondary education

At the local level, the consensus was that there is a need to broaden the current purposes of education to more widely encompass holistic development. This was closely connected with the concerns that the curriculum is too focused on academic subjects and passing exams. The desired outcomes covered social and moral development, a good citizen, skills development for future well-being and self-reliance and engagement with formal employment and higher education.

There is some alignment between the local and national purposes of secondary education but those espoused in the policy documentation are narrower with greater emphasis placed on measurable outputs rather than wider outcomes. At the policy level, this is shown in reference to the rates of return analysis and its use to rationalise investment in secondary education. This shapes the conceptualisation of the purposes of secondary education very much in human capital terms and for economic development. It can also be seen in the emphasis on measuring education, for example in the focus on the outputs of examinations.

The locally conceptualised purposes of education offer a more holistic approach, similar to that originally stated in the list of Heneveld and Craig (1996) of participation, academic achievement, social skills and economic success (see Chapter 2). However, the purposes as they appear in the national documentation can be seen to reflect the narrowing of focus that has been witnessed internationally on academic achievement (measured by exam results) and economic success (measured by involvement in the formal economy). Participation and social skills, though stated in the framework, have been relegated from these discussions.

A key finding from the comparison between national and local perspectives is a suggestion that the purposes of secondary education need to be reconceptualised in terms of broader outcomes rather than specific outputs. However, it is important to note that a move away from a focus on academic achievement through examinations may not be well received by parents and students in the Inka community, particularly so the students who place such importance on these as a measure of their own success.

Quality curriculum

What counts as a quality curriculum among local participants is grounded in the challenges that students and teachers face with it in its current state. The secondary school syllabus was widely critiqued for being too large with clear implications for both pedagogy and student well-being. The need for a joined up approach at the curriculum level across examinations, pedagogy and syllabus design to ensure that these are complementary rather than contradictory in practice was widely cited.

As discussed in Chapter 5, in discussions of the curriculum, the policy documentation showed greater understanding of the current challenging context than can be witnessed in relation to other key themes. This means that there is some alignment between local and national conceptualisations including reference to the need for curricular content reform, more conducive learning environments and the availability of more relevant learning materials in schools (MoE, 2007a, p.18). However, there is a clear difference in the language used at the two levels with more discursive terms used in the policy documentation. For example, there is frequent mention of the 'inefficiencies of the curriculum', although it is not made clear what this means (MoE, 2007a, p.19). Similarly, the national conceptualisations of a relevant curriculum are more theoretical, reflecting identifiable global trends which have been widely critiqued (see for example Unterhalter & North, 2011). This compares directly with the discussions of the curriculum at the local level which are grounded in practical challenges, such as ensuring that students get enough hours of sleep every night. This supports the EdQual framework which promotes a curriculum which is relevant to the values of given communities (Tikly, 2011). Further, it suggests the importance of understanding the challenges that accompany the implementation of any given

curriculum so it is not only made relevant to the economy but also to the classroom and wider school context in which it will be carried out (Crossley & Watson, 2003; Chisholm & Leyendecker, 2008; Kamunde, 2010).

Out-of-school factors

At the community level, great emphasis was placed on the challenges that students face out-of-school in their ability to attend, achieve and stay safe in their education. These focused on the uncondusive home environment, sex, alcohol and poverty, all of which acted as barriers for access to a quality education. Although not expressed in the specific language, this suggests the importance placed on equity in conceptualisations of educational quality and an understanding of the disadvantages that poor, rural students face.

It is in this area that there is the least alignment between the local and national conceptualisations since in discussions of quality in the policy documentation there is almost nothing written about out-of-school and community factors. When they are mentioned, these are in passing comment, such as the need to encourage teenage mothers to return to school, rather than an area of particular focus. Furthermore, few local participants promoted the concept of education for all at the secondary level – something which emerged as a key theme from the policy documentation. The concern rather was with enabling equitable education for those students currently attending school – for example, addressing the issues that contribute towards long and short-term absenteeism.

It is possible that the out-of-school challenges may be more prevalent among secondary school students; they may, for example, be more likely to engage in risky

sexual behaviour or hold greater responsibilities at home. While these are grounded in the realities of secondary education in practice, they represent a distinct difference to the policy documentation. Here, the language reads as though it has been uncritically transferred from the primary level. If there is a move to incorporate secondary education into Kenya's basic education strategy, thinking about enabling equitable access and the ways in which out-of-school factors impact on this will be needed. This is another example of how wider involvement of local stakeholders could enable policy decisions that go beyond rhetoric into practical solutions.

Participation and context

Participation and context have emerged as important aspects that underpin how quality education is defined by local stakeholders. Rather than the decontextualised conceptualisations of quality that proliferate the national and international documents, the definitions presented in Chapters 6 and 7 have been grounded in the local socio-economic and school contexts. For example, teachers referred to challenges they faced in delivering quality teaching in their classrooms or students spoke at length about their home lives which were uncondusive to quality learning. In the policy literature, there is much written about the need to narrow the gap between policy and practice by greater understanding of the problems associated with implementation (Crossley and Watson, 2003). My findings suggest the importance of involving local stakeholders in defining quality education. One local stakeholder (5) particularly promoted this by arguing that there was need for more authentic participation in policy development:

For a policy to work, it must be home grown and home owned. In fact, for any system to be sustained it must be home grown. You can't own it if you weren't part of the growth process...when it is home grown then it will be home owned. Everyone will work together to make sure it is sustained.

The first key conclusion of the study is thus that for context to be understood and fully incorporated into policy and quality formulations, there is a need for greater democratic participation in that process. This again supports the EdQual framework and social justice approaches in arguing for the importance of participation in discussions of educational quality (Fraser, 2008; Tikly, 2011; Tikly and Barrett, 2011).

An analysis of the policy documentation revealed little participation in the policymaking process. It is further argued that the language used is discursive and so does not encourage wider engagement away from the small numbers of policymakers and donors involved. Therefore, despite the fact that there appears to be some correlation between local and national quality definitions, the different language used makes it appear as though these are mutually exclusive. For authentic participation to be possible, the discourses identified at the policy level need to be challenged to allow for alternative ways of knowing or talking about education to enter the quality debate. As has been widely argued elsewhere, the discourses of educational development have become 'almost universal' and carry such weight that they are seen as the only way to talk about education (Samoff, 2007). This leads to great expectation of the role of education for both economic growth and enabling human rights' an expectation that is clearly visible in the 'wish list' shown in the national policy documentation. The second key conclusion from my empirical findings is the importance of participation so that educational policies are more aligned to the educational present than an overly ambitious future.

A third key conclusion is the importance placed at the local level on the interaction between the four themes for a holistic quality education. This suggests the need for a more joined up approach at the policy level across curriculum, governance, examination and pedagogy; these are themes which need to complement each other for quality education to be achieved in practice. A clear example to emerge is the size of the syllabus and focus on examination results being in direct contrast with the promotion of a learner-centred pedagogical approach. In contrast, in the national policy documentation, there is little attention to a joined-up approach. All of these are discussed in relation to a quality education but there is little recognition of the need to bring these together and consider what the promotion means in practice in secondary schools across the country. Rather, it reads like a number of different puzzle pieces that it is difficult to place together to create a single picture.

The promotion of a more holistic approach among local stakeholders supports Unterhalter (2007) and Tikly and Barrett (2011) who have argued that the dominant approaches to quality are insufficient. Furthermore, the emphasis placed on bringing the different aspects together reflects an importance placed on implementation thus places the focus on educational practice and opening up the 'black box of education' (Rose, 2003b). This means thinking about quality across the arenas of the school, community and policy and how they interact with each other; something which is at the heart of the EdQual framework (although the specific factors of the framework differ to some extent from the elements prioritised here) (Tikly, 2011). A final key conclusion is the need to think about education both holistically and realistically.

Chapter Summary

By drawing critical comparisons between the local and national conceptualisations of quality, some key conclusions have been made in this chapter. The importance of including local stakeholders and consumers in discussions of quality education has been highlighted so that practical challenges and priorities can become part of the debate. This could lead to both a more nuanced and relevant discussion of quality education and contribute to the narrowing of the gap between policy and practice which was noted throughout Chapters 6 and 7. In the next and final chapter, the implications of the study are discussed across theory, methodology, policy and practice.

Chapter Nine: Implications of the study

Introduction

This study set out to explore local conceptualisations of quality in secondary education and compare and contrast these with those identified in the national FSE policy documentation. There have been many studies which have highlighted the influence of international agendas in national policymaking and the power of development (see Chapter 2 and for example, Escobar 1994; King and McGrath 2002; Rose 2003; Mundy 2006; Samoff 2007). In recent years, many have focused their critiques on the promotion of dominant approaches to educational quality at the primary level in low income countries (Walker & Unterhalter, 2007; Unterhalter, 2007; Tikly & Barrett, 2011; Tikly, 2011). This study has contributed to this literature by proposing alternative conceptualisations of educational quality underlined by the key concepts of participation and context, and shifting the focus of the debate to the secondary level. Furthermore, it has revealed many context-specific challenges of the Kenyan FSE movement, a recent initiative which has received little attention in the international literature.

This final chapter draws from the theoretical analysis (Chapters 2-3) and fieldwork findings (chapters 5-8) in examining the implications of study for policy and practice in Kenyan Secondary Education and the related theoretical literature. Conclusions also explore the limitations of the study and priorities for future research.

Implications for Secondary Education Policy and Practice in Kenya

Implications for the policy level

Since FSE is only in its early stages and a policy document has not yet been written, findings from this study have timely implications for the policy level. These are discussed with reference to three key implications for the need to reconceptualise 'free' secondary education as 'equitable' secondary education, curricular reform and the case for wider participation in the policymaking process.

Findings suggest that FSE has made a demonstrable difference to the availability of resources such as books and science equipment in both schools. However, despite the great investment that FSE represents, findings reveal that the shortcomings of the notion of 'free' education. Ohba (2011, p.408) in her study of the impact on the introduction of FSE on widening access among poorer communities in rural Kenya argued that poverty remains a significant barrier for the majority of students to access a secondary education since 'the abolition of school fees does not necessarily increase access to the poor'. My findings add weight to this by showing that the additional financial requirements, such as lunch and exam fees, mean that making secondary education 'free' has not removed the barrier of poverty for children to access a quality education. This has particularly been shown in the consequential short and long term absenteeism witnessed among both student bodies. The findings of this study, together with those of Ohba (2011), suggest that making secondary education 'free' has not translated into an equitable education for all. Reconceptualising education for all in terms of equity rather than the latent notion of 'free' is recommended for a policy to better suit the needs of the rural poor.

A clear finding to emerge from the case study schools was the challenge that the size of the secondary school syllabus represented for students and teachers alike. The focus on breadth over depth which harks back to the introduction of the 8-4-4 system, means that there is a huge amount for students to learn and remember in time for their KCSE exams. This predicated rote learning for the majority of the time students are in school (Amutabi, 2003). Findings have revealed that, while at the local and national levels teachers and students are blamed for not covering the syllabus and subsequent poor exam results, it is the size of the syllabus which is the greatest perceived challenge among teachers and students. In the light of this, it is recommended that the secondary school curriculum should be revisited and the syllabus should be condensed, either within or across the subjects. This would also allow more time and space for students to engage in discussion groups, extra-curricular activities and non-examined subjects. All of these aspects were promoted by students as elements of a quality education.

This study has strongly argued for the potential that greater democratic involvement in policymaking and quality defining in making Kenyan Secondary Education more relevant and grounded in the needs and priorities of the Kenyan people. Great import has been placed on the need to challenge the impact of global discourses at the national policy level to allow greater space for practitioner involvement in the policymaking process. It is argued that rather than looking inwardly for an in-depth understanding of the challenges facing secondary education in practice, policymakers look outwardly when priority-setting. If and when the FSE policy documentation is written, there is much to be said for involving local stakeholders' priorities to improve policy trajectories and increasing the chances of successful implementation. Although

this study has not identified what such a participation process may look like, it has revealed the need for more to be understood about this so that the participation is meaningful rather than a tokenistic gesture; a critique often given to the promotion of participation in international development (Nelson & Wright, 1998; Mosse, 2001). This will mean those in power need to recognise and accept that a fully participatory approach to policy development may mean they need to be open to understanding the realities of practice and this may lead to models with which they do not agree (Nelson & Wright, 1998). Furthermore, by involving practitioners in policy development, changes are more likely to be complementary in practice and so offering a more joined-up and coherent strategy for educational reform.

Implications for the School Level

Findings have revealed that there are many challenges facing secondary education in practice in the two case study schools. Regarding the in-school challenges, participants had much to say on the topic of school leadership and management. This is an area which has received in-depth attention from Kamunde (2010) at the primary level but, with the exception of the recent study of Sang and Sang (2011), about which much less has been written about for the secondary sector. It is argued that it is not enough to implement decentralisation policies with the expectation that they will lead to the type of community ownership and managerial competencies seen in other countries (in the Kenyan case, that of the USA and Australia). Rather, a thorough training programme is needed so that, for example, BoGs can manage schools effectively and confidently. This finding resonated closely with the research carried out by Sang and Sang (2011) in secondary schools in Trans-Nzozia. This is especially the case for head teachers and the signatories of the accounts, in management and

finances. As Kamunde (2010) has argued, such training may need to be contextualised and need-specific since a one-size-fits all approach will not cater for the different needs and capabilities shown across the managers of different schools. Findings also suggested the need for better functioning systems of accountability and transparency such as a complaints procedure to improve educational governance.

Among students there was a strong desire for the school to be a safe environment where clean latrines and drinking water were all available. In the light of the impact that out-of-school factors had on student attendance, attainment and well-being there are clear implications for schools to do more in providing access to these and additional amenities. Such practical implications for the school include:

- *The provision of sanitary towels for all girls:* in support of Scott et al (2009) and Zanaa (2011), findings suggest that many girls are missing school on a monthly basis because they cannot afford sanitary towels. It is suggested that the primary school programme of the provision of sanitary towels should be extended to the secondary level to allieve students of this financial burden that many cannot afford (Kilonzo, 2012).
- *Access to alternative sources of lighting at school:* the qualitative findings have been shown to support the SACMEQ data and the analysis of Smith (2011) and Smith and Barrett (2011) in showing that access to a good source of light is important for a student's ability to read and revise in their home. Both of the case study schools allow students to use classrooms before school so that they can use the school's electricity. However, this is dependent on the students being able to reach school safely. The recommendation that students can access alternative sources of lighting at school is thus dependent upon the

condensing of the syllabus and thus the school timetable discussed in the previous section.

- *Guidance and counselling facilities:* teachers and students both stated the need for better facilities, including a private office and training for relevant staff. It was evident that in the more serious cases, guidance and counselling teachers are not able to offer the kind of support that they would like. This would also help students with difficult home environments, such as those where their parents are drinking chang'aa, or who are engaging in risky sexual behaviour to find the necessary information and support and help.

The provision of these facilities and resources will not remove the barriers that out-of-school factors present but they are some suggestions of ways that the Government could start to address them and in so doing start to move towards the idea of an 'equitable' education recommended in the previous section.

Implications for the Theoretical Literature

This study has been conducted within a conceptual framework which drew on three main bodies of international literature that (1) critique the uncritical transfer of policies worldwide and the adoption of one-size-fits all approaches to pedagogy and practice in low income countries; (2) highlight the power of development through drawing on the concepts of discourse and neo-imperialism; and (3) critique the dominant discourses of education quality and promote the potential for alternative approaches to understanding quality. In this section, the implications of the study for the theoretical literature are explored in terms of how findings contradict or support each of these bodies of literature.

Chapter 2 situated the study within the works of authors, such as Crossley and Watson (2003) and Chisholm and Leyendecker (2008), which critique the movement of educational policies and practices that often move globally both uncritically and within significant power imbalances. Findings have supported this literature by highlighting the ways in which *the Secondary Education Strategy document* has uncritically adopted elements of the policy from elsewhere, for example in the references to EFA and World Bank documentation (for example, Psacharopoulos, 1981; Psacharopoulos & Patrinos, 2002). Further, it has been revealed that much of the language used at the secondary level has been uncritically taken from the primary level with little recognition of the different context that secondary education represents. This has revealed the power of the EFA discourse and has clear implications if secondary education is to be encompassed into the basic education movement both in Kenya and further afield. A one-size-fits-all approach across educational levels will not suffice.

The emphasis placed on context throughout this study has also been influenced by the comparative literature which argues for the importance of understanding context for the successful implementation of a given policy (Higgins, 2004; Holmes & Crossley, 2004; Crossley, 2010, 2012). This literature comes from a socio-cultural tradition within comparative education which has long argued that successful policies cannot be transferred from one country to another without increased consideration of the implications generated by different contexts. It has been argued that a quality education cannot be discussed without greater attention being paid to the out-of-school factors which act as significant challenges to students' learning. As Sadler argued more than a century ago, 'we should not forget that the things outside the

schools matter even more than the things inside the schools, and govern and interpret the things inside' (Sadler 1900, p. 49 cited in Crossley, 2012, p.5). My findings have clear implications for the need to reconsider the concept of 'context' and promote greater emphasis upon the out-of-school factors which have received so little attention in the literature promoted by many multilateral agencies and in the Kenyan national policy documentation. Furthermore, although many have argued for the importance of evaluating the implementation of a policy (see, for example, Holmes and Crossley, 2004), much less has been written about how the context for implementation can be better understood through the involvement of practitioners in the design and the feedback loop of evaluating a given policy. This study contributes to this literature by showing how participation and context are interdependent concepts and by arguing that participation at all stages of the policy cycle could enable more relevant and successful educational policies.

The second body of literature that has been central to this study is that which explores the power of development and the ways in which such power is maintained in the discursive boundaries within which discussions of educational development take place (Chabbott, 2003; Samoff, 2007). The discourse analysis of the policy documentation revealed many examples of what Samoff (2008, p.3) has critiqued as the 'standardised authoritative terminology' that are taken for granted as statements of truth. Furthermore, it has been argued that these international discourses have created the structure within which educational quality is discussed leaving little space for alternative ways of thinking or for wider participation (Kress, 1989). The interrogation of these discourses to open up spaces for discussion are recommended for more authentic participation to take place. In this way, local knowledge and

priorities can be given as much attention as the neo-imperial agendas of the multi-lateral agencies and NGOs (Tembo, 2003; Tikly, 2004).

This also has implications for the growing body of literature which has critiqued how the dominant discourses of quality espoused in the rights-based and economic traditions promote a one-size-fits-all and decontextualised way of understanding educational quality (Tikly and Barrett 2011; Tikly 2011). These authors suggest that current approaches to conceptualizing educational quality are insufficient and mask education's complex nature. This study of secondary education in practice offers an in-depth case study of education's complexity with the school, community, curriculum and proposed outcomes of secondary education shown to be interlinked in messy and varied ways.

In the place of the traditional approaches to educational quality, Tikly and Barrett (2011) argue for new and more participatory conceptualisations based on the promotion of social justice and capabilities. My findings strongly support these new and reconceptualised understandings of educational quality and further argue that for such alternative ways of thinking about quality to be able to enter the debate, there is urgent need for dominant discourses to be challenged. It is argued that it is only by challenging these discourses that more authentic participation, and alternative ways of knowing, can enter the debate. Furthermore, while much of the rights-based and economic quality literature is almost exclusively focused on the primary level, the context-led EdQual framework offers much more of relevance to secondary education (Tikly, 2011). This is through, for example, the emphasis on out-of-school factors. The implications of this study for the quality literature are, thus, the recognition of the

potential of these principles for conceptualising quality in low income countries and a consideration of its (partial) suitability for the secondary level in Kenya.

Methodological implications

There are a number of implications for the methodological literature, both with regard to what worked particularly well in the field, and given elements that are discussed further within the section below of the limitations of the study. At the outset of the study, I felt strongly that I wanted to use postcolonialism both as a theoretical and methodological basis for the thesis (Tikly, 1999). This was in full awareness of the critique often put to postcolonial theorists that they are overly theoretical. Recognition of power, language and 'knowledge' imbalances was therefore central to the study's design and something which I reflected upon throughout the research process. Little has been written about the idea of a postcolonial methodology and this study has shown its potential, for example, in the promotion of considering power imbalances throughout the research process, and some challenges, for example, in the lack of validity checks and ethical guidelines within the tradition. A clear methodological implication of my study is the need to further develop postcolonialism as a research approach.

Authors such as Vulliamy (1990) and Crossley (2001) have argued for the importance of using qualitative approaches in educational research in low income settings for understanding the perceptions, experience and attitudes of those whom policies directly impact. Across the participant groups, but particularly among the students, I was overwhelmed with the varied and abundant data and how it enabled such an in-depth and critical analysis of secondary education in practice. The richness of the data

alone should stand testament to the importance of qualitative research for garnering contextualised understandings of education. Furthermore, the specific participative techniques that engaged the students offer much potential for understanding their educational realities. There has been little involvement of learners in defining educational quality in the international literature. The wealth and specificity of insight that emerged from across the student groups implies that learners should be more involved in future discussions of educational quality and suggests the greater use of participative methods of photo and diary linked interviewing for garnering such data.

Limitations of the study

This study has offered an in-depth analysis of educational quality and was conducted through a two-level case study drawing on qualitative and participative methods. As a consequence of using this methodology, the study encountered a number of limitations which need to be considered. However, it is noted where such limitations can be considered as strengths from alternative approaches to educational research.

Firstly, the fact that there is no policy documentation regarding the FSE policy is a limitation since I was not able to make direct comparisons between local and national conceptualisations of quality in the context of FSE as originally anticipated. Although the *Secondary Education Strategy Document* was a suitable replacement given that it was what was being referred to within the MoE, it was written before the FSE policy was introduced and so was more of a historical than contemporary document. This means that the comparisons between the local and national level presented in Chapter 8 do not represent directly comparable conceptualisations of quality.

Secondly, language acted as a limitation to the study in two ways. Firstly, in a study framed by postcolonial concerns, it was a limitation that the only language that I could communicate in fully with participants was English, both the colonial language and one that only I had as a first language. As has been widely argued, there is a strong relationship between language and power (for example, see Brock-Utne & Garbo, 2009). I perhaps could have done more to address such power imbalances, for example, by building longer standing relationships with parents so language differences would have been less significant (Fairclough, 1989). The practicalities, which I adopted went some way to remedy the situation such as offering students to participate in Swahili or English, were not well received by the school management since English is the only accepted language on school premises. Language was also a significant barrier to engaging with parents in practice. I employed a University student as a translator since I could not find an employed Ekegusii-English translator (see Chapter 4). He was not trained in interviewing or translating and this presented some implications in the interviews with parents. It further impacted on the interviews since I was not able to build rapport in the interviews.

Thirdly, the findings cannot be generalized across Kenya or more widely. As explained in Chapter 4, a small sample is characteristic of case studies given that they are in-depth and contextualised. For positivistic readers, the fact that the findings cannot be generalised would be a major limitation of the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). However, as noted above and in the literature related to case studies, this approach allowed for a 'thick description' and the exploration of attitudes and experiences of a range of stakeholders (Geertz, 1973; Yin, 2003). Therefore, given the richness of the data, this case study offers great insight both for those seeking to

understand the FSE policy in practice and conceptualisations of educational quality in Kenyan and other low income countries.

Fourthly, the timing of the study has posed limitations for being able to consider implications both for education reform in Kenya and the post-2015 agenda more widely. It is expected that by the end of 2013, the future priorities for education in Kenya and globally will be repositioned. Regarding the first, in 2012, an education taskforce looked into realigning the education system in line with the new constitution and some of the main recommendations suggest a change from an 8-4-4 to 7-4-2-3 system and the introduction of more vocational and talent schools alongside more academic ones at the secondary level (MoE, 2012). At the time of writing, given the political change in the country, it is not known whether these reforms will come into being. At the global level, the post-2015 agenda will dramatically shift global priorities for development. If lower secondary education is incorporated into the basic education agenda as some have suggested, findings from this study will have many implications for this policy change Kenya and beyond. Therefore, despite the fact that the timing of the study poses some limitations, this does also generate new potential scholarship based on this study in the coming years.

Priorities for Future Research

There are a number of key areas for future research which have been identified in this study. Firstly, as has been stated throughout this study, very little attention has been paid to secondary education in the international quality literature, particularly in the EFA and MDG era. This study has contributed to considerations both of 'free' secondary education policies and conceptualisations of quality secondary education. Given how little has been written in either of these fields, both within Kenya and

beyond, there is a need for greater attention to be paid in these areas. Furthermore, findings have suggested that there are distinct differences between primary and secondary education across both of these areas and it is important that what is deemed to have worked at the primary level is not uncritically transferred to the secondary level without more research about the differences between the two.

Secondly, the out-of-school challenges identified in this study have been shown to be deeply rooted in the socio-economic context of the Inka community. Very little has been written about education in the Kisii region and my findings have revealed some challenges that have not been cited previously in the literature. For example, the issue of alcoholism and patronage sexuality, more commonly associated with poor urban areas (see Arnot *et al.* 2010), and how these affect education have both been noted as serious problems in the Inka community. Further research is recommended to examine fully how both sex and alcohol impact on students' well-being and academic engagement in the Kisii region with exploratory research conducted in other rural areas of Kenya to see if similar issues affect students living in other regions.

Thirdly, there is need for more research to understand the ways in which a quality secondary education differs from a quality primary education, particularly in relation to the impact of out-of-school factors. It has been suggested that sex, alcohol, additional chores at home prevent greater barriers to older children but more research is needed to test this hypothesis.

Fourthly, little research has involved learners in conceptualising quality education in low income countries. The strength of using participative methods to involve students in the discussions of quality has been highlighted. It is recommended that more

research is conducted into how such methods could better engage learners to offer their valuable insights into how they experience education and how these can enter the policymaking process.

Fifthly, the promotion of participatory approaches to enable more contextualised understandings of educational quality at the policy level is the key recommendation of this study. However, it remains unclear what the process would look like by which both of these could be incorporated into the policymaking production. Further research is recommended into a realistic but meaningful process for such democratic participation, including ways in which parents and students can be included in this.

Finally, I plan to further develop my publications profile from this study through conference papers, journal articles and book chapters. These will include presenting key conclusions and implications (see Chapters 8 and 9), reflecting on ethics in cross-cultural research (see Chapter 4) and on my insider-outsider positioning and the connected rationale for using participative methods, and considering the implications of this study for post-2015 agenda setting and proposed educational reform in Kenya. My concerns for issues of educational quality in Africa do not end here. My first post-doctoral job is as a Research Assistant on a DfID funded project looking at language of instruction and textbooks in Rwanda. Undertaking this thesis has opened up many opportunities and I look forward to seeing where it takes me in my future research.

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Appendix 1: Letters to participants

Letter sent to Head teachers to gain access (with names blanked out for anonymity)



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Fax: +44 (0)117 905 1537
www.bristol.ac.uk/education
Tel: +44 7717 821 047
Email: lizzi.milligan@bristol.ac.uk

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: PHD RESEARCH DATA COLLECTION

My name is Buffy Milligan. I lived in **** and worked at **** Secondary School in 2004 and have visited the community on a number of occasions since. I was sorry not to meet you last summer. I am currently studying for a PhD at the University of Bristol in the field of education. Thank you very much for showing interest in allowing me to conduct my fieldwork at your secondary school. Before you decide whether or not you wish for your school to take part in my research, I wanted to write to you and give you more details about the project.

My PhD is funded by the UK Government and has the working title of **'Whose quality matters? A critical analysis of the Kenya Free Secondary Education policy'**. The research aims to capture the views and expectations of a range of stakeholders towards the FSE policy. I hope to conduct qualitative research with students, parents, teachers, BoG members and others in the community to explore what is deemed important in secondary education in Inka village. The project will not be an assessment of your school and I will not be relaying data collected to the Ministry of Education. Furthermore, I am no longer actively involved in EPAfrica and the research is entirely independent from the charity.

If you were to allow access to your school, I am liaising with the Ministry of Education (both in Nairobi and the DEO in Kisii) to gain formal access and a research permit(although your school will not be named as taking part in the research). I am coming to ***** from the 10th May and I plan to conduct my study over a period of four months across two secondary schools. I therefore envisage spending a maximum of two days per week at your school. During this time, I would like to observe classes (with teacher permission), engage in extra-curricular activities and arrange interviews

with parents, Form 4 students and staff members at times that are convenient for them and fit in with the school schedule. I may have a research assistant with me for some of the time. I will take some notes and photos (with the permission of students, staff and parents). The aim of the research is to observe and explore the everyday processes at two secondary schools so I will not wish to make any changes to your normal school day. I will be as minimally invasive as possible. I also think I have a lot to offer your school – I would help to coach your football teams, aid in revision and be an active member of the school community.

If you were to permit me access, I would like to assure you that I will be conducting the research in line with the UK Data Protection Act and the ethical guidelines recommended by the University of Bristol. You can have complete confidence that I will only use the data collected for this stated purpose and will save all data securely and anonymously. Participants would take part at their own will and would be free to withdraw at any time. I will phone you at the beginning of May to confirm that you have received this letter and to discuss any queries that you may have. If you wish to contact me in the meantime, my details are at the top of the page. ***** can act as a character reference for me.

If you have any questions – please get in touch with me on emamilligan@gmail.com or 07717821047. If you text me, I will ring you back.

I am very much looking forward to returning to my ‘nyumba Kenya’, meeting you and hopefully spending time at your school.

Asante Sana,

Yours faithfully,

Buffy Milligan

Cc. Prof. M. Crossley (Supervisor) & *****

Letter to parents (English and Swahili)



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Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: RESEARCH DATA COLLECTION

My name is Buffy 'Nyansiaboka' Milligan. I am a PhD student at Bristol University. My research is about Free Secondary Education in Kenya. I am the British woman who is staying at *****'s place – you may recognise me! In 2004 I stayed in Inka while I worked at *****. I am conducting research in two secondary schools - Omwana and Eskuru. I plan to stay for four months and I hope to meet you while I'm here. Please greet me if you see me around.

My research will examine Free Secondary Education. My research is funded by the British government. It's qualitative research and allows me to explore what people think. I write to you for two reasons. First, I would like to ask your permission to be in your child's school to do research with them. I want to focus on lessons, take photographs and conduct interviews with some of them. Secondly, I wish to interview some of the parents so I may contact you to arrange an interview.

I am interested to hear the views of parents. There are no right or wrong answers, there are only opinions. Involvement in the research is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw at any time. Please contact me in school if you do not want for yourself or your child to participate in the research. What is said in the interview will only be used for the purpose of my PhD research. I will store data safely and not share it with others. You are free to withdraw at any time now or in future.

I look forward to meeting you,

Asante Sana,

Buffy Milligan

Cc. Prof. M. Crossley (Supervisor)

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22 January 2014

Wapenzi mzazi,

RE: Utafiti PhD katika shule ya sekondari Eskuru na Omwana

Jina langu ni Buffy 'Nyansiaboka' Milligan. Kiswahili yangu si njema hivyo tafadhali nisamehe kwa makosa yoyote. Mimi ni mwanafunzi PhD chuo kikuu Bristol. Utafiti yangu ni kuhusu Bure ya Elimu ya Sekondari Kenya. Mimi ni mwanamke uingereza ambaye ninakaa nyumba ya ***** – ni hakika umeniona! 2004 ninakaa Inka wakati mimi kazi katika shule ****. Ninafanya utafiti katika shule ya sekondari Omwana na Eskuru. Ninasudia kukaa kwa miezi minne na natumaini kukutana na wewe wakati mimi niko hapa. Tafadhali nisalimiane kama kuniona karibu. Utafiti yangu atachunguza Bure ya Elimu ya Sekondari. Utafiti yangu umefadhiliwa na serikali ya Uingereza. Ni utafiti ubora na naomba kujua nini watu wanadhani. Ninaandika na wewe kwa sababu mbili. Kwanza, napenda kuomba ruhusa yako ya kuwa katika shule ya mtoto wako na kufanya utafiti na wao. Ninataka kuzingatia masomo, kuchukua picha na mahojiano maadili kwa baadhi yao. Pili, napenda mahojiano baadhi ya wazazi ili nipate kuwasiliana na weewe kwa kupanga mahojiano.

mimi na shauka ya kusikia maoni ya wazazi wanaweza kuwasiliana na wewe kwa kupanga mahojiano. Hakuna majibu sahihi au makosa, kuna maoni tu. Kujihusisha katika utafiti ni ya hiari na una haki ya kutoa wakatin wowote. Tafadhali nisalimiane katika shule huna untaka kwa ajili yako mwenyewe au mtoto wako ya kushirili katika utafiti. Nini alisema katika mahojiano zitamikwa tu kwa madhumuni zaliyokusudiwa. Nitahifadhi data salama na sitaishiriki kwa wengine. Wewe ni bure kuondoa wakati wowote sasa au katika sika zijazo.

Ninamatumaini ukukutana.

Asante Sana,

Buffy 'Nyansiaboka' Milligan

Letter to the students given cameras

Thank you very much for agreeing to help me in my research. Your help is very, very important to me and my research so please take this seriously. You have been chosen by your teachers as trustworthy students – please show me that they are right! Before taking part, it is important that you understand that you are taking part voluntarily and you have the right to withdraw at any time. Please keep what you are doing secret – I will also do the same so we know that everything is confidential. It is very important that you are open and honest and know that I will keep your photos and what you write secretly and when I report, you will not be named. I will not tell any of the teachers, your parents/guardians or other students what you take photos of or what you say.

I am giving you a camera that only has 24 photos on it. After these, 24 photos the camera will stop working. PLEASE only use the camera for what I am asking you to take photos of. If you want photos of your friends or family, I can take photos on my digital camera. The photos you take are also for me to keep. Please complete this task in the next week. I have also given you a form to complete each time you take a photo so you can document what you have taken pictures of. Please complete it as fully as possible in English (although if you find it easier to write in Kiswahili, that is ok). I am interested in your opinions and how you are feeling. I want to understand from you what you think is important to your education. So take photos of the things that are most important to you and your education (including those that may be lacking). This may include what you think is:

- ❖ Good at school
- ❖ Bad at school
- ❖ The challenges that you face at school and at home
- ❖ What changes would improve your education
- ❖ Why your education is important to you
- ❖ And anything else that you want to tell me!

I will collect the cameras and forms from you next Monday 11th July. Before the end of term (when you are not in exams), I will want to have a short interview with you so we can talk through what you have taken photos of. If you complete the task, I will give you a small present later in term.

If you have any questions, please talk to me. My phone number is 0703544577 (although please do not give this to others and only use it if you have questions about the research).

Thank you again,

Buffy

Letter to the students given diaries

Thank you very much for agreeing to help me in my research. Your help is very, very important to me and my research so please take this seriously. You have been chosen by your teachers as trustworthy students – please show me that they are right! Before taking part, it is important that you understand that you are taking part voluntarily and you have the right to withdraw at any time. Please keep what you are doing secret – I will also do the same so we know that everything is confidential. It is very important that you are open and honest and know that I will keep what you do/say secretly and when I report, you will not be named. I will not tell any of the teachers, your parents/guardians or other students what you have said.

I am giving you a diary to complete for one week – please complete it as fully as possible in English (although if you find it easier to write in Kiswahili, that is ok). Please complete it to tell me what you do at different times of the day. For example, in the morning I want to know what time you wake up, what chores you do before leaving for school, how long it takes to walk to school. I am interested in your opinions and how you are feeling. I want to understand from you what you think is important to your education. This may include what you think is:

- ❖ Good at school
- ❖ Bad at school
- ❖ The challenges that you face at school and at home
- ❖ What changes would improve your education
- ❖ Why your education is important to you
- ❖ And anything else that you want to tell me!

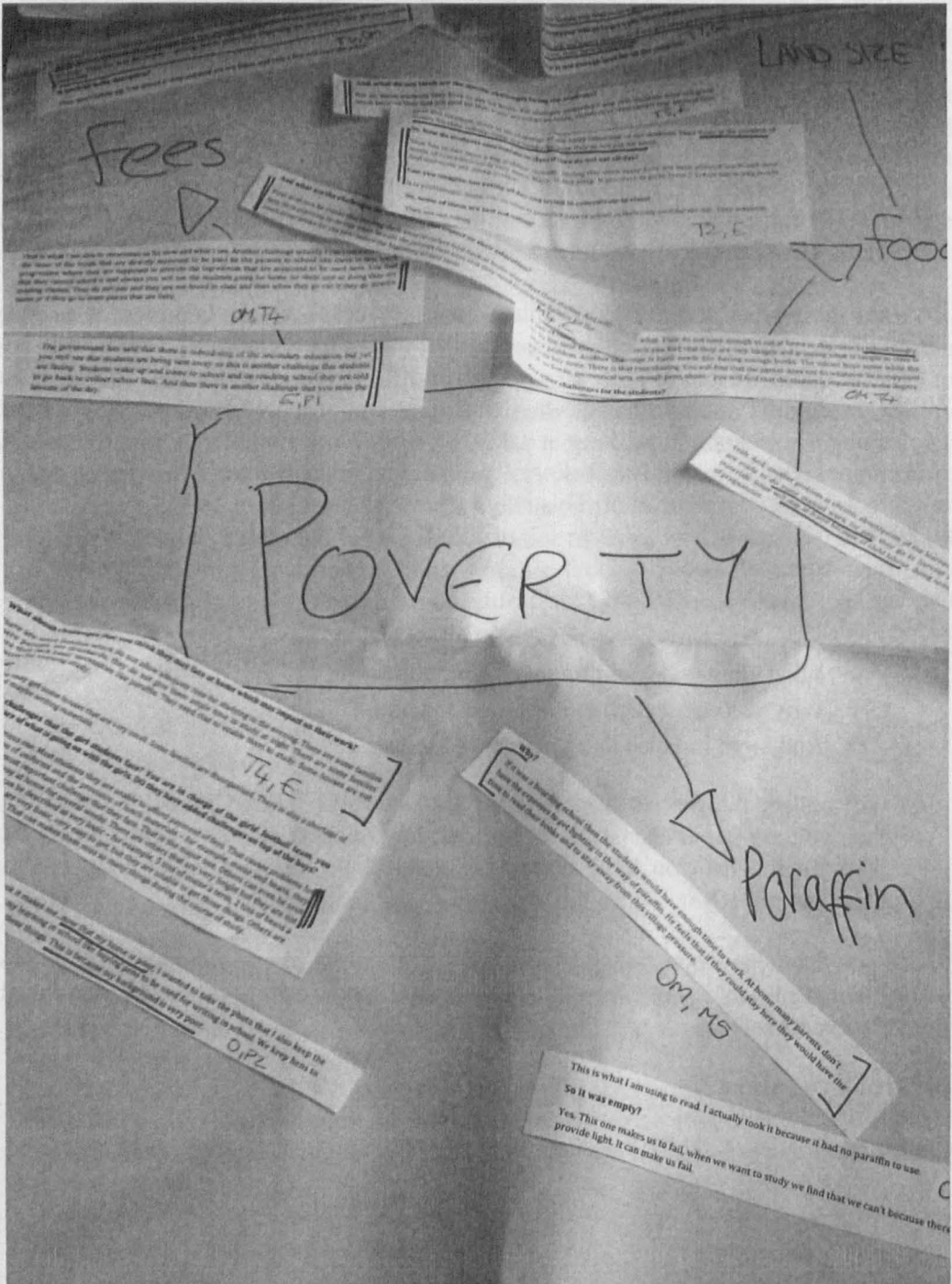
I will collect the diaries from you next Monday 11th July. Before the end of term (when you are not in exams), I will want to have a short interview with you so we can talk through what you have written. If you fill the diary, I will give you a small present later in term.

If you have any questions, please talk to me. My phone number is 0703544577 (although please do not give this to others and only use it if you have questions about the research).

Thank you again,

Buffy

Appendix 2: Analysis sheets



Appendix 3: GSoE Ethics Form

GSoE RESEARCH ETHICS FORM

Name(s): Lizzi Milligan

Proposed research project: Ethnographic Case Study in Secondary Schools in Kisii, Kenya

Proposed funder(s): Funded by ESRC – PhD fieldwork

Discussant for the ethics meeting: Terra Sprague

Please include an outline of the project or append a short (1 page) summary:

My research will explore how local stakeholders (teachers, parents, students) in secondary education understand quality in education and what they deem to be important for their own context. This sits within a wider aim to bring the views of local stakeholders to the educational policymaking table in Kenya. My research design is an ethnographic case study of one rural community (and two secondary schools) with the aim of constructing a locally grounded quality educational framework. I will compare and contrast this with that identified in the national Free Secondary Education policy documentation to see to what extent secondary education is meeting the needs and hopes of those it seeks to help. I will be spending four-five months in the village of Inka with the two principal research sites of two secondary schools. I will use a range of qualitative research methods (interviews, observation, 'photovoice', documentary analysis, experiential knowledge) while in the field. My research participants will be Form 4 Students (final year, 17-18 year olds), teachers (including the head teachers), parents, board of governor members and local dignitaries. I will be staying between two friends' homes – one in the village, one in the local town of Kisii. I plan to conduct the research primarily in English (it is the language of instruction in Kenyan secondary schools) but research with parents and local dignitaries will be in Ekegusii (with a translator) or Swahili (I am learning this but will also need assistance in translating), whichever they choose.

Ethical issues discussed and decisions taken (see list of prompts overleaf):

1. Power relations/relationship with EPAfrica

I am still well-recognised in Inka as a volunteer with EPAfrica and I will have to make a lot of effort to show myself as an independent researcher. I am especially concerned that participants may present a worse impression of quality in their schools because they think that I will report back to EPAfrica that the schools are in need of assistance. I will remain aware of my relatively powerful position in the community and not abusing prior relationships for the sake of my research will be central to my design. I plan to ensure that the schools and wider community are fully aware of the purposes of my research and impartiality from EPAfrica. I am no longer on the management board of EPAfrica and will need to emphasise that I am no longer involved in the charity. I also plan to invite EPAfrica representatives to evaluate the two secondary schools for potential partnership with the charity. This will mean that I can separate myself from the charity and their decisions and will take away the impression that I am at the schools to do this evaluation.

2. Cross-cultural ethical concerns

Everything given here is in line with the UK ethical guidelines. I will also liaise with Fredrick Kamunde (a recent doctoral student in the Graduate School of Education who now works in the Kenyan Ministry of Education) to obtain the Kenyan ethical guidelines. I will complete any ethical clearance before my fieldwork begins (and from experience I expect and have planned for this to take place in country at the start of my fieldwork period). I will compromise between the two ethical concerns but ensure that I take the minimum ethical stance of either country.

3. Researcher access/exit

Access secured through friends in the village of Inka that I had previously known while a volunteer with EPAfrica. Access was secured from head-teachers and will also be followed up at the Ministry of Education on arrival in Nairobi. It was made clear that my presence would disrupt usual routine as little as possible and that any interviews etc would be carried out outside of lesson time. I will reaffirm the purpose of my research, the intended methods/participants and highlight any possible areas of disruption in a letter that I will send before May allowing time for the head-teachers to reply with any questions and have the right of withdrawal. I will have an ethical responsibility to manage my exit and not to make any promises either of my return or that my research will result in an actual change in that community. It will be for me to manage my relationships with participants and the wider community throughout the research period to ensure that I am able to do this fairly.

4. Information given to participants

I will write to the head-teachers beforehand so that they are aware of my aims, the methods I hope to use and also that all participants will be asked to take part voluntarily with the right of withdrawal and in confidential conditions. I will have a letter which outlines these, in English, Swahili and Ekegusii to give to potential participants on arrival in Inka. I will also take the opportunity to verbally inform the wider community by attending local gatherings and speaking, such as at school open days (both secondary and primary) and at the different churches in the community. At all times the key ethical concerns of confidentiality, consent, and right to not participate or withdraw will be reaffirmed and explained in language that is understandable. Furthermore I will make it clear that it is not important for them to know lots on the subject but rather that I am interested in their opinions and that there are no right or wrong answers.

5. Participants right of withdrawal

Each participant will be asked beforehand if they would like to partake in the research and will be given an information sheet and time to consider their involvement in the project. It will be explained to them that they have the right to withdraw at anytime without harming the research project or upsetting me. It is important that I, as far as possible, take away any expectation of obligation towards me that may be felt. This will be explained in whichever language is appropriate.

6. Informed Consent

I will get informed consent from all participants. This will be in the format of a signed document or a verbal agreement to take part that will be recorded by digi-recorder at the beginning of each interview. For observation in the classroom, I will need to confirm the ethical clearance needed in Kenya via the Ministry of Education in Nairobi and proceed as is fitting (i.e get full signed forms from each student or verbal agreement or only do so when I am recording individual information rather than general observations – in this case, only consent would be needed from the Board of Governors and/or the head-teacher of each school).

7. Complaints procedure

All participants will be informed of a complaints procedure. The point of complaint in Inka will be the two head-teachers (with their consent) and their phone number will be given in the document of information given to all participants. The head-teachers will then have the contact details for my supervisor in the Graduate School of Education, Michael Crossley, and will be able to complain to him via email/telephone if they see fit.

8. Safety and well-being of participants

My research should in no way harm participants and the nature of the inquiry means that we did not feel that there was a significant chance of unintended harm to participants. All research will take place in an environment that participants feel comfortable and safe (either at school or home).

9. Safety and well-being of researcher

My own safety needs to be of paramount importance throughout the fieldwork stage. I am very lucky that I have a number of close friends in Nairobi, Kisii and Inka who will look after me and be a first point of contact if there were to be an emergency. I will create an emergency contact card which I will always have on me that has my vital information (passport number, insurance details, blood type, anti-malaria medication) and the contact details of three friends in Kenya. I will make sure that these friends have my vital information, copies of my insurance details/passport and contact details of emergency contacts within the UK.

I have chosen fieldwork dates which correspond with the dry season so as to ensure that the research site is readily accessible and I can also access medical treatment within two hours if necessary. This is also the time of year when malaria is less prevalent in Kisii highlands. I will follow the guidelines for safety that I have been training volunteers for EPAfrica on for the last six years – not to travel in the dark or in the wet, not to take motorbike transport, not to walk around the village alone at night. I feel comfortable that given my experience of working and living in Kisii that I will look after my own safety to the best of my ability and that I will be looked after fully by friends while on the ground.

10. Anonymity/Confidentiality

All research will be conducted in confidentiality and stored anonymously (except to the researcher who will know the coding to identify the participants – this is discussed below). The fact that it is confidential will be explained before the research interviews take place. The translator will also need to be aware of and respect this issue of confidentiality.

11. Data Analysis

I have an ethical responsibility to analyse the data following recognised validity checks. Although much of the analysis will be about my own interpretation – it needs to be an interpretation of the actual data rather than giving a skewed impression of what was said. This is a responsibility to both my academic colleagues and participants.

After each interview/'photovoice'/significant episode of observation, I will make a summary of what I view to be the key aspects of the data while in the field. I will take this opportunity to go back and check with each participant whether I have summarised the data fairly and check for any language misinterpretations.

12. Data Storage

All data will be downloaded to my laptop and hard-drive at the end of each day and stored anonymously to an external eye (for example, parent 1). Names and anything that could identify the participant will be removed. The data will only be accessible to me and so will be fully password protected. The translator may help me with the interpretation of the interview data but will not be able to access the written and audio files that will be saved securely on the computer.

13. Ethical concerns for documentary analysis (July 2010)

All documents are publicly accessible since they were sourced either from the Government Printer in Nairobi or the Ministry of Education. A letter explaining the purpose of the research was shown to MoE officials so that they were aware of what the documents would be used for. Although Ministry officials were not direct participants in this research, I have an ethical responsibility to make every attempt to ensure that my research does not have an unwanted effect for the Ministry. This meant, in practice, bearing this ethical concern in mind while writing the study and, if it had been applicable, removing any aspects that may have been harmful. A fellow student read my work to act as a validity check in this regard.

14. Responsibility to colleagues within EPAfrica

Since KEP is the only mzungu (foreigner) presence in rural Kisii, however much I state my independence from the charity, I must be aware that for many (for example, away from the research site, say, in Kisii town) I will still be associated with EPAfrica. I plan to act responsibly for my own safety but must also remember that I have a responsibility to not tarnish the name of charity by my actions. Furthermore, I must be careful not to downplay the work that EPAfrica does in my attempt to assert my independence.

15. Responsibility to academic community

I have a responsibility to my academic colleagues within the Graduate School of Education and further afield to conduct my research in a fair, ethical and culturally sensitive manner. I need to make sure that the reputation of the academic community is not sullied. This also follows through into my analysis and presentation of findings – my interpretations and conclusions need to be justifiable. This means making sure that my data, analysis and conclusions are clearly linked.

16. Reporting of research

I will write a short summary of my findings and an accessible diagram of the quality framework which I hope to present in person to the community of Inka after my fieldwork is complete. Again, I have an ethical responsibility to make sure that participants realise that my findings may have a particular purpose but that there is no guarantee that my recommendations will follow through into changes in practice in their schools.

*Signed: Lizzi Milligan (Researcher)

*Signed: Terra Sprague (Discussant)

Date: 24/11/10

**By writing your name here, this is equivalent to a signature*

July 2009

Appendix 4: Faith's Diary

MONDAY

	What are you doing?	How are you feeling?
Before school	I woke up at 5.07am, this time I did not read. I took a shower and dressed. By 5.40am I started from home to school, I took 30 minutes Prayers first	It was unusual for me to wake up at 5.07am. I felt a bit bitter because I normally like waking up at 4.00am and read or revise for my coming exams
When you arrive at school – 11am	At 11am to 12.20om is a double lesson of chemistry and next the lesson programmes continues	By the way I don't like chemistry. It is a worst subject and it is the one that I don't understand. It makes my academic performance to decrease
11am-1pm	Still this is for a chemistry lesson	Chemistry is the bad subject that makes school to be bad at times. I do not know whether I put a bad attitude towards it
1pm-2pm	I took lunch for only 20 minutes . By 1.20pm I turn to Maths peer teaching of lunch hour	I feel good because this peer teaching helps me so much because I am not good in Maths. I have acquired more from this peer teaching
2pm-4pm	At this time, different teachers come to teach different subjects for a duration of 40 minutes per subject	I find myself sleeping at this time. I hate reading at this time so much because I am very tired and bored
4pm-6pm	At exactly 4pm, I go to the field for games until 5pm then I come back to class for evening preps; group discussion	I like it because this group discussions helps me to share ideas of certain subjects with my classmates and we learn more. I also like games because it makes me to refresh and being fresh till evening
After School	At exactly 6pm I go back home, when at home, I wash my uniforms and prepare supper, at 8pm I start reading and writting down some points up to 10pm	At 10pm I am very tired and I go to bed to sleep, I don't like extending because I find myself very tired. The big problem that I had at this time is that may be I have been in school from 6am to 6pm, I sleep a bit early.

TUESDAY

	What are you doing?	How are you feeling?
Before school	I woke up at 4.30am, pray, revised some maths questions and read History and Government. I took shower and ran to school by 5.40am	Today there was no mud on the road. This made me to come faster than usual. At times when there is mud on the road, I feel like not coming to school

When you arrive at school – 11am	Agriculture teacher taught us. I like this subject because I know it. Then a break of ten minutes meaning I rush to the toilet and back to class for next lesson	I feel that if my parents had enough money, they buy for me as many revision materials for this subject/ The short break is good, because it makes me to refresh my brain and to avoid dosing while in class
11am-1pm	Biology teacher entered. I love biology so much and I am aiming to score high. I also like being attentive at this time	I feel more than comfortable when biology is being taught. More so in practicals I am ok but coming to theory I need to pull my socks up. I am average.
1pm-2pm	Today we did not discuss Maths peer teaching. I feel bored and I see that at times the school is bad, I have tried to do private studies now	Peer teaching is more important to me because it makes me to know more in Maths. I am not feeling good because I don't like to end the day minus doing maths
2pm-4pm	This time is for normal lessons. I feel like sleeping but I prevent myself because I will be punished	This is the worst time that makes me to hate school. I became fully disturbed by sleep
4pm-6pm	Because it is a Tuesday, at exactly 4pm I have to go to a debate. The debate takes 2 hours	I feel good when I attend it because it makes me to improve me in speaking fluently in both Kiswahili and English. Debate makes life more comfortable at school. I'll like to request the patron of the club to continue with the same spirit
After School	At exactly 6.30pm I have already reached home. I change my uniforms and help my parents in domestic chores. I take supper, read for 2 hours and go to bed	At times it is good to help our parents but the chores and duties are too much and excess. I don't like doing them but I force myself to do if possible my parents to employ a housemaid so that I can utilise the shortest time possible to revise.

WEDNESDAY

	What are you doing?	How are you feeling?
Before school	Prayers at 3.30am I take a shower Revise English and CRE Take my breakfast & I run to school at 5.40am	Today I did not feel like coming to school because it rained and destroyed the road; since the road is muddy, it makes me to walk a bit slow and this forces me to carry two pairs of shoes to school. At times I become very dirt
When you arrive at school – 11am	General prayers with my fellows Class assembly as in discussing issues that affect us and problems arising Normal lessons & a break of 20 minutes	This general prayers and scripture reading is very important hence making life good at school Class Assembly helps me and my fellow students to solve problems banning enmity amongst us I like this break so much since it makes me complete any assignment
11am-1pm	Chemistry context paper 1 & 2	By the way I don't like Chemistry

1pm-2pm	Lunch for 20 minutes Private studies	Lunch was not tasty Private studies makes me to revise more
2pm-4pm	Chemistry context paper 2	It was very hard indeed I was bored and sleepy because of waking up very early in the morning (3.30)
4pm-6pm	Games from 4pm-5pm Evening preps: did English paper 3 from 5pm-6pm	I like games so much as in legball. It makes lie good at school It is sometimes good but at this time I find myself eager to go home
After School	Wash my uniforms Go to the market to buy vegetables Go to the poshomill Prepare supper Read Agriculture Go to bed at 11pm	I feel bored when I do household chores I felt sleepy because of reading for 5 hours

THURSDAY

	What are you doing?	How are you feeling?
Before school	Wake up at 4am Pray Prepare breakfast Take a shower and take breakfast Read Kiswahili for 30 minutes & come to school	Today I feel unwell; stomach ache The road was good because it did not rain I feared during morning because of the darkness
When you arrive at school – 11am	General prayers and reading of scripture. Morning preps. School programme starts Brea	Today I am uncomfortable. I feel like sleeping
11am-1pm	School programme continues as in normal lessons	School programme is good hence it makes to be ready for the next lesson
1pm-2pm	Lunch for 20 minutes Maths peer teaching	The meal was not good as in it had alot of soup. Maths today was boring because I did not get the sum I was given to do
2pm-4pm	Teaches for CRE revised with us for a double lesson Kiswahili did not enter	Although I was sleepy, I tried to listen. I felt going at home because the Kiswahili teacher did not attend the lesson
4pm-6pm	At 4pm, join my club since it is clubs day. I am in YCS club. It takes a duration of 1hr	I love God so much that is why I joined YCS club. It gives me courage to overcome temptations. What makes this club interesting is that members has a project as in we have grown nappier grass

After School	Wash the uniforms & ran to the river to fetch water Prepare supper & revise Biology	I wish my parents had money to install water in the homestead Today the day was not interesting The duty of preparing supper daily makes me to loose alot of time instead of studying
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FRIDAY

	What are you doing?	How are you feeling?
Before school	Wake at 5.07am Pray Bathe Run to school	Today I did not take anything because I woke up very late I felt very hungry on my way to school
When you arrive at school – 11am	General prayers Preps Assembly Revision for chemistry practical	I was not concentrating because of hunger during preps During assembly, the YCS club was called upon to present a song and a scripture. I felt good coz I read the Bible I revised a little and sleepy waiting for the 1 st shift to finish
11am-1pm	Resting and sleepy	I felt like sleeping and relaxing eagerly waiting for lunch Today was a very bad day in school
1pm-2pm	Lunch for 10 minutes At 1.15am I went to the laboratory to tackle practical	During practical, I chose accidentally a bad station having old apparatus, when I was filling the burette with that given soln, it poured without no controll from the burette
2pm-4pm	Practical up to 3.40pm 20 minutes relaxing	I was feeling uncomfortable due to the smell of the chemicals in the laboratory. I relaxed a bit while sneezing and coughing, may be allergy
4pm-6pm	Cleaning time Packing books in my bag	As a school prefect, I helped the prefect on duty and teacher on duty to make the practise a success and faster. This is one way of utilising time so that we finish manual early and leave school early to prepare the weekend
After School	Sent to buy charcoal from the shop Prepare supper Read for only one hour Pray and go to bed	Today it rained heavily and made me dirty as I was coming from school. As usual the road is very bad when it normally rains After supper, I found myself sleeping on the table, I decided to sleep early. I feel that on Fridays I sleep without reading

THE WEEKEND

	What are you doing?	How are you feeling?
Saturday Morning	Wake up at 8.30am Pray Prepare breakfast Wash utensils Mob house Wash clothes	Today I feel good because I was not going to school I felt tired when I finished home chores
Saturday Afternoon	Cook lunch Bathe Watch movie Reading novel Visiting friends	I feel good at this time because: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. I entertain myself by watching movie ii. I read novels that I did not understand well iii. I visit my friends whom I chat with to pass time and avoid unnecessary work at home
Saturday Evening	Fetch water Go to buy vegetables Prepare supper Go to bed	As a Saturday, I don't like touching even a cover of the book. I sleep through out the night
Sunday Morning	Wake up at 7.00am Prepare breakfast Bathe Go to church	I like going to church once in a while. Going to church is good but mostly I don't find time to go
Sunday Afternoon	Prepare lunch Read English and Chemistry Go for a walk around the market	Even though I hate chemistry, sometimes I force myself to read it because it is compulsory I like walking at the market place mostly to buy some clothes and other things
Sunday Evening	Buy vegetables Prepare supper Read for 1 hour Go to bed	I like sleeping so much more than education Today I felt sleepy and I did not read so much I went to bed a bit eary because I was very, very tired.