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Investigating School Experiences of Vulnerable Children in Singida, Tanzania:

Challenges, Strategies, and Possible Interventions

By

Chrispina S. Lekule

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies

through the Faculty of Education

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at

the University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario, Canada

2014

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Investigating School Experiences of Vulnerable Children in Singida Tanzania:
Challenges, Strategies and Possible Interventions

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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

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ABSTRACT

The number of vulnerable children in Tanzania is on the rise. For the purpose of this study, the concept of vulnerable children refers to those who are under 18 whose life is in jeopardy due to socio-economic factors such as: abject poverty, orphanhood, and child abandonment, among others. Although vulnerability is known to have deleterious impacts on students' learning, studies conducted in Tanzanian schools on the issue of vulnerable children's education are scarce. Consequently, this research sought to: (a) examine vulnerable children's school experiences in Singida from the perspective of educators and vulnerable children alike; (b) explore challenges facing educators who strive to meet vulnerable children's academic needs; and (c) investigate strategies that teachers and schools can implement to support and scaffold vulnerable children's learning and improve quality of education. The study employed a qualitative research methodology and critical ethnographic approach. Participants were drawn from 5 schools and a centre for orphaned and vulnerable children located in Singida region, Tanzania, and included 5 school principals, 45 teachers, and 26 children. Data was collected via participatory observations, in-depth individual interviews, focus group discussions and questionnaires. The results of this study indicated that the vulnerable children in Singida who participated in this study generally experienced schools as a stumbling block. Recommendations are made for urgent intervention by government leaders, policy makers and educators to support the schools through improved work conditions, enhanced school leadership and pedagogy, teacher development programs, collective ownership of the problem and commitment to ensuring improved school experiences for vulnerable children.

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to the Rt. Rev. Bishop Augustine Shao of the Catholic Diocese of Zanzibar, a man of great integrity and a visionary who inspired and opened the way for me to pursue graduate studies. I also wish to dedicate this dissertation to my beloved religious community, the Evangelizing Sisters of Mary, my family, and friends who inspired and encouraged me through their unwavering love and care, and through their prayers that kept me strong and persistent in this academic journey.

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cherish the many things I have learned from this great and passionate professor all the days of my life.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

This study investigated school experiences of vulnerable children in Tanzania using a sample of five schools in Singida region. Through a critical ethnographic research approach, the study sought to identify challenges facing and interventional strategies used by schools and educators who support vulnerable children's learning process. The objective of the study is to contribute to the ongoing effort of supporting vulnerable children in acquiring education that can be used as a stepping-stone for overcoming vulnerability.

The concept of vulnerable children is multifaceted and problematic because its meaning is dependent on context (Eloff, Ebersöhn, & Viljoen, 2007; Obrien, Eriksen, Nygaard, & Schjolden, 2007; Walker & Smithgall, 2009; UNICEF, 2004b). Based on this standpoint, the present study defines vulnerable children as those under the age of 18 whose life is in jeopardy due to conditions such as abject poverty, orphanhood, child abuse, child labour, hostile family conditions, and child abandonment, among others (Evans, 2002; Whitehouse, 2002). Although children with disabilities are also considered vulnerable in Tanzania, for the purpose of narrowing this study, they are not part of it.

Demographically, Tanzania, officially known as the United Republic of Tanzania, is the largest country in Eastern Africa (its size is 945,087 square kilometers). The country is made up of the mainland Tanzania, originally known as Tanganyika, and the islands of Zanzibar comprising two main islands (Unguja and Pemba) together with other small islands forming the archipelago of Zanzibar. According to the 2012 census, the United Republic of Tanzania has a population of more than 44.9 million people (National

Bureau of Statistics, 2012). Politically, Tanzania is one of the most stable countries in Africa. It is also well-known worldwide for its natural resources, that include wildlife, fertile lands, and attractive landscapes and minerals—all major sources of income that should boost the economy. Surprisingly, despite these resources, Tanzania still faces abject poverty as more than 33% of the people are living at or below the national poverty line (World Bank, 2012a). This situation suggests that abject poverty could be one of the main factors that lead to childhood vulnerability in Tanzania. Therefore, both the root causes and far-reaching effects of child vulnerability in the country must be traced, controlled, and eventually eradicated in order to improve life quality for all Tanzanians, especially the most vulnerable and marginalized communities. The roots of poverty and vulnerability can be eradicated in many ways. According to the United Republic of Tanzania Ministry of Education and Culture (URTMEC), one of the best strategies in eradicating the roots of poverty and vulnerability is contextualized education that focusses on preparing learners to realize their potentials and to become productive members in their society (URTMEC, 2003a). This strategy is stipulated in the Tanzanian 2025 Development Vision which as stated by the URTMEC (2003a) has improved “education for all” and is expected to be the means for eliminating illiteracy and to improving livelihood for all Tanzanians. According to the 2025 Tanzanian Development Vision, education is viewed as a significant “strategic agent for mindset transformation and [the creation of] a well-educated nation sufficiently equipped with knowledge and skills needed to completely and competitively solve the development challenges that face the nation” (URTMEC, 2003a, p. 4). This vision articulates the critical importance of education in relation to the eradication of poverty and its effects, including the growing

phenomenon of vulnerable children. It emphasizes the urgent need for both “quantitative and qualitative transformation of education as a means of promoting and enhancing productivity and reducing people’s vulnerability to poverty” (URTMEC, 2003a, p. 4).

Many things are required to ensure a continuation of efforts to achieve this vision.

Among them is the need to examine what is being done to develop skillful citizens for Tanzania in terms of the education offered by schools facing an increasing number of students who may be classified as vulnerable children.

Statement of the Problem

Tanzania has witnessed an alarming increase in the number of children identified as vulnerable (Mkombozi Centre for Street Children, 2006; World Education, 2006).

According to local studies and reports, government and non-governmental organizations alike have taken strategic initiatives to address matters concerning the well-being and educational issues of vulnerable children (Linsk et al., 2010; Mamdani, Rajani, Leach, Tumbo-Masabo, & Omondi, 2009; UNICEF, 2005b). Steps that were taken include construction of new community schools, training additional teachers, the abolition of school fees in 2002, and the establishment of programs such as Most Vulnerable Child (MVC) in 1995 and Complementary Basic Education in Tanzania (COBET) in 1999, that sought to improve the livelihood of vulnerable children and to ensure their opportunity for schooling (Chikuwa et al., 2007; URTMEC, 2003).

Unfortunately, as demonstrated by several studies, the issue of vulnerable children in Tanzania remains a major challenge as the number of such children is progressively escalating (Galabawa, 2001; Mamdani et al., 2009; Sifuna, 2007; Sumra & Rajani, 2006). According to URTMEC (2003), the government of Tanzania acknowledges the criticality

of the problem of vulnerable children and the challenge of addressing it. In other words, the government realizes that vulnerable children are missing the chance to acquire the kind of education through which they would gain the necessary skills for realizing their potentials in order to transform the conditions of their lives and those of their immediate communities. Surprisingly, despite the evidence of the criticality of the problem of vulnerable children's education, research on this issue is severely lacking (Lombe & Ochumbo, 2008). As a Tanzanian who has witnessed the effects of poverty and its harms as an educator and now a researcher, I was surprised at the great disparity between schools and the extreme level of poverty in the schools in Singida. Prior to visiting the schools in Singida, I had never seen or experienced anything like this as either a student, a teacher, or a school principal in Tanzania. I wondered how the situation developed and how the experiences and the challenges that the students faced were different from what I had previously seen. Compounding the issue is the paucity of research coming out of the Singida region. According to the Tanzanian Bureau of statistics and the 2012 census, Singida region has a population of more than 1.3 million people living in a semi-arid land of 49, 342 square km. Due to its geographic position, Singida is the poorest of the 21 regions in mainland Tanzania. The study addresses the knowledge gap between how schools in Singida were experienced by vulnerable children and the literature. In summary, this study will serve as starting point to identify intervention strategies for constructively and effectively resolving the problem of vulnerable children's education. Given its level of poverty, and its increasing number of vulnerable children Singida is prime evidence of a crisis of the region which must be addressed with urgency. This research contributes to the field of education by raising awareness about the experiences

of vulnerable children, what they have to say, and how educators view the problem. This study is significant to educators, policy makers and to the government leaders who must take action to support vulnerable children and to initiate change to improve the educational system for vulnerable children in Singida.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study was threefold. First, it sought to examine school experiences of vulnerable children in the Tanzanian school system from the perspective of educators and vulnerable children, alike. Second, the study explored the challenges educators face in meeting the academic and social needs of vulnerable children. Third, the study endeavored to investigate strategies teachers implement to support and scaffold vulnerable children's learning. In addition, the study sought to explore and establish possible interventional approaches that can be adopted in the future to build school capacities in providing quality education to vulnerable children.

In line with the purpose of this study, the following questions were utilized in the research field as a guideline.

1. What are the school experiences and challenges of vulnerable children in the United Republic of Tanzania public school system in Singida?
2. What are the main challenges facing teachers and school leaders in educating vulnerable children? In other words, what kinds of gaps exist in the ability and capacity of public schools to provide a quality education for vulnerable children?
3. What strategies do educators implement to support and scaffold the learning processes for vulnerable children?

4. What kinds of interventions are needed for vulnerable children and schools to build capacity in this area?

Rationale

As the number of vulnerable children in Tanzania continues to escalate, the country's inability to cater to their social basic needs, including that of education, also increases (UNICEF, 2009). Such increase can have severe negative impacts on the economic and social status of the whole nation; for this reason, it was important to examine how schools are already experiencing this problem and how they are dealing with it. As in other developing countries, Tanzanians believe that education is the best means of providing children with skills necessary for securing their livelihood (Mamdani et al., 2009). Education is also believed to be the means of overcoming abject poverty, ignorance, and disease—the major factors that lead to child vulnerability. The government of Tanzania has made strategic efforts to combat child vulnerability. Among the strategies is that of ensuring access to schooling for all Tanzanian children. To ensure access to schooling, more school facilities have been constructed, more teachers have been trained and more funds have been set aside to support schools. According to Mamdani et al. (2009) and Sifuna (2007), the efforts to ensure access to schooling have been successful in that school enrollment and literacy rates have increased significantly. Such success, however, has not necessarily contributed to the reduction of poverty, illiteracy and disease that the first leadership of the United Republic of Tanzania promised.

In the Tanzanian philosophy of education, as prescribed in the 1995 educational policy, education is viewed as the key to life. Like many Tanzanians, I maintain the same philosophy with the understanding that schools should be preparing learners for a healthy

life style and to become active contributing members to their immediate social and economic life. Akin to George Counts, in *Dare the School Build a New Social Order* (1978), I believe that schools should take the lead in bringing societal change rather than simply following and reflecting societal norms and values as they currently are. In other words, schools must be active agents of change by addressing social issues that hinder them from achieving the philosophy of education as key to human emancipation.

Michael Fullan in *The New Meaning of Educational Change* (2006) argues that schools are contributing to the reproduction of hierarchical society and the maintenance of status quo in such a manner that the gap between the wealthy and the disadvantaged is rigorously expanding. This can well be said of the schools in Singida that participated in this study. The schools are far from being emancipatory as they focus on a unilateral approach that does not give learners the opportunity to be creative or to become critical thinkers so that the knowledge they acquire transforms their lives and empowers them to become productive members in their society. To overcome this setback, educators must begin to be more concerned with social issues and embrace the reality of the life of their learners. In addition they must initiate societal change, educators must strive for a teaching pedagogy which is learner centered and that engages learners so much so that they become critical thinkers who can participate actively in their learning. In this way, the education they acquire becomes instrumental in bringing change in their own lives. In line with this philosophy, I envision educational institutions providing learners with the opportunity to be creative and critical thinkers who through learning can acquire knowledge which they will utilize in their lives. In other words, by viewing education as the key to life, I envision the kind of schooling that encourages learners to discover their

potentials. This kind of education is an absolute necessity if we hope to escape the cycle of vulnerability. Taking education as the key of life also suggests that learning should be a two way approach rather than unilateral. Both the educator and the learner should play an active part. In this way, learners can acquire knowledge that can transform their lives and empower them to become socially and economically productive.

It is unfortunate that, despite the high regard for education in Tanzania, so far the education offered does not seem to support the ideals it proposes for children to realize their potentials. Instead, there is clear evidence that the number of vulnerable children has continued to escalate. Evidence is clearly seen in many city streets and towns in Tanzania where many children are found in desperate conditions struggling for their survival. This situation suggests that access to education is only a starting point that is far from the achievement of what education ought to bring to the lives of its beneficiaries. In other words, access does not necessarily guarantee the kind of educational achievement that learners require in order to improve their livelihood and to contribute efficiently and effectively to their immediate communities. This is to say that vulnerable children are yet to benefit fully from the Tanzanian educational strategic initiatives that aimed at eradicating factors that render them vulnerable. Various studies have challenged the issue of educational access. For example, Mamdani et al. (2009) suggest that learning is limited even though many children are attending school, and conclude that, “the promise of education is proving to be elusive” (p. 9). Likewise, Sifuna (2007) noted similar shortcomings in Tanzania’s educational initiatives; in his view, the overemphasis on access to education jeopardized the latter’s quality. Sifuna further indicated that the scarcity of quality education mostly affects children in rural and vulnerable communities.

Highlighting the same argument, Mamdani et al. (2009) point out that, due to social and economic factors such as poor accessibility and a shortage of teachers and learning resources, vulnerable and marginalized communities are not getting quality education. This shortage explains the reasons for which vulnerable children lag behind in academic outcomes and lead in school dropout rates, as noted by Mdimi (2011). Similarly, according to the analysis of the Mkombozi Centre for Street Children (2006), the problem of vulnerable children failing to benefit from education stems from the government's inability to meet such children's academic needs. This claim indicates that the problem of educating vulnerable children in Tanzania is complex and requires several initiatives that can shed some light on its root causes and help determine how it can be resolved and who should be involved in the process.

This study was necessary for determining what is missing, what could be done, and how social, psychological, and academic needs of vulnerable children in the Tanzanian schools can be met as a means of ensuring that such children acquire an education through which they can liberate themselves from the cycle of vulnerability. Based on this rationale, it was necessary that a more collaborative approach be utilized. Both Walker (2001) and Kembe (2002) argue that collaborative forms of research, such as those used in the present study, encourage participants to be more creative, and to undergo changes in attitude that may in turn improve the teaching and learning process (as cited in Greenbank, 2007). Consequently, my rationale is that this ethnographic study will influence not only the practices of educators when it comes to vulnerable children but also other stakeholders and students themselves.

The results of this study are expected to inform policy, to raise awareness of the experiences of vulnerable children in schools and the challenges schools face in educating them, and to highlight the kind of strategies currently employed in support of vulnerable children. Furthermore, this study has a broader impact on the Tanzanian educational system in that it may alert policy makers about the plight of vulnerable children. Ideally, the study should shed light on policy making as a strategy of alleviating vulnerability and promoting equity in education for the good of both the vulnerable and the entire Tanzania population. The next section presents a brief history of the Education system in Tanzania to help set the context for the reader who is unfamiliar with education in that region of the world where this study was conducted.

Brief History of Education in Tanzania

Knowledge of the history of education in Tanzania is a necessary component in understanding the current status of education and its influence on the learning process for vulnerable children. Education is defined by the United Republic of Tanzania Ministry of Education and Culture (URTMEC) as a “process by which the individual acquires knowledge and skills necessary for appreciating and adapting to the environment and the ever-changing social, political and economic conditions of society and as a means by which one can realize one’s full potentials” (URTMEC, 1995, p. viii). Providing a brief history of Tanzanian educational policy and that policy’s contribution to how vulnerable children (the focus of this study) experience school is important. That brief history extends from pre-colonial times to present day Tanzanian educational policy.

Pre-Colonial Education in Tanzania

Like most African countries, before the coming of the Europeans, Tanzanians had their own “traditional education that emphasized principles of good citizenship, acquisition of life skills and the perpetuation of valued customs and traditions” (URTMEC, 1995, p. i). During this time, education was viewed as a life-long process of preparing young people who were transitioning from childhood to adolescence to adulthood. It involved both formal and informal learning processes. In the formal learning, groups of young adults were brought together to learn about their social and cultural values, identity, morals, and responsibilities, as well as norms that were attached to their spheres of life (Marah, 2006). Informal learning involved acquiring skills by observation of the elders or those with experience in the use of skills needed to be productive in the society. This type of education was treated as indispensable and a right of every member of the community and it was meant for the maintenance and development of the society (Semali & Stambach, 1997).

Given the nature of the pre-colonial education, it is evident that learners had the opportunity to acquire a holistic education (Semali & Stambach, 1997). Learning was achieved through experience and practice. It provided all learners equal opportunity to achieve relevant education to develop and nurture necessary skills as a means to be productive and to contribute efficiently and effectively to the well-being of their immediate society (Adetutu, 2010). Tanzanian people held steadfast to their traditional education until the arrival of the European missionaries whose presence and hidden agendas revolutionized the form of education that had existed until then.

Colonial Education in Tanzania

Various groups of Christian European missionaries introduced formal education in Tanzania in the 19th century. The first school was established in Kilimanjaro region where the German missionaries had found a favourable climate and fertile land for settlement among the Chagga people (Semali & Stambach, 1997). The aims of the missionary education were what the colonizers saw as the “civilization” and Christianization of the people (Douglas, 2007). The missionaries used education as a channel to pass down their European values and spiritual beliefs and also to obtain local people who would provide them with social services and assistance needed for the purpose of evangelization. Missionary education was culturally genocidal because it forced people to give up their traditional religion to accept Christianity (Marah, 2006; Samarrai & Peasgood, 1998).

Public schools were first introduced to the United Republic of Tanzania (the country was at that time known as Tanganyika) in the year 1892. According to Douglas (2007), the purpose of colonial public schooling was to obtain “mid-level personnel to enhance the communication and technical infrastructure that would secure economic development” (p. 6). Like missionary schools, which were discriminatory based on religion, the colonial schools, both under the German and the British governments in Tanzania, were also discriminatory in nature. Colonial public schools were founded on race, gender and social status. According to Julius K. Nyerere the first president of the independent Tanzania, colonial education did not aim for human emancipation, as education ought to do; instead, it focused “on transmitting the values of the colonial power and to train individuals for the service of the colonial state” (as cited in Kassin,

2000, p. 3). Both the German and British educational policies in Tanzania emphasized the need for local Tanzanian people to obtain basic skills required for clerical work in the service of the colonial masters. As a result, manual labor such as farming and other technical knowledge was neglected and came to be regarded as less significant.

Post-Colonial Education in Tanzania

In 1961, when Tanzania became independent from Britain, education was made the number one priority by the government leaders (Wedgwood, 2005). As a result, the new *Educational Act* was passed in 1962. Under the new policy, secondary education became a means of preparing personnel to take over job vacancies left behind by the British (Samarrai & Peasgood, 1998). The new educational policy of 1962 repealed and replaced the British educational policy of 1927 and provided basic education that the leaders viewed as a necessity for African socialism; it included the following provisions:

1. Racial discrimination in the provision of education was abolished;
2. Curriculum, examinations as well as administration and financing of education was streamlined in order to provide uniformity;
3. Kiswahili was promoted as a national language and was made the medium of instruction along with English;
4. Local communities were given more authority and responsibility for the construction of primary schools and provision of primary education; and
5. Unified teaching services were established for all teachers. (URTMEC, 1995, pp. i–ii)

Despite the good intentions revealed in the aforementioned five stepping-stones for the new educational policy, it was not long before the national leaders realized that

the policy was not meeting their expectations. According to Kassam (2000), Julius Nyerere, the first president, realized that the new educational model did not differ much from that of the colonialists; he saw it as being discriminatory because it favoured the elites. In Nyerere's view, the new education was limited because it "catered to the needs and interests of a very small proportion of those who manage to enter the hierarchical pyramid of formal schooling" (Kassam, 2000, p. 4). For this reason, the educational system in the newly independent Tanzania was failing to prepare learners to take responsibility in their society and instead was building a wrong concept of education (Kassam, 2000). Contrary to Nyerere's view of education, the new system as a means of developing learners' contempt for the manual labour needed to build the new nation created the notion that education was equivalent to formal schooling or passing exams (Kassam, 2000). Hence, given the limitations found in the first 7 years of independence, a new educational policy was necessary for the Tanzanian people.

In 1967, another educational policy for the independent Tanzania that emphasized self-reliance was passed. Under this new educational policy, Universal Primary Education (UPE) which according to Galabawa (2001) "was built on the philosophy of Ujamaa (African Socialism) and the Education for Self-reliance (ESR) reforms" (p. 10) was the government's priority. Since then, primary education has been compulsory for children ages 7 to 15 years. Because of this new educational policy, the "illiteracy level dropped from 69% in the 1960s to 9.6% in the mid-1980s" (Sabates, Westbrook, & Hernandez-Fernandez, 2012, p. 57).

Education under the self-reliance policy prioritized the acquisition of skills needed to cope with life in the village (Barratt, 2008). For example, Grade 7 students had

to take a national examination, which though not directly specified, functioned as a terminating strategy instead of a transition into higher grades. In fact, fewer than 2% of all children who graduated from Grade 7 had the opportunity to transition to secondary school (Sabates et al., 2012). According to Galabawa (2001), the 1967 educational policy “addressed some relevant novel ideas of relevance of education, egalitarianism, practicality and elimination of elitism” (p. 10).

Unfortunately, as noted by Galabawa, though UPE was viewed as the government’s priority in the 1967 policy, it has never been successful due to “limited resources and lack of appropriate and strategic investment to allow for a feasible joint pursuit of access and quality in a holistic manner” (p. 11). Other shortcomings that led to the failure of UPE were severe lack of funds to support schools and the massive increase of enrollment (UNICEF, 2009). According to UNICEF, the government needed to have “considerable planning, ingenuity and imagination” (p. 1) in order to achieve such an important educational policy. The Tanzanian government’s failure to implement the policy may have contributed to the many educational and developmental challenges that many Tanzanian people particularly the marginalized currently continue to experience.

Positionality

As Eagan (2010) aptly observes, “Thinking critically about practice of today or yesterday makes possible the improvement of tomorrow’s practice” (p. 429). Exploring the issue of vulnerable children in Tanzanian schools has a personal dimension for me. As a natural born Tanzanian, I have first-hand experience of what it means to live in poor, vulnerable, and marginalized conditions. My passion for vulnerable children, personal knowledge, and experience have grounded me in this research and granted me a

deep understanding of the culture, social norms, and environs in which this study took place. I am a dedicated educator and a longtime advocate for marginalized and vulnerable children. My experience working with poverty-stricken and vulnerable children in various parts of Tanzania and Kenya left me wondering what more I could do as an educator, school leader, and now researcher aiming to contribute to the elimination of the obstacles that hinder vulnerable children from acquiring the kind of education that will enable them to cope with life in their environment. This background experience motivated me to pursue this research.

Through personal experience, I have seen the importance of education in preparing students to become contributing members of society. Unfortunately, from my experience, too few vulnerable children in Tanzania receive the education necessary to liberate them from the cycle of poverty and vulnerability. This cycle of poverty and vulnerability calls for immediate intervention because, as noted by Mbilinyi (2007), the majority of Tanzanian children (about 85%, many of whom are from regions such as Singida, Shinyanga, and Mtwara) are failing to pass qualifying primary school examinations, which prevents them from progressing or transitioning to high school. Therefore, this study was an opportunity to reflect together with educators and vulnerable children about their experiences with the intent of compiling knowledge that can bring a better understanding of what goes on in the Tanzanian school system in relation to the education of vulnerable children.

As mentioned above, in taking up this study, I strongly believed that my “insider” status as a native Tanzanian with much experience in the educational system as both a student and a teacher contributed to the enrichment of this study. On the other hand,

having left Tanzania to study abroad and to then return as a “researcher” gave me the status of an outsider, which was both advantageous and disadvantageous to the implementation of this study. Pipher (2006), for example, has creatively outlined this situation with regard to researchers in dual positions. On one hand, she notes that researchers who approach their study as insiders may “suffer from habituation and write with blatant perspective” (p. 135). Pipher suggests that insider researchers with personal knowledge about the issue under study risk losing themselves because of being blindfolded by groupthink. On the other hand, researchers who are insiders are able to write with authority, because the findings may confirm what they have lived and experienced. It is also true that the follow-up steps that should be taken after the research is completed might be easier to implement in collaboration with the participants since the researcher is one of them. According to Pipher, those writing as outsiders face the danger of missing “the nuances and the underlying issues which are critical to research” (p. 136). However, Pipher maintains that being an outsider is beneficial because it allows the researcher to apply a new and critical lens in viewing the issue studied with less bias. I believe that my outsider status, which I gained during my undergraduate studies in Kenya, and graduate studies in the United States and Canada, has sharpened my gaze on how I viewed and wrote about school experiences of vulnerable children in the Tanzanian schools.

In other words, my international experiences have helped me to overcome the tendency of remaining neutral to the way things are in Tanzanian schools. Instead, I have learned to take more responsibility and to fulfill my role as an educator by making my voice heard and asking critical questions, which may have an impact in my society and in

the world. Based on this understanding, my outsider position was advantageous because it gave me the impetus and courage to see the issue of vulnerable children as a phenomenon that needed to be examined through a critical lens (McLaren, 2009). By using my outsider eye to examine the issue of vulnerable children—an examination that led to the results I have included in this dissertation—my chances for contributing to the enhancement of my country's educational system through offering new perspectives was improved.

Significance of the Study

According to Duncan, Ziol-Guest, and Kalil (2010), positive childhood experiences and opportunities, such as receiving good education, pave the way for a productive and socio-economically vibrant future life. The reverse is also true. On this ground, I conducted this study in the hope of highlighting school experiences of vulnerable children, the challenges that both they and their educators face, and strategies implemented to overcome such challenges. Broadly speaking, the significance of conducting this kind of study was to create the potential for identifying intervention strategies, which schools and children alike need in order to achieve the purpose of their education. Another significant part of this study was its ability to produce new knowledge that can inspire educators and policy makers to acknowledge and act upon the dire experiences of vulnerable children and the challenges schools face in supporting the learning process of these children. Consequently, this study may have a broader impact on Tanzanian schools by alerting policy makers about the need to regulate educational policies and practices in order to meet the needs of vulnerable children and their educators. In addition, it was my hope that this research would contribute to the efforts

made in developing relevant indicators for measuring school progress in achieving educational equity, which is a major challenge in Tanzania.

Moreover, the significance of this study is underscored by the fact that I actively involved children identified as vulnerable with the intent of providing them with the opportunity to make their voices heard. Such chances are rare, and for this reason, their active participation contributed to this study in a very exceptional manner. I believe that their voices added power to the research findings. Their voices also created the potential for educators and policy makers to contextualize the issue of vulnerable children, view it with the eyes of those who experience what it means to be a vulnerable child, and implement what is required to educate the children.

Furthermore, this study is particularly significant because its findings can potentially inspire government leaders, policy makers, and educators to initiate guidelines and protection measures for vulnerable children, specifically in the school system. More importantly, the study may inspire educational practitioners and policy makers to reconsider new strategies that will ensure vulnerable children have access to quality schools which, in turn, will help them to adapt well to their environment. Finally, because my review of literature revealed a dearth of studies that have examined the relationship between vulnerability and student learning in Tanzania, this study fills a critical gap in this particular field of study

Theoretical Framework

A theoretical framework is a fundamental component of qualitative research (Jaye, 2002). Maxwell (2005) defines the theoretical framework of a study as “the systems of concepts, assumptions, expectations, beliefs and theories that support and

inform research” (p. 33). This research weaved together three theories to form a framework: critical theory, critical pedagogy, and transformational leadership theory. The three theories overlap in that they all deal with issues of power and social justice in education. In addition, the interconnection among these theories is evident in that they tend to highlight the issue of critical thinking among learners and educators as a means of creating personal awareness and recognition of individuals’ potential as a necessary tool for human emancipation. Their relationship is apparent in that they serve as a critical lens to investigate a social phenomenon, in this case the issue of vulnerable children.

In other words, the three theories are interconnected in such a way that they form powerful means of analyzing and understanding how schools operate in the effort to support learners rather to maintain status quo. Thus, they form a useful theoretical framework for analyzing a social problem in the field of education as a means to facilitate human emancipation from created and taken for granted constraints within the school system. Such constraints may include but are not limited to (a) hegemony, (b) official and hidden curriculum, and (c) social reproduction. For the sake of clarity, I describe briefly what these constraints are and how they apply in the school situation.

Hegemony

According to McLaren (2009) the concept of hegemony refers to a variety of mechanisms, including educators’ approach to teaching in a way that maintains their own and the dominant culture’s ideologies by denying opportunities for students to question or to challenge the prevailing values and attitudes. Hegemony also refers to power struggles in which the powerful may win the consent of subordinates—for example, teachers’

control of the classroom, a control that trains learners to accept power relations and educational practices the way they are without questioning or challenging them.

Official and the Hidden Curriculum

According to McLaren (2009), school curriculum exceeds classroom texts and syllabus. It involves introducing students to life and knowledge hierarchies. This happens when for example “certain forms of knowledge are preferred over others thereby affirming the dreams, desires and values of certain groups of students over other groups” (McLaren, 2009, p. 75). I have seen this phenomenon clearly through my personal experience. In high school, students who enrolled in science courses received special attention and recognition compared to those who took art subjects. This situation is very evident in the procedures and criteria used by the government of the United Republic of Tanzania when granting bursaries to university students. Science students are normally privileged compared to students in the arts or social sciences as they automatically qualify for full bursary while art students have no such guarantee. Although the intention of this approach is to promote and to encourage more students to pursue science and technology as the means to advance the economy, the result is the subjugation of other subjects and marginalization of many students. This experience is a good example of what I observe as a taken-for-granted constraint that shapes how students are prepared to feel about themselves, others, and their position in society as either dominant or subordinate.

The above example signifies what McLaren (2009) refers to as the “hidden curriculum that shapes students through standardized learning situations and other agendas including rules of conduct, classroom organization, and other informal

pedagogical procedures used by teachers with specific groups of students” (p. 75). In a study that sought to examine the impact of the hidden curriculum on social functioning of children and youth with Asperger syndrome, Myles and Simpson (2001) concluded that the hidden curriculum was one of the main causes of challenge and grief to this group of learners. According to Myles and Simpson, the hidden curriculum includes “skills that we are not taught directly but we are expected to know, that is the taken for granted unspoken rules, dos and don’ts rules within the school” (p. 279). Other examples of the hidden curriculum include teacher expectations of the students in and outside the classroom. It is also true that schools uphold competition, whereby exams are meant to determine who passes and who fails. By so doing, they contribute significantly to building a society of dominant and subordinate people.

Social Reproduction

According to the description provided by McLaren (2009), the concept of social reproduction refers to the intergenerational reproduction of social class that results from the kind of education received at school and how the students are socialized. We can understand how social reproduction applies in the schools if we critically examine their design and day-to-day operation. For example, in the United Republic of Tanzania, there are different classifications of schools from government schools, community schools, church-owned schools, to private schools. Although all schools in Tanzania follow the same curriculum and are nondiscriminatory, meaning that they are open to everybody, the admission requirements including academic and financial criteria differ significantly. The schools are also differentiated by the quality of their structures and resources. The conclusion here is that children from the financially challenged and marginalized

communities are typically the ones who fall victims of the poorly resourced schools. There is no question that poorly resourced schools typically serve financially challenged families and the marginalized communities. Because of a lack of resources, neither teachers nor students are motivated to be in school, either to teach or to learn (Mbilinyi, 2003). Private schools run by church groups greatly outperform under-resourced community schools. What I have just explained is one example of how Tanzanian schools contribute to social reproduction. Other examples can be found in the classroom pedagogy. For example, teachers can have higher academic expectations for boys than for girls, especially in the science subjects. In my view, such expectations, though unintentional, contribute to the maintenance of male domination over females, that lead to a kind of social reproduction.

Critical Theory

According to Giroux (2009), critical theory originates from the school of thought founded in the late 1920s in Frankfurt, Germany, and it refers to “a process of critique” (p. 27). The Frankfurt School had sought to articulate a theory centered on social transformation and human emancipation from positivist domination of thought (Giroux, 2009). The positivists maintained philosophical thoughts characterized by objectivism and empiricism (Giroux, 2009; Stewart, 2011; Ziai, 2010). In other words, they believe that value is neutral in knowledge focused on empirical matters. Positivist thinking suggests that only empirical testing produces knowledge. Critical theory on the other hand, interrogates power. It is a critique of ideology, where knowledge is seen as neither value free nor neutral. According McLaren and Giarelli (1995), critical theorists of the Frankfurt School were concerned with the extent to which education serves as an

instrument for the emancipation of those who participate in it. Likewise, critical theorists had expressed concern about how education perpetuates the status quo of unequal power relations (McLaren & Giroux, 1990). In order to achieve their vision, the Frankfurt theorists (including Felix Weil, Max Horkheimer, Erich Fromm, Herbert Marcuse, and Theodor Adorno) stressed the importance of critical thinking as a means for self-emancipation and social change (Giroux, 2009). Giroux emphasizes further that critical theorists focused on analyzing social conditions as a means to “distinguish what is and what should be” (2009, p. 28).

From this perspective, it could be argued that critical theory is fundamentally a process of self-conscious critique that involves “interactions among individual, schools and society” (Palmer & Maramba, 2011, p. 438). According to Palmer and Maramba (2011), critical theory may be considered as a source of inspiration in education that challenges educators to become more responsible in their roles as change agents. In addition, Palmer and Maramba view critical theory as a process that “aims at empowering people to deal with real problems by addressing issues in their own lives such as vulnerability that may preclude social growth” (p. 438). Viewed in this way, using critical theory as a framework for this research was useful because, as suggested by Kincheloe (2008), it encourages critical thinking that can lead to self-consciousness and reflection about the self and how individuals and groups can contribute to promoting new strategies that can make a difference in the lives of vulnerable children. Education, then, should prepare learners to be critical-minded as a means to see their world differently from the way they viewed it before. By so doing, they may be able to transform their own lives and at the same time make a positive contribution to the improvement of their society.

From this understanding, it is evident that critical theory applies in a very special way to my study and to the field of education today in general. McLaren (2009) captures my experience when he argues that, “Critical theory enables educational researchers to see the school not simply as an arena of indoctrination or socialization or a site for instruction but also as a cultural terrain that promotes student empowerment and self-transformation” (p. 62). Thus, employing critical thought in this study helped me to discern and tease out the everyday occurrences in schools that influence school experiences of vulnerable children.

I am aware that critical theory originated from the European educational experiences that more recently have been popularized in North America. Adopting critical theory as a framework for my study requires a careful approach that takes into account the different criteria for examining what goes on in the Tanzanian schools in comparison to where the theories originated or where they are more vocalized. My intent was to utilize critical theory as a means of asking questions that challenge the oppressive nature of education in order to advocate for a more emancipatory system. Although it remains unclear “as to what an emancipatory education might consist of in practice” (Galloway, 2012, p. 165), in this research, I am referring to an emancipatory education as one in which educators are driven by an act of love to work with their students as their co-subjects who are capable of thinking critically in order to create knowledge together. In other words, I am referring to an education that does not involve “an act of depositing, in which the students are depositories and the teacher is the depositor” (Freire, 2009, p. 52). In this case, knowledge will no longer be seen as a “gift bestowed by those who consider

themselves knowledgeable upon those they consider to know nothing” (Freire, 2009, p. 52).

What this means is that there will be a balanced relation between teachers and students, thus producing dialogue in learning that can lead to critical thinking and action (Galloway, 2012). For this reason, I used critical theory as a means of encouraging participants to ponder about their thinking more reflectively and to think critically about the means and the extent to which the form of education provided prepares all students to become successful participants in their respective communities and the society at large. Like Palmer and Maramba (2011), I regard the issue of school experiences of vulnerable children in Tanzania as a systemic issue. For this reason, my focus was to examine how schools function in counteracting systemic problems that affect vulnerable children with the aim of meeting the learning needs of these children.

Using critical theory as a framework in a study implies the ability to think critically and thoroughly about the issue under scrutiny. Aslan-Tutak, Bondy, and Adams (2011) argue that using critical theory means questioning what is being taken for granted. In other words it suggests a commitment to social justice. In this type of commitment, researchers are more interested in questioning the status quo and pondering new possibilities for change. In the statement of my personal ground in this research, I indicated that I am an educator with a long record of working with marginalized groups and vulnerable children. I also noted that the drive of this research originates from my personal experiences in Tanzania. From these standpoints, it is evident that there is an urgent need to take a reflexive stance in order to consider ways Tanzanian public schools can ensure children the opportunity to achieve an emancipatory education. In this case,

emancipatory education is the kind of education that is capable of inspiring learners to develop mentally as they become critical thinkers capable of realizing their potentials and making a visible difference in their lives and in their immediate society. Fletcher (2000) notes that, “Critical theory offers a generalizable descriptive and normative framework based on universal qualities of human experience for understanding social relations and institutions” (p. 56). This being the case and also based on the assumption that critical theory is associated with self-conscious and social critique that is aimed at emancipation and social change through enlightenment, it is obvious that critical theory corresponds directly with my research.

Fletcher (2000) also argues that the origins of our most unpleasant educational outcomes are grounded in poverty and other social components. If this is true, as I think it is, then investigating the issue of vulnerable children through a lens of critical theory is the best way to improve my understanding of the problem. As an educator committed to ensuring democracy and the well-being of marginalized communities including vulnerable children, the use of critical theory in this study paved the way to discover the nuances of the problem under investigation and to establish new strategic principles for ensuring quality education for all vulnerable children in my country.

Sumra and Rajani (2006) underline the need to emphasize the goals of education offered in the United Republic of Tanzania. They argue that educators must set precise strategies for achieving such goals. However, clear goals alone cannot guarantee the effectiveness of an educational implementation. For instance, Galabawa (2007) suggests that, while the education offered in Tanzania takes into consideration the needs of all children, achieving the predetermined goals of quality education for all is unrealistic.

Critical theory was thus necessary and useful in analyzing whether the strategies employed in the schools actually provide education that supports and prepares vulnerable children to thrive (Sumra & Rajani, 2006).

Strategic actions have been taken towards educational reform in Tanzania. Unfortunately, as Galabawa (2007) contends, the Tanzanian educational system is far from achieving the desired quality education. From this viewpoint, a critical approach was useful in revealing the obstacles that prevent schools from providing the kind of education that vulnerable children require in order to thrive in the world and in the next stage of formal schooling, where applicable (Sumra & Rajani, 2006). Critical theory not only allowed the examination of the experience of vulnerable children, but also the identification of possible intervention strategies that can contribute to improvements in the provision of quality education to all children. Bernstein (1976) argued that, "Critical theory provides the basis for critical evaluation of the forms of life" (as cited in McLaren & Giarelli, 1995, p. 2). Drawing from this understanding, the goal of critical theory could be associated with identifying problems with systems of education as well as the type of knowledge that best facilitate human emancipation. The final goal is therefore to advance human life through utilization of knowledge as a basis for overcoming sociological forms of oppression (McLaren & Giarelli, 1995).

In summary, utilizing the tenets of critical theory in this study provided me with a clear lens through which I could begin to see and more deeply understand vulnerable children's school experiences, educators' challenges, and the types of strategies that support the learning process of these children. There is evidence of mushrooming commercialized private schools in Tanzania that turn schooling into a commodity. This

situation has contributed to quality education becoming a privilege of the few who are able to afford it. Michael Apple (2006) warns against educational reform that exploits children for profit by turning schools into market commodities. Although Apple may not have had particularly the United Republic of Tanzania in mind in his analysis, the current situation of schooling in Tanzania treats education as a commodity quality of which depends on how much the so-called customer can afford. Although the government has taken strategic efforts to ensure access and quality education for all (which is viewed as a means for emancipation), not all students have access to quality education; it is only the small minority of people who are rich and powerful who benefit from the form of education currently being offered in Tanzania (Mbilinyi, 2003). Thus, critical theory was significant in shedding more light on how vulnerable children are missing the benefits of quality education and in determining how schools can resolve such a problem.

Critical Pedagogy

According to Giroux (2010), critical pedagogy is “an educational movement and practice that is guided by passion and principle, to help students develop consciousness of freedom, recognize authoritarian tendencies, and connect knowledge to power and the ability to take constructive action” (p. 15). From the very beginning of its foundation by Freire and its promotion by several North American theorists including Henry Giroux and Peter McLaren, critical pedagogy has focused on dialogue and practice (Kaufmann, 2010). According to Freire (1968/2004), action and dialogue are paramount to critical pedagogy because they both have the power of transforming the world of learners so that they can utilize knowledge acquired as a means of improving their own lives and contribute to the development of their society.

Critical pedagogy is not, in any way, a teaching technique, methodology, model, framework, or recipe for educational practice (McLaren, 2008). Instead, as stipulated by McLaren (2008), it is an educational philosophy that is “concerned with the problem of reasserting human action, what we call praxis” (p. 476). In educational research praxis is used to express the need for reflecting on the findings/knowledge about the world being studied for the purpose of transforming it. Based on this view, knowledge should be a source of enlightenment and it should be capable of shaping the actions of learners for self-emancipation and for their active involvement in the society (McLaren, 2009). In addition, McLaren views critical pedagogy as an educational philosophy based on principles associated with the “enactment of emancipatory classroom culture principles that are intimately linked to the paradigm or way of thinking about human being . . . and the world” (2009, p. 328).

Based on the above assumptions, I asked further questions about what critical pedagogy really is and what makes it critical in such a way that it would promote the way of thinking about human being and education so that the latter becomes the means for the emancipation of the learners and societal transformation. Critical pedagogues are well aware of this challenge. This perhaps explains the argument that “critical pedagogy must be pedagogy of place and that it must address the specificities of the experiences, problems, language and histories that communities rely upon to construct a narrative of collective identity and possible transformation” (McLaren & Giroux, 1990, p. 163).

According to McLaren (2009) critical pedagogy interrogates positions of power. It questions the construction of knowledge and how knowledge functions in the society. It can therefore be argued that critical pedagogy is a theory that if well understood can be

enlightening because it cultivates an inquisitive mind as a necessary tool for critical thinking and a catalyst of social transformation. Based on this standpoint, embracing critical pedagogy is appropriate for this study given its purpose of establishing possible means and strategies by which education offered in the Tanzanian schools can become channels for breaking the cycle of poverty and vulnerability. As argued by Kincheloe, McLaren, and Steinberg (2011), using critical pedagogy as part of the theoretical framework for a study like this is crucial. It gave me the opportunity to create a critical awareness that would inspire my research participants to reflect more deeply about their working context, how they function as educators and what is needed in order to transform learning experiences of their vulnerable students.

Recalling critical pedagogy's founder might shed some light on the problem under study here. Critical pedagogy stems from the work of one of the most prominent critical educators of the 20th century: Paulo Freire. Freire was a Brazilian whose work emphasized the potential of education in supporting and leading learners to a democracy (Darder, Baltodano, & Torres, 2009; Giroux, 2010). His work is known to have inspired many North American critical thinkers to begin expressing their own thoughts and definitions about the education of the working class (Darder et al., 2009). In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire (1968/2004) emphasized the importance of unity between action and reflection. In this unity, he envisioned a kind of education that required the implementation of different educational practices for creating first a better learning environment and second and more importantly a better world. For this reason, Freire was opposed to any kind of knowledge that emphasized knowing as transference of knowledge. Instead, he believed that education should involve a collaborative process

between educators and learners who together would produce knowledge grounded in the reality of the lives of students. Through his philosophy of education, which emphasized dialogue, humility, hope, and praxis, Freire was moved to dedicate his time to educating the landless peasants of his country; this aspect of Paul Freire's background, motivation, commitment, work and the nature of audience, has a close link to the present study. By immersing himself among the peasants, Freire learned about his compatriots' struggles and their experiences. He taught them how to read and write, but he learned a great deal through a method of participatory observation and dialogue, both individually and in groups. From this experience, Freire gathered knowledge that enabled him to understand deeply the social, economic, educational, cultural, and political problems that the peasants were facing. I believe it is from this experience that he was able to make a strong recommendation for a sincere dialogue that encompasses critical reflection, true love and hope for improvement (Freire, 1968/2004). This is exactly the direction I wanted to take my doctoral research and I have found it to be natural, realistic, and rewarding.

According to Giroux (2010), the type of dialogue suggested by Freire is one that involves critical thinking and which should lead to action as a means of intervention. As a matter of fact, such a dialogue needs to be treated as the most fundamental aspect of and a moral value in education that aims to provide learners with "knowledge, skills, and social relations that will enable students to explore the possibilities of what it means to be citizens while expanding and deepening their participation in the promise of a substantive democracy" (Giroux, 2010, p. 15). It is most probably from this concept that McLaren (2008) argues that "critical pedagogy operates from an understanding that the basis of

education is political and that spaces need to be created where students can imagine a different world” (p. 477). McLaren’s argument relates to the rationale of my study in which I sought to produce knowledge that can be utilized by educators and policy makers in the process of teaching and learning as a means to lead vulnerable children to imagine a different world and have an experience of it after their education.

Critical pedagogy, as envisioned by Freire, is an approach in education that offers the chance for learners to cultivate and deepen knowledge about their rights and responsibilities to be actively engaged in the development of their society (Giroux, 2010). If my doctoral research is to be truly a tool of intervention for the academic needs of vulnerable children in the Tanzanian school system, then the theory of critical pedagogy was the right framework for examining the process of education in Tanzania. In other words, this framework was instrumental in evaluating how Tanzanian schools provide learners with the opportunity to be actively involved in learning so as to become critical thinkers equipped with necessary skills and knowledge that they need for their well-being and for the good of society. By drawing from critical pedagogy, I wanted to understand in a school context “how social relationships are distorted and manipulated by relations of power and privilege” (McLaren, 2009, p. 64). In this case, critical pedagogy was foundational as I took note of different teaching and learning aspects in the schools including school curriculum, teacher-student relationships in the classrooms and outside the learning environment, all of which have an impact on school experiences of vulnerable children. The most important pedagogical questions asked in the present study are the following: How does the presence of vulnerable children in the school influence learning processes? What do educators do in order to mitigate vulnerability and to ensure

learning for this particular population?

Embracing critical pedagogy paved the way for a better understanding of how educators can counter vulnerability among students in their schools. Based on Kress's (2011) argument that the "critical pedagogue seeks to tap into the human potential while embarking upon a quest for the essence of humanity" (p. 262), I saw critical pedagogy as being very useful in addressing the complexities of children's vulnerability and in highlighting how educators view their roles as agents of transformation in the lives of these children. McLaren and Giroux (2003) note that, "central to the conception of critical pedagogy for schooling is the relationship between authority and responsibility of leadership" (p. 163). Drawing from this argument, this theory was essential for understanding the interrelationships among educators and vulnerable children and how educators utilize their positions of power as a means of creating conditions by which vulnerable children are able to overcome barriers that prevent them from being successful in their learning processes.

In my attempt to understand the school experiences of vulnerable children and intervention strategies for effective teaching and learning, it was important to utilize critical pedagogy to reflect deeply on how educators in their specific environment address the particular experiences and problems faced by their learners especially those of vulnerable children (McLaren, 2009; McLaren & Giroux, 2003). In this sense, critical pedagogy was essential in exploring critical questions such as how schools can work towards creating a better learning environment and approaches that can cater to the specific needs of vulnerable children. In addition, this approach was helpful in asking difficult questions related to the roles of individual educators in meeting the learning needs of marginalized

and vulnerable children (Kress, 2011). Utilizing critical pedagogy was fundamental because it has the ability to inspire the researcher to make a positive contribution to bring educators and society at large “a step closer toward a utopia that we may never witness but would mark the end of human suffering” (Kress, 2011, p. 261). For this reason, I have come to view critical pedagogy as a means of deconstructing and understanding the ideological and material obstacles experienced by vulnerable children in schools.

In addition, I found critical pedagogy very instrumental in evaluating the practices and strategies that educators implement in their attempt to meet the needs of vulnerable children. This theoretical concept carries a broad range of understanding. The most important aspect of critical pedagogy, and the one which motivated me to select it as a viable tool for this research, is that it carries at its heart “the belief that education and society are intrinsically inter-related and that the fundamental purpose of education is the improvement of social justice for all” (McArthur, 2010, p. 494). I was deeply convinced that if I am to obtain knowledge and a meaningful understanding of the experiences of vulnerable children, the challenges encountered by teachers in educating vulnerable children, and strategies used to overcome setbacks, then critical pedagogy was an indispensable means for this work.

Transformational Leadership Theory

Transformational leadership theory is conceptualized as a leadership philosophy and strategy through which schools’ ability to meet learners’ academic needs can be improved (Hallinger, 2003). Burns developed transformational leadership theory in the late 1970s, and the theory was later popularized in the early 1980s by scholars such as Bass, Avolio, Leithwood and others in North America who were searching for a kind of

leadership style that could facilitate change in schools and lead them into the 21st century (Leithwood & Duke, 1999). Transformational leadership was identified as a tool for school reform and restructuring that required a more centralized and transforming form of leadership (Marks & Printy, 2003). According to Hallinger (2003), transformational leadership is a concept that recognizes the presence and potential of every person in a given system. Thus, transformational leadership, when successfully applied, tends to seek the satisfaction and active participation of everyone involved in the school, though in different capacities. Based on this conceptualization, transformational leadership theory plays a similar role in education as critical theory and critical pedagogy. Evidence of this argument can be found in Burns's (1978) point that, "Transformational leadership occurs when one or more people engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of morality" (p. 20).

As a theory, transformational leadership recognizes the presence of every person and his or her potentials to succeed and contribute to the well-being of the society (Hallinger, 2003). For this reason, like critical theory and critical pedagogy, transformational leadership theory aims to disallow the existence of hegemony in the schools. This means that by acknowledging the presence and the potentials which individuals bring to the school community, some constructs and power structures that dominate, blindfold and influence the school community and the kind of school policies and regulations that determine the daily running of the school are minimized. Embracing transformational leadership, which encourages teamwork in the school community, contributes to raising consciousness of the factors of power and control which both school leaders and their subordinates maintain as the norm of their everyday life either

consciously or unconsciously. In other words, transformational leadership theories discourage tendencies of maintaining social stratification. The theory of transformational leadership overlaps with critical theories in education. According to some scholars, the theory of transformational leadership can be used as an effective lens for highlighting organizational matters as a means to inspire, motivate, and facilitate change and lead members to be more committed in achieving the purpose of their society or organization (Owens, 2004; Stewart, 2006). Like critical pedagogy that assists educators to understand why students from the marginalized or oppressed communities delay in embracing transformation in the classroom, transformational leadership seeks to provide all stakeholders with the opportunity to share some leadership roles while those in leadership act as mediators (Marzano, Walters, & McNulty, 2005).

In order to educate all children in the United Republic of Tanzania, schools must undergo reform and restructuring which according to Marks and Printy (2003) will require a more centralized and transforming form of leadership. In other words, in order to meet the needs of vulnerable children, schools need a more centralized leadership capable of facilitating and maintaining mutual relationships between leaders and followers (Marzano et al., 2005). Bass and Avolio (1994) identified four dimensions of transformational leadership: (a) idealized influence, (b) inspirational motivation, (c) intellectual stimulation, and (d) individual consideration. Marzano et al. (2005) see these four dimensions as the framework needed to succeed in dealing with educational leadership challenges in the 21st century. Reflecting on the work of these scholars, it is my view that Tanzanian schools must on the first place have leaders who are willing and eager to promote transformation of the schools in order to overcome the challenge of

meeting the needs of vulnerable children. In other words, Tanzanian schools require leaders with excellent administrative skills that will enable them to provide personal attention and inspire individual staff members and students, particularly those who seem to be left out so that they can all become agents of change in society. Second, schools need leaders who can challenge and help staff members to think critically and in new ways about the obstacles they face. In other words, schools need leaders who can provide intellectual stimulation to their followers. Third, schools need effective leaders who are capable of manifesting a powerful and dynamic presence, that is, leaders who communicate high expectations of performance of teachers and students alike. Finally, effective educational leaders must be able to influence teachers by being positive role models.

To contextualize and flesh out the dimensions of transformational leadership, Leithwood and Jantzi (2006) developed three key themes that are significant to educational leadership practice. The first key theme is setting directions that leaders should follow to build school vision, establish specific goals and priorities, and hold high expectation for performance. The second key theme is that educational leaders should strive to provide intellectual stimulation and individualized support, and to model best practices and important school values as a means of ensuring the development of those they are leading. The third key theme is redesigning the organization. To do so, leaders must develop collaborative school cultures, create structures to foster participation in schools, and create productive community relationships (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006). The two researchers further identified three fundamental roles related to the concept of transformational school leadership:

1. Helping staff members develop and maintain a collaborative, professional school culture;
2. Fostering teacher development; and
3. Helping teachers solve problems together more effectively.

It is by and through the exercise of these fundamental roles that transformational school leaders come to be regarded as change agents. According to Leithwood and Jantzi (2006), transformational school leaders play significant roles that can enhance conditions of educational practice and learning in school, which in my view has a particular impact upon vulnerable children. In essence, the job of transformational school leaders does not focus on making decisions but rather on ensuring the presence of collaborative decision-making. Transformational leadership focuses on developing the organization's capacity to innovate. Hence, based on my understanding of transformational leadership theory, I contend that educational leaders have the power of control over what goes on in the school and they have the ability to make effective change that can improve the learning experience of vulnerable children.

The theoretical framework that I have just discussed was the appropriate lens for analyzing different perspectives and observations concerning Tanzanian school systems in relation to the issue of vulnerable children. In my view, each segment of this framework played a significant role in my study. For example, critical theory was useful in challenging educators' perceptions about vulnerable children and also in critiquing the issue of power relations "that promote the transformation of existing educational inequalities" (Darder et al., 2009, p. 23). In this case, by weaving together critical theory, critical pedagogy, and transformational leadership theory, I was able to achieve the goal

of inquiry into the issue of school experiences of vulnerable children in Tanzania. By using this theoretical framework in conjunction with a critical ethnography research approach, I was able to gain some understanding about school experiences of vulnerable children. In addition, this framework was instrumental because it enabled me to comprehend how, as noted by Erickson (2011), vulnerable children view themselves in schools and what such experiences mean for them. Adopting this kind of critical framework was for me the appropriate means for examining both mainstream and taken-for-granted policies. Likewise, it enabled me to understand the nature of school practices that impact teaching and learning with the ability to either benefit or hinder vulnerable children from experiencing school and schooling as a process of human emancipation.

Furthermore, I regarded the use of this theoretical framework as a means for conducting a critical and constructive analysis of some of the education issues influencing vulnerable children. For example, my review of literature indicated that the government of Tanzania has implemented several strategies for the purpose of guaranteeing access to quality education for all. Unfortunately, those efforts have not been successful in that they did not provide equitable achievement of the desired ends. Therefore, the discussed theoretical framework was very instrumental in analyzing the extent to which educators are conscious of the experiences of vulnerable children in the schools. In other words, I wanted to better understand how educators experience teaching, how they view vulnerable children's learning and the challenges they encounter in educating such children. Using this framework, I was able to analyze the kind of teaching strategies employed by teachers as a means of encouraging resilience and promoting vulnerable children's learning. In other words, the three theories were an

excellent means for conducting a critical and constructive analysis of the Tanzanian educational system and imperatives for schools in transforming the status of vulnerable children and their society. By using these three overlapping theories, I was able to examine social practices and structures that influence, either positively or negatively, how teaching and learning takes place in the schools and how vulnerable children are impacted. Broadly speaking, the use of this framework was instrumental in getting a wider perspective of knowledge as I scrutinized why things are the way they are in the schools and how they can be improved. As a matter of fact, the interconnections among these theories and their relation to critical ethnography as an approach offered an excellent framework for my data collection and analysis.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I introduced the topic of study and its background problem. I emphasized that this study was necessitated by the visible increase in the number of vulnerable children in Tanzanian schools. I noted that the problem of vulnerable children emanates from persistent abject poverty that must be uprooted by means of education. I also underlined the lack of literature on school experiences of vulnerable children and my personal experience as a classroom teacher in Tanzania as the catalyst that intrigued me enough to take up this research. With supporting background information taken from current literature and from some informative documents such as educational policies and government reports on the current status of education in Tanzania and future plans for improvement, I clearly discussed the statement of problem, purpose, rationale, the history of Tanzanian educational policy, and the significance of this study. Likewise, I described in detail the theoretical framework utilized in this study. I indicated in this chapter that, in

order to obtain deep knowledge about the issue of vulnerable children in Tanzania, it was necessary that I utilize a theoretical framework that weaved together three overlapping theories: critical theory, critical pedagogy, and transformational leadership theory. Each of these theories has been discussed in the chapter indicating how they serve as a powerful means of understanding what goes on in the schools in relation to the issue of vulnerable children. With this background information, the next chapter contains a review, analysis, and synthesis of relevant literature that served as a foundation for further discussion and arguments made in relation to the findings of this study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Studies that explore the issue of vulnerable children in Tanzania have focused extensively on factors that lead to child vulnerability and public responsibility towards the children's welfare, including access to education and basic needs like food and shelter. As I noted in the problem statement in the preceding chapter, the issue of school experiences of vulnerable children, the challenges educators experience in catering to their learning needs, and the kind of strategies they implement in meeting such challenges have not been adequately addressed in previous studies. In this chapter, I provide an analysis and synthesis of relevant literature that informs this study. In analyzing the literature, I focused mainly on works related to education policy, social justice issues in education, and matters associated with the issue of vulnerable children.

This chapter is organized into six sections. The first section, contains an analysis and synthesis of literature related to the concept of vulnerability and the factors that render Tanzanian children vulnerable. The purpose for this first section was to contextualize vulnerability as a means to scrutinize the issue under study. The second section highlights the literature that discusses different strategies concerning how educators can be supportive to vulnerable children. Building on the second section of this chapter, the third section is the analysis of literature on the significance of education as a source of human emancipation and economic development. In the fourth section, the aspects of equality versus equity with a focus on the understanding and practicality of these concepts in Tanzania are broadly discussed based on current literature. The fifth section delves into literature that highlights the significance of educator-student

relationship as a basis of supporting vulnerable children in school. In the sixth section of this chapter, studies that show how educators can strive to strengthen resilience as a means of improving the learning process for vulnerable children are also analyzed and synthesized. The chapter then concludes with a recap of the aforementioned sections.

The Concept of Vulnerability: What Is It?

The current literature is replete with different conceptualizations of vulnerability by a variety of scholars across multiple academic disciplines. Due to its numerous definitions, the term “vulnerability” has become extremely complex, elusive, and a challenging concept to narrowly define (O'Brien et al., 2007). McEntire (2011) notes that the available definitions have considerable variations. Nevertheless, there is evidence that most definitions of vulnerability are influenced by either the disciplines or the contexts in which researchers find themselves. For example, in their situational analysis study conducted in Tanzania, Eloff et al. (2007) found that children living in rural areas are more susceptible to vulnerability than those living in urban areas. Eloff et al. defined vulnerability as a state in which individuals or groups have the likelihood of being adversely affected by an event or change in life.

It is also true that the concept of vulnerability, though highly studied, does not necessarily have a single definition. As a result researchers are encouraged and given the flexibility to conceptualize and contextualize the concept of vulnerability according to the focus and purpose of their particular study (Walker & Smithgall, 2009). It is likely for this reason that Clark (2007) recommended that researchers, policymakers, and agencies make sure they have an appropriate understanding of what vulnerability actually means to people in their specific context. This recommendation is important because as discussed

by Cardon (2003), vulnerability differs depending on the factors from which it originates. For example, in developing countries, vulnerability may be the result of political instability, economic setbacks, social unrest, outdated cultural practices (such as forced marriages, female mutilation, gender preferences), and lack of quality education (Massesa, 2004).

It is against such a background that Skinner et al. (2006) define the concept of vulnerable children based on the criteria used in identifying the neediest children in diverse communities. Similarly, Walker and Smithgall (2009) have described vulnerable children as those living in high-risk conditions where their prospects for continued growth and their mental, physical, and psychological development are seriously threatened. From a Tanzanian perspective, high-risk conditions include a lack of parental or adult care, affection, and guidance, as well as a shortage of nutritious food needed for children's growth, and proper shelter for their safety. Other conditions include living in extreme poverty; being orphaned, abandoned, or homeless; and being exposed to hazardous work conditions, human trafficking, as well as to sexual and physical abuse (Evans, 2002). Circumstances such as these have the likelihood of hindering children's socialization and learning process. In extreme cases, these conditions can critically damage children's self-confidence, social competencies, and motivation (Subbarao & Coury, 2004). Because of these risk conditions, the children's prospects are automatically limited due to the lack of a favourable environment appropriate for physical and mental development.

According to Eloff and al. (2007), some researchers have defined the concept of vulnerability in terms of detrimental social, economic, and environmental factors that are

usually blamed as the root cause of the phenomenon. For example, Cutter (1996) contends that “[v]ulnerability is the likelihood that an individual or group will be exposed to and adversely affected by a hazard” (as cited in McEntire, 2011, p. 295). Likewise, Cardona (2007) defines vulnerability as “an internal risk factor of the subject or system that is exposed to hazards and corresponds to its intrinsic predisposition to be affected or to be susceptible to damage” (p. 137). Similarly, McEntire (2011) views the concept of vulnerability as “being related to both liability and capabilities that influence the impact of disaster” (p. 202).

Critics such as Bellamy (2003) and Richter et al. (2004) have challenged the manner in which researchers conceptualize vulnerability and vulnerable children and suggest that attempts to define vulnerability on the basis of who should and should not be included is misleading (as cited in Eloff et al., 2007). These scholars have noted that in the existing literature regarding vulnerable children, “constructive space, the affirmative space, and the space that allows the inherent and extrinsic resources and capacities within and around vulnerable children to be acknowledged” (Eloff et al., 2007, p. 79) were being neglected. It is also true that more positive ways for describing the concept of vulnerability have been offered. For instance, Eloff et al.’s (2007) longitudinal study conducted in South Africa broadened the conceptualizations of children’s vulnerability by looking at how vulnerable children cope with HIV/AIDS. Eloff et al. chose to take a different approach in which they relied on three concepts that guided them in understanding vulnerable children: “assets, resources, and capacities” (p. 80). Briefly, the term “assets” in this context could include characteristics such as positive identity, which is generally composed of “personal power, sound self-esteem, a sense of purpose, and a

positive view of one's future" (Eloff et al., 2007, p. 83). According to Eloff et al., "children with personal power are able to influence their own surroundings and have control over the things that happen to them, they also possess coping skills and are able to process frustrations and challenges" (p. 83). Children with these kinds of assets and confident outlook about the future are more likely to overcome challenges that could render them vulnerable.

In a study that emphasized the need to rethink vulnerability, Cardona (2007) noted that authors in the social sciences associated vulnerability directly with risks or disadvantaged conditions in which individuals or groups find themselves. Cardona warned against the danger of generalization, noting that "people refer to vulnerable groups when they talk about elderly, women and children" (p. 38) which could be misleading. From this standpoint, Cardona defined the concept of vulnerability, saying that it "represents the physical, economic, or social susceptibility or predisposition of a community to damage in the case a destabilizing phenomenon of natural or anthropogenic" proportions (p. 37). McEntire (2011) concurs with this conceptualization of vulnerability as being the result of different physical, social, economic, and demographic factors.

Other factors that were noted as leading to vulnerability included break up of families, presence of obesity, and loss of skills. Examples of social factors identified as courses of vulnerability include: gender inequality, age, wealth status, levels of education, poor health, poverty and hunger, and lack of access to resources and services. Physical factors that may cause vulnerability include: droughts, hurricanes, earthquakes, floods, water scarcity, and land degradation, to name but a few (McEntire, 2011). For

example, Eriksen, Brown, and Kelly (2005) examined the manner in which smallholder farmers in Kenya and Tanzania struggle with challenges emanating from climatic constraints and how such challenges shape their lives. In their research, Eriksen and colleagues concluded that vulnerability is based on two trends, physical and social. Eriksen et al. admit that vulnerability does not have an agreed-upon definition. Citing the work of Kelly and Adger (2000), Eriksen et al. noted that vulnerability is generally referred “to the potential of an individual or a group which is adversely affected by an event or change” (p. 288). Given the many conceptualizations highlighted in this section, it is evident that vulnerability cannot be pinned down to a single and holistic definition or conceptual idea. The common thread in varying definitions of vulnerability is that a person becomes vulnerable when exposed to situations with risk factors that create negative outcomes for those involved.

How Educators Can Support Vulnerable Students

There is no single or most correct way in which educators can support their vulnerable students effectively since situations vary. For this reason, there must be a starting point, which involves educators’ ability to realize their roles and responsibilities towards their vulnerable students (Reupert & Maybery, 2007). According to Reupert and Maybery, educators have significant roles to play in the academic development of all their students. In order to fulfill these roles, Reupert and Maybery suggested that educators begin by identifying their vulnerable children and then develop strategies for supporting them accordingly and progressively. In addition, various studies have suggested possible strategies, which could be adopted as starting points:

- The establishment of school/educational policies that educators can follow in identifying and providing services to their vulnerable children (Reupert & Maybery, 2007).
- Identifying the ways and the means for addressing academic, social, and material needs of vulnerable children (UNICEF, 2009).
- Ensuring opportunity and access to quality and equitable education (UNICEF, 2005b, 2009).
- “Nurturing caring teacher student relations capable of promoting and strengthening emotional responsiveness, supportive relationship, and social warmth” (Sinha & Thornburg, 2012, p. 23).
- Strengthening resilience in vulnerable children by acknowledging and reinforcing their strengths (Henderson, 2013; Warshof & Rappaport, 2013).
- Creating a protective and friendly learning environment (Malindi & Machenjedge, 2012, Sadowski, 2013).

In addition, scholars who have conducted related studies in the school context have also identified strategies of addressing the needs of vulnerable children. For example, Robson and Kanyanta (2007) conducted an empirical study to examine the perception of staff and students on the impact of HIV/AIDS on the children affected by this pandemic. Through the method of focus group discussions which involved teachers, senior management and administration teams, as well as by means of questionnaires which were completed by students, the study found that a large number of students considered vulnerable were often missing school due to their economic situation which forced them to search for employment involving manual labour in order to secure funds

to meet their basic needs, including food and clothing. Based on this finding, the study suggested the following strategies as ways of supporting such children:

- Increase access, participation, and retention in basic education, with particular emphasis on children with special education needs, girls, and orphaned and vulnerable children.
- Increase bursary provisions for the disadvantaged and marginalized.
- Develop and promote support actions aimed at mitigating and reducing the impact of HIV/AIDS and other socially related issues.
- Strengthen collaboration among different stakeholders involved in the education of vulnerable children including “government, donors, NGOs and private providers of education and training” (Robson & Kanyanta, 2007, p. 270).

Mutch, Rarere, and Stratford (2011) conducted 11 case studies of primary schools in New Zealand. The study sought to examine the problem of “a growing group of children who were at risk, socially, behaviourally and educationally because of the transient nature of their families” (p. 331). According to Mutch et al. (2011), “transient students are those who attend two or more schools in a year” (p. 232). Because of their conditions, such children are considered vulnerable in school. The study examined schools that were considered exemplary and successful in supporting such children. At the end of the study, the researchers reported five themes categorizing different strategies that support the children in the schools, including: “school culture, school leadership, and relationship with families, effective teaching, and full service social support” (Mutch et al., 2011, p. 234). Within each of these themes, the study reported specific aspects of the schools that were used as strategies to support the children at risk. Under the category of

school culture (which was defined as the way they did things at school), the following were strategies underlined:

- Ensuring positive relationships between at-risk students and teaching staff and other students.
- Establishing a safe, friendly, and welcoming environment with low levels of bullying and other abuses.
- Encouraging the development of a buddy system through which new transient students would find their ways through in the school and build strong relationships with others.
- Being proactive in responding to the social and educational needs of the children at risk.
- Identifying and removing barriers to achievement through behaviour analysis, and supporting families who were struggling to meet the needs of their children.
- Finding and developing the strengths of all students (Mutch et al., 2011, pp. 234-236)

Mutch et al. (2011) also described how school leaders implemented a variety of strategies to support children at risk, including school principals acting as role-models in meeting the needs of their students; maintaining a positive school culture; encouraging team work; and recruiting teachers who matched the values of their schools. Other strategies employed by school leaders described by Mutch et al. included establishing excellent connections with the families of at-risk students, as well as effective teaching which Mutch et al. described as “highly effective systems for identifying and addressing special needs, effective analysis and use of assessment and evaluation information” (p. 241).

In addition to these strategies, Mutch et al., (2011) reported that the schools had full social services support for the students at risk. Examples of social problems which rendered children vulnerable and at risk as identified by Mutch and colleagues were, hunger, family violence, budgeting and housing issues. These problems were seen as barriers to student achievement. For this reason, schools assisted students to overcome these barriers. The schools had strong social network support through which different school stakeholders played different roles in supporting the children at risk. The strategies such as those listed above are exemplary, and there is no doubt that when practiced, as revealed in Mutch et al.'s case studies, they can counteract or ameliorate the impact of vulnerability that affects the learning process of these children.

Knowlton (2006) suggested additional strategies through which schools can be supportive to the vulnerable children. In her discussion of how schools could be helpful to homeless students, Knowlton listed a number of strategies in categories of what teachers can do and what school principals can also do. Knowlton suggested that teachers can help vulnerable children by being sensitive to the latter's feelings, offering a buddy, being a mentor, seeking donations to help them meet their needs, making educational accommodation, and offering tutoring as needed. Knowlton also recommended various ways that school principals can, through their leadership status, fulfill their leadership roles to support vulnerable children in the school context. Some of the roles suggested are: (a) ensuring timely access to appropriate educational and school support; (b) training teachers and school personnel on how to help the children; (c) developing working relationships with those who can contribute to the support of vulnerable children; and (d) offering parenting and educational programs (Knowlton, 2006, p. 19).

In view of these roles, it is evident that strategies for supporting vulnerable children in schools vary in many ways and are not limited to the school environment or academic matters alone. UNICEF (2005a) highlighted this claim in its discussion about the role of educators in supporting vulnerable children, particularly those resulting from the impact of HIV/AIDS. UNICEF argued persuasively that, “educators have an extraordinary opportunity and responsibility to provide children and young people with a safe space to understand and cope in a world of HIV/AIDS” (p. 4). Similarly, de Witt (2007) conducted a study that examined the crisis of orphans in Africa and how teachers could actively support orphaned children in reaching responsible adulthood; de Witt concluded the study by suggesting that teachers have a crucial role of supporting their vulnerable students, and that teachers can fulfill their roles and duties towards such children by ensuring care and support. They can also be supportive to vulnerable children by guaranteeing material and social support that students require in order to remain in school and to progress in their studies.

So far, we have seen how several researchers have emphasized the responsibility of schools as the most reliable agents of addressing the needs of vulnerable children. But such emphasis alone is not enough. Further details on how schools can specifically implement their responsibilities towards vulnerable children have also been studied and discussed by various researchers. For example, McCroskey (1992) suggested three approaches, which include “showing empathy, understanding and responsiveness” (as cited in Baker & Bridger, 1997, p. 168). According to Baker and Bridger (1997), with regards to empathy, educators must realize that in order to effectively support their vulnerable children, they should first try to imagine the experiences of these children and

try to feel with them. With regards to understanding vulnerable children and their conditions, Baker and Bridger (1997) noted the significance of educators taking time to try and grasp what these children could be feeling, the kind of ideas which they may have, and their particular needs. This is a very important aspect in supporting vulnerable children in the school context, and it could be considered as one of the starting points. The limitation with this step of trying to understand what vulnerable children experience and how they view their situation, can lead to mere empathy which is in itself not enough. In order to deal with the critical issue of vulnerable children in the schools, it is important that educators go beyond empathizing to a state in which they can begin to critically evaluate systemic issues that hinder and perpetuate vulnerability starting from their own school context. In regard to responsiveness, these researchers emphasized the need for educators to be quick in listening and responding positively to the needs of their vulnerable children.

In Canada, the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD, 2012) also recommended that educators should think critically on how they are supportive of their vulnerable students. Adding to this view, the ASCD advised educators to challenge themselves to understand what might work best for these students and how they can assure them success. Likewise, Henderson (2013) underlined this point by arguing that, “schools are natural environments for helping all children cultivate the resilience that resides within them” (p. 23). In addition, Henderson urged educators to support their vulnerable children by demonstrating care, encouraging relationships, acting as role models and mentors, taking initiatives like using stories that could inspire children on how to overcome adversities, and encouraging respect and dignity which many

vulnerable children do not find in their homes and in the community. Malindi and Machenjedge (2012) also delved deep into the roles of educators in supporting vulnerable children when they discussed the importance of schools getting engaged in promoting a sense of belonging among vulnerable children so that they can develop self-confidence which is a critical asset for effective learning. Malindi and Machenjedge (2012) found out that when schools actively involve vulnerable children in school activities, the children experienced a feeling of safety that was not associated with vulnerable children, particularly those who were homeless. In a similar manner, Henderson (2013) encouraged educators to “strengthen internal and environmental factors” (p. 23). According to Christle, Harley, Nelson, and Tones, (n. d) internal protective factors are those that allow individual children to develop their ability to manage their lives by being able to proactively make decisions that will have positive impact on their lives rather than remaining neutral to what is happening to them. Equally, Christle, Harley, Nelson, and Tones highlighted some external protective factors which educators must consider such as establishing caring relationship with their learners, maintaining high expectation and giving such children chances to meaningfully participate in their learning. By so doing educators can contribute to ensuring support to vulnerable children.

Scaffolding is another strategy that has been identified as a powerful method for improving school experience of all learners, especially vulnerable children (Hmelo-Silver, Duncan, & Chinn, 2007). In education, the concept of scaffolding can be understood as a teaching approach in which the instructor starts with the learners’ current level of understanding and leads them progressively to a higher stage. More philosophically, scaffolding has been described by researchers as a process whereby

educators provide a temporary support to their learners and as their learning proficiency improves, the support is gradually removed as learners become confident in their learning process (Chang, Sung, & Chen, 2002; Pentimonti & Justice, 2010). This definition suggests that scaffolding is a temporary activity geared towards modeling learners to reduce uncertainty and gain competence and efficiency in learning (Chang et al., 2002). For this reason, and according to Engin (2011), scaffolding can be done by either teachers or peers who have themselves gained proficiency. Conceptualizing scaffolding in education, as noted above, implies that the purpose is to provide learners with the context, motivation, and basis for understanding new knowledge (Read, 2010). As a Grade 1 and 2 teacher, Read (2010) conducted an experimental study that involved a series of steps, based on scaffolding, as a means of improving students' writing skills. Read modeled for the students by integrating reading and writing using genre. The steps followed in this experiment included: (a) presenting an example of genre; (b) engaging students in inquiry about genre, models, or form of writing; (c) giving students good examples of how to write; (d) allowing students to write collaboratively; and (e) encouraging students to write independently (p. 51). By the end of the study, Read concluded that scaffolding is instrumental because it enables the teacher to "make expectations more explicit and overt, which increases the likelihood of students feeling successful" (p. 52).

Following the procedure of scaffolding outlined above, it is clear that this strategy encourages creation of a learning atmosphere in which all learners can gain a sense of purpose and how to remain on task in order to succeed. It is also possible that if teachers apply such a strategy with vulnerable children, the possibility for these children to be

motivated and encouraged to overcome their vulnerability and concentrate on learning can be outstanding. To sum up, I concur with Chien-Sing and Kolodner's (2011) suggestion that if schools are to succeed in educating vulnerable children, proper scaffolding must be provided as a means of overcoming the vulnerability-inducing conditions that weigh the children down and this in turn would ensure that vulnerable children would embrace and pursue their educational goals with more hope for a brighter future of success and a worthwhile life. In other words, educators and school leaders must encourage vulnerable children to develop educational vision and goals, and provide mentorship so that they can remain on task for success.

Education for Liberation

Under the leadership of Mwalimu Julius K. Nyerere, the first president and the founding father of the United Republic of Tanzania, and Sheik Abeid Aman Karume, first president of the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar, education was considered a major weapon in the war against poverty, disease, and ignorance. The two charismatic leaders worked hard to establish strong ties among the Tanzanian people by providing education that would guarantee equality and development for all. According to Kiango (2005) the conceptualization of education as a means of liberation for all Tanzanians contributed significantly to "rapid expansion of educational opportunities through universal primary education and adult educational programs" (p. 160). Contrary to the colonial era when schools prepared elite students for white-collar jobs, education under these two presidents aimed at preparing all children for life after school. In fact, according to Galabawa (2001) the educational system in the years soon after independence was a kind of education that aimed to prepare learners for self-reliance as a

means to overcome poverty and vulnerability. It meant that after school, learners would be able to secure occupations that would guarantee them a decent life. It can therefore be argued that the Tanzanian education in those early years after independence was capable of transforming lives for the common good of the individual beneficiaries and the society. In this context, under the socio-economic, political, and ideological orientation formulated by president Nyerere of the mainland Tanzania and Kurume of Zanzibar, education was clearly aimed at being a means of liberation and a tool for alleviating poverty by addressing the reality of life in Tanzania rather than copying colonial systems that were out of context. Unfortunately, Nyerere and Kurume's educational system did not succeed due to inadequate resources. The individualistic and capitalistic attitudes towards conceptualization of education in relation to production that overpowered the two leaders, also contributed to their failure in achieving their educational vision. Had this not been the case, their vision for a liberating education would have most probably reduced the cycle of vulnerability in which many Tanzanian children find themselves today.

The government of Tanzania recognizes quality education as the most indispensable pillar on which the nation can develop. It also acknowledges that through equitable education the nation will obtain people endowed with relevant skills through which they can effectively contribute to their wellbeing and to the progress of the nation (United Republic of Tanzania, n.d.). Significant steps have been made from primary to secondary and tertiary levels of education in pursuance of quality education. Policies safeguarding the right to access quality education have been formulated and pursued.

Despite all such efforts, the change in the quality of education received by many Tanzanian children, especially the vulnerable and marginalized, is minimal. Mamdani et al. (2008) argue that the reason behind this setback is that “the Government of Tanzania has failed to live up to its full promise and potential” (p. 53). According to these researchers, there are several factors that have led to the government’s failure in keeping to the promise of education. First of all, there was lack of research into the issue of education and the kinds of challenges they had wanted to address in that matter. As a result, the government failed to establish policies and clear strategies that would be observed in implementing educational change for the good of all learners. Along with this challenge, as pointed out by Mamdani et al. (2008), the issue of corruption and lack of accountability for the distribution of funds that were allocated to support the improvement of schools was missing. As a result, the funds did not reach the targeted groups in a timely manner and at times never reached them at all or as expected.

According to the 2004 report prepared by Geir Sundet, a Tanzanian Consultant for USAID, on Public Expenditure and Service Delivery Monitoring, neither the communities nor the particular beneficiaries of the funds allocated to support the children in need were informed about their rights to such funds. Consequently, the funds allocated for this purpose did not reach them and so were not accounted for. While leadership is key to systemic change, implementing educational change in Tanzania failed due to lack of a kind of leadership that “value critics and outside the box thinkers” (Mamdani et al., 2008, p. 54) which was crucial in improving and realizing educational change. As a result of all these setbacks many Tanzanian children from financially challenged families and communities continue to be disadvantaged on matters of education and its outcomes.

Such continuation can be related to more factors than the ones just discussed. For example, in my preliminary study, I visited five schools in Tanzania where I witnessed teachers working in deteriorating classes with hardly any teaching materials. In a stable country rich with natural resources like Tanzania, it is difficult to condone the misery that exists in some schools especially those in the rural areas like the ones that I visited. Conditions like these are disheartening and the possibility for teachers to be motivated is very low. It is unfortunate that many vulnerable children go to schools like these; while some of them might be expecting to find solace in school, what they get is just the opposite—hostility is the everyday style of life. According to Bendara, Mboya, and Maro, (1998), “Children in such schools are subjected to physical and psychological forms of violence both at home and in the school” (p. 31). Policies and practices need to be addressed in the way we look at education. According to Mamdani et al. (2008), unless this situation changes,

interventions such as enrolling children, building classrooms, and raising funds are relatively easier to accomplish than improving classroom teaching and development of skills at scale. Capacity building in this instance is less about establishing systems, manuals, and training, and more about enabling people to develop a vital resourcefulness to discern power relations and act creatively (Mamdani et al., 2008, p. 54).

Unfortunately, those dreams for the desired development are far from being achieved and it might take much longer before they are realized. The reason for such delays has been attributed to the lack of public systems that can adequately support vulnerable children (Mamdani et al., 2008).

According to the 1995 Tanzanian Education and Training Policy as well as the 2003 Education Sector and Development program, the government of Tanzania has expressed its determination to reduce vulnerability and to improve people's lives and the economy of the country by 2025 (URTMEC, 1995, 2003a). Despite the well-intended vision, the realization of it is still questionable. As studies have already shown, Tanzania has a serious deficiency of systems to support vulnerable children (Mamdami et al., 2008). We cannot dismiss the fact that a lot has been done to raise the standards of life of vulnerable children in Tanzania. As mentioned earlier, there are programs that have been established for the purpose of providing care to vulnerable children. But as discussed so far, Tanzania's vulnerable children are still not benefitting adequately from the many initiatives taken by the government to provide quality education as the key to improve livelihood and to ensure that every person is capable of contributing to their wellbeing and development of their immediate communities.

Equality vs. Equity: A Focus on Tanzania

The concepts of equality and equity in education are very complex and can easily be confused or used interchangeably. In a nutshell, educational equality refers to treating all children the same or, in other words, maintaining uniformity in the provision of access to schooling and resources, whereas educational equity suggests treating children differently depending on their unique needs and circumstances. More precisely, educational equity as defined by the Tanzanian Ministry of Education and Culture (1995) is described as follows: "equity refers to the fairness in the distribution and allocation of educational resources to various segments of the society" (p. 17).

Tanzania has expressed via its 1995 Education and Training Policy and 2003 Educational Sector Development Programme a commitment to ensuring equitable education for all. Although the documents contain a clear definition of equitable education, the idea of classroom approaches to equity does not seem to have found its way into the everyday lives and practice of Tanzanian schools. With the clear inequities between rural and urban schools and between public and private schools, such policies seem to reflect educational equality rather than educational equity. The Tanzanian government is failing to provide education according to its own policy documents. It is interesting to observe that at the start of the current trend of economic development, that promotes liberalization and privatization of public services (including education), policy makers in 1995 realized right away that this trend would be disadvantageous to marginalized people. To prevent it from happening, the government promised that it would guarantee “access to primary and adult literacy to all citizens as a basic right” (URTMEC, 1995, p. 18). In a similar manner the government vowed “to promote and ensure distribution of educational institutions” (URTMEC, 1995, p. 18).

The government of Tanzania has made great strides in its efforts and success achieved so far in implementing the vision of access assurance. However, the understanding and implementation of equity in education came to be entangled in between efforts toward access to schooling and educational facilities assurance. This means that, although there are schools within the reach of marginalized people, they are left struggling in between the cracks trying to make something good come from what they do not have because of the government’s failure to meet their specific educational needs. In most cases, they are not making it as they continue to lag behind in educational

matters and development. Therefore, as noted by Unterhalter (2009), “the concept of educational equity ought to be repositioned and detached from an eversion of a connection with equality” (p. 423). Defining clear distinctions between the two concepts in practice could avoid the dangers of misunderstanding educational equity policies. If we examine the Tanzanian educational system today, we can clearly see a growing trend that does not live up to the intended purpose of the 1995 Educational and Training Policy that suggests provision of equitable education. There are clear demarcations between rural and urban schools and schools in affluent, working-class and/or impoverished communities. The schools that the children of impoverished families attend are severely lacking resources, including human resources (Mamdani et al., 2009). For this reason, fair distributions of resources in all Tanzanian schools are never realized. Instead, there is merely equal or open access to schooling, which means many more children in Tanzania have been able to go to a school. Unfortunately, opening up access to schooling does not mean equity.

The Tanzanian Education and Training Policy falls short and has missed the mark for ensuring equity for students in Tanzanian schools. When this happens, education becomes a tool of power and control that contributes to further marginalization of the already disadvantaged. According to Hale (2006), an educational policy based on distributive equality “implicitly shifts the responsibility for success or failure on the individual” (p. 94). Expanding further on this explanation, Hale argued that “where there is rhetoric of equal opportunity individuals can have their lack of progress and feelings of personal failure compounded by the implication that it is their fault when the reality is much more complex” (p. 94). In Tanzania, the repercussions of this rhetoric are evident;

for example, in 2012 more than 60% of 367,750 candidates failed the Form Four national examination. Following these results, three of the students (all of them boys, aged 20, 19, and 18) committed suicide—two by swallowing poisonous chemicals and one by hanging (Mulisa, 2012). According to the report, the 19-year-old left a note to his mother saying, “Forgive me mother, I love you dearly but I don’t look for scapegoats, the decision is due to the poor results of my exams” (Mulisa, 2012, para. 1). This example illustrates how the system of equal distribution conditions students to internalize and blame themselves for their own academic failures.

The Tanzanian education system also falls short of meeting vulnerable children’s needs in terms of policy. For example, the 1995 Education and training policy takes for granted the idea of “Education for All.” Although the concept of education for all may sound ideal and seems agreeable and desirable, it has negative impacts on some students. Theoretically, Tanzanian schools present themselves as providing opportunities for all. Critics of equal opportunity have argued that such an approach “benefits most the ones that need it less” Hemelsoet (2012, p. 526). No wonder the aspect of fair distribution as emphasized by the 1995 policy has proved to be a failure despite the many strategic efforts. The educational system remains inequitable and with no equality of outcomes for all students. Therefore, like Unterhalter (2009), I question whether “inputs and resources or outcomes in education are to be fairly distributed and whether equal distribution is fair” (p. 416). By asking this question, I do not intend to be rhetorical; I am instead wondering how people in unequal society can benefit from an educational system that claims to be operating on a concept of equal opportunity or in other terms, on a level ground which does not exist.

Hale (2006) rightly critiques those who tend to define equality of opportunity in a manner that the outcomes are overlooked. According to Hale's views, the two concepts are inseparable because "an opportunity is a starting point and every starting point is the outcome of a previous process" (p. 94). If there is not equality of outcome then equality of access is meaningless and it can lead to social and economic stratification. As such, the claimed equality of opportunity in education that overlooks equality of outcome is exploitative and a powerful means of social and economic stratification. In this case, schools can be seen as holding-cells for students from poor and marginalized communities. They also serve to reproduce and maintain hegemony and societal norms. Based on the above argument, to be realistic, equity must be practiced in a manner that children are given the opportunity or a fair chance to experience learning and an outcome of success.

Tanzania, like most African countries, has since its independence in 1961 been guided by theories based on "human capital and modernization which view education as the most reliable form of investment in society and in individuals" (Sifuna, 2007, p. 691). Political leaders have therefore expressed and emphasized the need to ensure access to education at the primary level for all Tanzanians. Surprisingly, as shown in Mushi's (2009) study, the educational vision that Tanzania had from the very beginning has not been fully realized. Despite clear strategic steps taken to ensure access to education for all, many Tanzanian children are still being left behind (URTMEC, 1995). According to an evaluation conducted by the Tanzanian Educational Development program, there is evidence that "more than two million children and youth are out of school for various reasons" (URTMEC, 2003a, p. 5). Many children and youth are left out of school because

of “poverty, long distances to get to school, pregnancy, and decline in interest in education” (URTMEC, 2003a, p. 5). This evaluation by URTMEC failed to highlight the reason for the decline of interest in school, which might be a fundamental aspect that a researcher needs to examine if the Tanzanian goals for education are to be achieved. It also failed to challenge how education is defined and the nature of strategies and policies that claim fairness of distribution of resources.

More recently, scholars have made observations that Tanzanians increasingly experience daunting disparities between education received by children from wealthy families and those from financially challenged families (Sifuna, 2007; USAID, 2009). Mamdani et al. (2008) examined the current situation of education in Tanzania and the effectiveness of its policies and noted how disparities in Tanzanian education continued to expand:

Significant inequities remain entrenched. Those left out include a disproportionately high number of poorer and vulnerable children, and the potential of education to improve longer-term quality of life and livelihood prospects is likely to be limited. Large geographical disparities persist in teacher distribution, across districts and among schools, classrooms are overcrowded and teaching is geared specifically to the primary school leaving exam (p. 54).

Hence, this argument is clear evidence that attempts to achieve fair distributions of resources will never be achieved, and attempting to do so tends to stratify society.

Therefore, much needs to be done in order to overcome the growing disparities among Tanzanians—disparities that are facilitated by the way the educational system operates.

In Tanzania, the disparities that lead to stratification of the people are undeniably

evident. To understand how it all happens, we can begin by identifying which schools are continuously performing well in the qualifying national examinations, and which children go to those schools. For example, in a statistical analysis conducted by the United Republic of Tanzania, Ministry of Education and Vocational Training in 2012, the pass rates of children who had taken their qualifying national examinations in 2009, 2010, and 2011 were as follows:

The pass rate division I-III was higher for seminary schools 41.17% followed by government schools 35.12%. Non-government 19.52% and the community schools came last 6.01% schools. Likewise, in their analysis, failure rate showed that community schools were ranking higher (52.73%) followed by non-government schools (30.45%), Government schools (23.40%) with Seminaries coming last (17.92%) (p. 16).

These data indicate that vulnerable children, most of those who come from poor families and go to community schools, are underperforming. Such inequality can be associated with current educational policies that contribute to schools being turned into avenues for business and competition rather than a life-changing process that is a human right. In Tanzania, the quality of basic education obtained depends to a large degree on one's social class or wealth.

As stated on the United Republic of Tanzania website, the role of the government in education “is now changing from that of a key player to that of a facilitator in the provision of education” (n.d., para. 7). Surprisingly, those involved in the Tanzanian Ministry of Education and Culture take this shift as something positive, claiming it to be the means to encourage private sectors to invest in education. Such investment

encourages commodification of education that negatively impacts the majority of Tanzanians. It makes access to education a function of economic status and thus further marginalizes the poorest members of the population and widens the cycle of poverty. The marketization of education supports the 1995 policy, which emphasized equal distribution of resources. Marketization in education encourages competition, which is unfair due to the fact that the competitors are unequal. The risk of having unequal people compete is that “some will not succeed to follow the pace and fulfill the requirements of competition” (Hemelseoet, 2012, p. 528). Based on this standpoint, the marketization of the Tanzanian education system coupled with its policy of fair distribution (which hardly happens) contributes significantly in creating the gap between those who are socially and economically able and the vulnerable population.

According to the description given by the Tanzanian Ministry of Education and Culture and the process observed since the 1995 educational policy amendment, commitment to ensuring fair distribution of resources in education meant ensuring that all children have access to an educational facility in their locality or community (URTMEC, 2004). This interpretation is evidenced by the great efforts made so far by the government in partnership with local communities, which together have worked to build schools in many areas of the country. We can perceive the concept of educational equality (which was confused with equity) in Tanzania as being equivalent to sharing similar curriculum and ensuring that all children have access to schooling. From this perspective, we may conclude that the overall goal of educational reform initiated in the early 1990s was to ensure equality of participation, especially among the underserved groups, in terms of geographical location, gender, and income (URTMEC, 2004). Unfortunately, this

approach is unsatisfactory because as Sifuna (2007) argues, “broadening access to schools is not just a matter of increasing the number of school places” (p. 688); instead, the emphasis needs to be placed on the quality of schools, availability of learning resources, and the teaching process. More importantly, the focus needs to be on issues of equity where children must be treated as unique individuals with different needs. The concepts of fair distribution and equal access must also be elaborated upon because the sole focus on these two aspects has proved to be a failure as it does not guarantee the achievement of the education-for-all policy stipulated by the ministry of education (URTMEC, 2004).

Hence, to recapitulate on what has proved to be a rather confusing and misleading dichotomy in the conceptualizations of equality and equity, I reemphasize the words of Sifuna (2007) who argued that equal access is only a starting point. Therefore, as suggested by Hemelsoet (2012), equality in outcomes must similarly be prioritized. Such prioritization of equal outcomes should be done according to egalitarian views and does not mean that every individual must reach the same level and acquire the same skills (Hemelsoet, 2012). Instead, education should ensure that all individuals in their uniqueness are enabled to realize their potentials and acquire skills necessary to bring change to their own lives and so become effective contributing members in their immediate and global communities.

Educator–Student Relationship

The educator–student relationship is crucial to schooling because of its ability to enhance pedagogical approaches and students’ learning experience (Corso, Bundick, Quaglia, & Haywood, 2013). Several researchers have emphasized this aspect of

relationships in the school context. For example, Marzano et al. (2005) in their book *School Leadership that Works* made a point on the significance of relationships in the school context when they listed professional relationship as one of major responsibilities of school leaders. Elaborating on this aspect, Marzano et al. noted that, “relationship refers to the extent to which the school leader demonstrates an awareness of the personal lives of teachers and staff” (p. 58). Based on this definition, the educator–student relationship can also be understood as the extent to which educators are conscious of the status of their students and are responsive to their immediate needs. It also entails the degree to which students on their side are able to view their educators as caring, respectful, and concerned for their well-being. Based on this standpoint as noted by Marzano et al. (2005), this kind of relationship is therefore “central to effective execution of many other responsibilities” (p. 58).

From my personal experience as an educator, the educator–student relationship is important and complex. First, this kind of relationship is vital because as shown by some studies, students usually have a deep desire to have a positive relationship with their educators because they want to be heard and treated as whole human beings with “world problems, concerns and hopes for the future” (Sadowski, 2013, p. 28). Second, the educator–student relationship has an impact on the effectiveness of teaching and learning (Corso et al., 2013). Such views remind me of my experience as a classroom teacher, when I often noted that the more aware I was of the background of my students, including their social and economic situation, and their ways of learning and their behaviours, the more I was able to adapt and to make my teaching student centered. I also realized that when students discovered that I cared about them and that I was interested in

guiding them to realize and achieve their potentials in life, their motivation and resilience also improved.

Based on my past experience and on previous studies, it is evident that this two-way relationship is fundamental and must be cultivated (Warshof & Rappaport, 2013). According to Warshof and Rappaport (2013), through healthy educator–student relationships, children can overcome obstacles emanating from the effects of trauma. In fact, Warshof and Rappaport have argued that, “a healthy relationship promotes curiosity and learning” (p. 34). Relationship is a need that students strive for; as a result, they tend to scrutinize their educators in order to find out whether their school leaders and teachers care about them and their concerns (Teven & McCroskery, 1997). As students watch and study both the verbal and non-verbal language of their educators, depending on what they find, they can be impacted either positively or negatively.

Henderson (2013) confirms this claim when she shared her own experience of school as a vulnerable child who was wounded by being brought up in a family characterized by violence and alcohol abuse. She shared how caring educators enabled her to experience school in a positive way. Writing of her positive school experience, Anderson underscored, “School was my heaven, my solace, the alternate universe I stepped into most days with relief, school counteracted the trauma of the rest of my life” (p. 23). There is no doubt that many children, who have missed the care and support which they need from their families and communities, would want to have similar experiences of school as it is one of the places where they spend most of their daytime hours. It is also true that no matter where they come from, children deserve a positive school experience, where they feel valued, respected, protected from harm and supported

in their effort to realize their potentials (Statham, 2004). While this is true for every child, the demand for a positive relationship is even higher for vulnerable children because of what they lack in their home-life. Like other children, vulnerable children look to their educators/teachers to really listen to them rather than those who treat them as “test takers or data points along a grade distribution” (Sadowski, 2013, p. 28). Based on this argument, and as highlighted by Marzano et al. (2005), school leaders including administrators and teachers must make intentional efforts to fulfill their leadership responsibility by nurturing a caring relationship with their learners.

It must be noted, however, that establishing a nurturing educator–student relationship is not always an easy task. According to Warshof and Rappaport (2013), educators, particularly teachers, need a sense of openness and support from others in order to establish and maintain positive relationships in cases when learners are severely traumatized and may have demonstrated destructive behaviours. Warshof and Rappaport strongly emphasized the importance of teachers needing support from school leaders as a means of maintaining positive relationships with their learners and underscored that “administrators’ support counts” (p. 37). They also added that, “teachers must feel that their own needs are met and that they are supported in challenging moments” (p. 37). This statement suggests that if such support is not available, the efforts of a teacher may be jeopardized and may as a result have a negative consequence on students. But as discussed by Henderson (2013), if school leaders are supportive of their teachers, the possibility is that they will in turn contribute to creating a school culture that encourages students to cultivate the resilience which they already possess.

Hence, there is no doubt that the educator–student relationship is critical to effective teaching and must be taken seriously by educators. It is also true that many children come to school overwhelmed by traumatic stresses that have a deleterious impact on their learning process. In order to help such students enter an appropriate state of learning, creating a positive relationship must be a starting point. This claim has been confirmed in Canada by the ASCD (2012) which argued that the “demands of the 21st century require a new approach to educational policy and practice a whole child approach to learning, teaching and community engagement” (p. 2). Additionally, the ASCD further maintained there is a need to transcend the narrow focus on curriculum and accountability issues and focus more on other strategies through which schools can adequately prepare children for their future livelihood and potential life chances.

The ASCD’s (2012) argument presents a very complex and significant issue in education. It calls for educators to transcend the curriculum and accountability and reach out to the children where they are so that the education they receive is more meaningful. It means that if schools are to be highly effective in educating all children to acquire skills necessary for improving the conditions of their lives and environment, educators must create a learning environment where children feel at ease with their educators. Such a learning environment occurs when there is a positive educator–student relationship. Henderson (2013) echoes this view when she says that, “the most powerful protective factor in school was the caring, supportive relationship that students had with all types of educators” (p. 26). She further explained how such factors could contribute to a creation of a positive school climate which from her personal experience was instrumental in ensuring the success of vulnerable children who were struggling academically. As argued

by previous researchers, to create a positive school climate characterized by a healthy educator–student relationship, educators must go beyond their role of formal teaching and provide an epistemological education to their learners (Hoadlye, 2007; Morrow, 2005). In this case, as argued by Lekule and Beckford (2013), educators must assume “responsibility of providing access to a learning process which is not limited to theoretical perspectives but rather focuses on providing an education which can inspire learners to re-imagine their future and how it can be attained” (p. 1074).

To recap what has been discussed in this section so far, it is worth establishing that the kind of education that is capable of inspiring learners depends not only on what each educator can do and the context in which they find themselves but also on how they are aware of and address systemic issues which contribute to the problem of vulnerable children in their schools. It is also contingent on whether educators are able to embrace a teaching pedagogy that boosts curiosity and promotes the critical thinking and creativity necessary for learners to realize their potentials. Likewise, teacher–student relationships are instrumental in supporting vulnerable children in an effort to successfully realize their potential and to achieve a transformative education. It must be remembered, however, that nothing should be taken for granted. As highlighted by Marzano et al. (2005), teachers must offer emotional and interpersonal support, that requires the ability to be conscious of the fact that their students are not equal and do not have equal opportunities. Hence, as they realize this situation, their relationship with each student must be unique in such a way that each student is treated as a unique human being.

Moreover, as emphasized by Warshof and Rappaport’s (2013) viewpoint regarding the significance of the educator–student relationship in meeting the needs of

those students who have been traumatized by the conditions of their lives, the ability to create a sound educator–student relationship that can contribute to the well-being of each individual will require educators to contextualize their teaching so that learning becomes meaningful and enjoyable to the learner. Finally, given the significance of the educator–student relationship discussed in this section, it is important that educators must maintain higher expectations for each learner while demonstrating care and a belief in each child’s potential, so that, as Anderson (2013) noted, a vulnerable child might be able to claim that “[s]chool was my heaven, my solace, the alternate universe I stepped into most days with relief. School counteracted the trauma of the rest of my life” (p. 23).

Countering Vulnerability to Strengthen Resilience

Many vulnerable children are at high risk of poor academic performance and school dropout (Hoadley, 2007a). Such risks have been associated with negative impacts arising from their previous and current experiences, which have rendered them vulnerable. The negative impacts include psychological trauma, low self-esteem, and lack of motivation (Kennedy, 2008; Salami, 2010). In such situations, schools need to reflect on how they can help vulnerable children to overcome circumstances that hinder their progress and encourage them to develop and strengthen resilience. Herrman, Stewart, Diaz-Granados, Berger, Jackson, and Yuen, (2011) describe resilience as the ability of individuals to cultivate positive attitudes and maintain stable conditions that allow them to be productive in their respective circumstances despite any adversities they may be experiencing.-

Shaffer, Coffino, Boelcke-Stennes, and Masten (2007) suggest that, when considering the promotion of resilience, educators should consider the following

components: sense of humour, assertiveness, self-efficacy, positive attitude, providing rewards, and promoting sense of agency. They also suggest, however, that there is no “magic bullet” approach in fostering resilience. Rather, it is a natural aspect of social life that originates from personal and systemic factors that may include openness, self-efficacy, self-esteem, optimism, flexibility, and ability to socialize, to name but a few.

From the academic point of view, promoting resilience could be a means by which children regain positive self-esteem, become motivated to be in school, and to learn, as well as a means to overcome trauma that hinders learning. School leaders, teachers, parents, and all those responsible for the upkeep of vulnerable children have a critical role to play in nurturing children’s sense of being capable and worthy of success. According to some researchers, such as Herrman and al. (2011) when educators become supportive and sensitive to the social and academic needs of vulnerable children, students can in turn overcome vulnerability and gain resilience. In order to be and remain a source of reassurance to vulnerable children’s academic success and life improvement, educators must also confront systemic factors such as power structure and ideological constraints that hinder them from making constructive decisions necessary for initiating change.

Chapter Summary

This chapter started with a brief overview of what literature denotes in regard to the concept of vulnerable children and factors that may lead to child vulnerability. In the literature that focused on Tanzania which was also reviewed in this chapter, poverty and HIV/AIDS were among the factors discussed by most studies as the major causes leading to child vulnerability in Tanzania. Along with these two, orphanhood, poor parenting, domestic abuse and alcoholism were also highlighted. Surprisingly, none of the studies

reviewed seem to point to the issue of education itself as a possible cause of the problem of child vulnerability. Likewise, in this chapter, studies that have explored the kind of strategies educators implement in support of vulnerable or at-risk children as they are referred to in some countries were also analyzed and synthesized. The common strategies that were highlighted in this review included: the initiatives taken by educators to acknowledge their roles and responsibilities towards vulnerable children; identifying who vulnerable/at-risk children were: establishing clear policies to safeguard their wellbeing, providing psychological support: ensuring a friendly learning environment; and educating stakeholders in their schools among others.

Additionally, the chapter analyzed literature on issues of equality and equity, educator-student relationship and the need of a liberating education—all of which equally influence school experiences of vulnerable children. The need for schools to strive for an education that can prepare learners to realize their full potentials and to become contributing members in their immediate community was one of the aspects that came up in most studies that were analyzed in this review. Similarly, the issue of equal opportunity in education was also highlighted as being problematic. With this in mind then, in the next chapter I discuss in details the methodological designs, which were utilized for this research as a means of making it more beneficial to those engaged in the field of education.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, I discuss the research design and methodological approaches employed in achieving the purpose of this study, which is to investigate the school experiences of vulnerable children, as well as the challenges faced and strategies employed by educators in support of these children. With the collaboration of school principals, teachers, and school children identified as vulnerable, the study also explored possible future interventional strategies that can improve the school experience of vulnerable children. For the purpose of this study, which involved participants who shared their lived experiences, a qualitative research design involving a collaborative and critical ethnographic approach was utilized. As Creswell (2009) suggests, this approach was taken as a means of acquiring and providing a “holistic account” of the issue of vulnerable children in relation to their school experience. In other words, the qualitative approach enabled me to create knowledge by examining the school experiences of vulnerable children. Likewise, the qualitative approach enabled me to identify multiple factors influencing school experiences of vulnerable children, the challenges educators face, and the kind of strategies they employ.

This chapter begins with a brief description of critical ethnography as a philosophy of inquiry and a research methodology in qualitative studies. In describing ethnography as a research method, I also provide the rationale for adopting it as a means of achieving the objectives of the research at hand. I then turn to explain the research site and the reasons for which I opted for this particular site. Following that, I discuss procedures that I employed for securing participants, and then explain my methods of

data collection along with their advantages and disadvantages. I also provide a brief explanation of how I conducted the analysis of data and how I met ethical concerns related to this research. Finally, I discuss the strengths and limitations of the study.

Critical Ethnography

For the purpose of this study, I adopted a qualitative research methodology that follows a critical ethnographic approach. As noted by Erickson (2011), this approach is the most suitable research design through which I could appropriately discover, understand, and describe school experiences of vulnerable children. Through this approach, I was able to grasp the kind of challenges educators experience and the strategies they employ in supporting this group of students in their schools. Broadly speaking, this approach allowed me together with the participants to identify possible intervention strategies necessary for mitigating vulnerability in the school context.

According to Creswell (2012), critical ethnography is a qualitative research technique used by researchers interested in eliciting participants' points of view, to understand their world as a platform upon which they can stand as allies of marginalized people as they work with them for their emancipation. In education, critical ethnographers usually study "issues of power, empowerment, inequality, dominance, repression, hegemony, and victimization" (Creswell, 2009, p. 70). In line with the purpose of this study and the theoretical framework on which it was founded, embracing critical ethnography provided me with useful methodology for facilitating mutual dialogue with the participants. Kincheloe et al. (2011) contend that an ethnographic approach to research has the ability to motivate participants to begin questioning their thoughts and perceptions about the world around them. In my view, embracing critical

ethnography was the best means through which I was able to shed some light on the issue of Tanzanian schools concerning education of vulnerable children. The active collaboration of all participants contributed significantly to the realization of this study. In fact, their involvement was instrumental because the process intrigued their minds to begin questioning and rethinking education as well as their experiences and practices and how such practices influence them and others, especially the vulnerable. In other words, the opportunity to be actively engaged in this kind of research helped educators see and understand the taken-for-granted practices that possibly affect the education of vulnerable children.

Through brainstorming and identifying new strategies, which we did during focus group discussion and in the individual interviews, I began to get the sense of how educators can reshape and transform their schools to better meet the learning needs of all children. Based on this background, I have adopted Lutzhoft, Nyce, and Petersen's (2010) suggestion that a critical ethnographic research approach is the best means of handling the issue of vulnerable children in school because, by its very nature, it is a social problem that involves identifying factors that influence how vulnerable children experience school and how educators work to support them.

In order to ensure relevance and applicability of academic research, researchers must commit to "trying out their theories with practitioners in real situations and real organizations" (Avison, Lau, Myers, & Nielsen, 1999, p. 94). In the effort to answer the research questions that guided this study as outlined in chapter one above, this study took an approach which aligned well with Jensen's (2006) argument that "research is a social activity and that the context of study is founded in human interaction" (p. 4). It also

aligns well with Creswell's (2012) contention that qualitative methodology is the approach that can be used more effectively when researchers need to comprehend how different individuals or groups of people conceptualize their social situations or the problems they face. In addition, Maxwell (2005) argued that, because the qualitative research approach involves "interconnections and interactions among the different design components" (p. 3), it has high reliability, as well as an assurance of understanding of the core problem and of obtaining relevant data.

Freire (1968/2004) contends that "a revolutionary leader does not go to people in order to bring to them a message of salvation but in order to come to knowledge through dialogue with them" (p. 129). Freire's words resonate well with the objectives of an ethnographic research approach through which the researcher seeks to advocate for the marginalized by speaking out against inequalities and challenging the status quo (Creswell, 2009). Like a leader who seeks to create awareness through dialogue with the people, I strongly affirm my choice of critical ethnography as a philosophical method of inquiry that aims to involve active collaboration of the people in examining the issue of vulnerable children. The most important aspect that inspired me to adopt critical ethnography as the best approach for this study was its ability to inspire participants to develop a greater degree of self-consciousness; in other words, its ability to lead participants to a free and deep reflection about their own practices, beliefs, and understanding in relation to the issue of vulnerable children (Creswell, 2009). Despite the push back of the ethnographic method by postmodern critics who question the likelihood and abilities of ethnographers representing the experiences of another culture without exploitation and defiling ethics (Wolf, 1992), I saw this approach as the method through

which I could, with the active collaboration of the participants, generate valuable insights about the issue under study. Moreover, this research approach is instrumental in developing and establishing strategic solutions needed both by educators and policy makers responding to challenges that hinder vulnerable children from achieving academic goals.

Additionally, embracing a critical ethnographic approach allowed reciprocal dialogue with participants (Creswell, 2012). It was also a means of making sure that this study did not further marginalize the participants in any way; instead it became a means of bringing them closer by providing them with the opportunity to play an “active collaborative and participatory role through a shared dialogue” (Creswell, 2012, p. 468). By adopting a critical ethnographic approach, I adhered to Creswell’s suggestion that the researcher be reflexive and cognizant of the significance of the role she plays in her study. I made intentional efforts to reflect critically on the research findings and was careful that my personality and past experiences did not influence the research process, interpretation of the findings, and conclusions but rather enriched them. In other words, my past experiences enabled me to capture and to make sense of what my participants shared without judging them.

Actually, as Creswell (2012) suggests, this stance required me to be forthright and respectful during the research process in the field and in the written research report. In this way, I was able to consider participants’ active role as central to my study. Furthermore, critical ethnography was significant because it enabled me to immerse myself into the participants’ experiences—an immersion that added depth to the findings. It also enabled me to generate valuable knowledge about school experiences of

vulnerable children. Michael Fullan (2006), the champion of tri-level reform in education that focusses on systemic change by examining what needs to happen at school, community and district levels contends that “ implementation of educational change involves change in practice” (p. 30). Hence, it was significant that this research employed an ethnographic approach as a means of allowing change to begin from within the schools themselves and to spread further to the Tanzanian educational system. In other words, a critical ethnographic approach was an excellent means of inspiring the participants in this research to come into better understanding of their own situations so as to begin facilitating the needed educational change in their schools.

Data Collection: Methods and Procedures

The nature and the purpose of this study contributed in determining the methods that were employed in the data collection process. In ethnographic research, as in other qualitative inquiries, there is no single way to conduct research adequately (Creswell, 2009). According to Denzin and Lincoln (2011) this type of research approach “involves utilization of various methods which act as a means of creating a space for critical, collaborative and dialogical work” (p. 4). In addition, Denzin and Lincoln (2003) denote that “multiple methods or triangulation reflects the attempt to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question” (p. 7). Furthermore, as Seidman (2013) explains, the use of multiple methods was appropriate for this study because the study had multiple purposes. Based on this background and in my effort to answer the four questions that guided this study, I collected data through four distinct methods that complemented each other: participatory observations, in-depth individual interviews, focus group discussions, and questionnaires—all of which were relevant to a qualitative

ethnographic research approach (Creswell, 2012). By utilizing multiple methods of collecting data in response to the four questions that guided this study, I gained holistic knowledge about school experiences of vulnerable children. Such understanding is necessary for guiding the development of policy and initiatives that can enhance the experiences of vulnerable children and to increase capacity among teachers to cater to their needs.

As we shall see in the following pages, the methods employed in this study are unique and different from each other in many ways, but they are “logical and intuitive in their design and application” (Nicholls, 2009, p. 643). Due to their exceptionality, each had a unique and significant benefit to this study. In other words, they complemented each other and thereby increased the reliability of the results (Lambert & Loiselle, 2008). Similarly, Morgan (1996) encourages qualitative researchers to avoid the danger of limiting a study to a single method of data collection. DeWalt and DeWalt (2002) affirm Morgan’s suggestion, saying that, “the most effective research includes the use of different methods to investigate different aspects and to improve the likelihood of accuracy and objectivity in a project” (p. 93).

Hence, in this ethnographic study, I adhered to the suggestion of employing multiple methods of data collection with the intent of gaining a holistic understanding of the issue of vulnerable children. Using multiple methods of data collection was not an easy task; I found it to be laborious and time consuming. Creswell (2007) warns that one of the major challenges of an ethnographic research approach that uses multiple methods of data collection is the amount of time it requires the researcher to be in the field. Nonetheless, given my passion to comprehend and to possibly address the current issue

of vulnerable children in the schools, I still took this approach in this study as a means of establishing a more comprehensive understanding of the problem. My rationale was based on a genuine conviction that by doing so, this research would highlight the gulf between the experiences of vulnerable children and their schools. Moreover, I had high expectations that the different methods of data collection would bring into focus the dreams and the desires that Tanzanian educators hold at heart and long for as a means of improving their schools and learning processes for vulnerable children (Kesson, 2011).

For more practical reasons, I wanted to triangulate individual thoughts with group consensus and my own day-to-day observations of how school routines influence vulnerable children's experience of school and education. Through this process, I was able to capture both the unspoken and spoken day-to-day realities of what takes place. Such knowledge enabled me to determine how vulnerable children perceive themselves and how they are perceived differently by their educators as individuals and as groups. Finally, the effective use of different methods of data collection gave me a wide avenue of choice from which I could gather knowledge that informed this research. In other words, utilizing different methods of data collection was important because this research was breaking new ground and required different approaches that provided data that I would not be able to acquire through other approaches. Likewise, participants were able to choose the method with which they were most comfortable. For example, those who preferred to share their views privately rather than in a focus group had the opportunity to do so. The next section provides a broad discussion of the four methodological approaches used during the process of data collection. The four methods are:

participatory observation; in-depth individual interviews; focus group discussions; and questionnaires.

Participatory Observations

According to Creswell (2012), participatory observation is one of the most commonly used strategies for data collection in an educational setting. Its popularity could be attributed to its status as the most scientific method in social sciences—one that gets researchers closer to the informants (Gans, 1999). In this regard, participatory observation is understood as a method of data collection in which “a researcher takes part in the daily activities, rituals, interactions and events of a group of people as one of the means of learning the explicit and tacit aspects of their life routine and their culture” (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2002, p. 1). Based on this definition, it is evident that participatory observation is an effective means of research because it allows researchers to establish a positive relationship with research participants. It also increases the researcher’s ability to access participants and their activities. As a result of this approach, the researcher’s ability to comprehend the phenomenon under study is enhanced. In other words, participatory observation enables the researcher to observe what people do rather than rely on what they say in the interview or in other methods of data collection (Creswell, 2012; Gans, 1999).

Participatory observation as a method of data collection resonates well with the critical ethnographic approach used for this study. As a matter of fact, participatory observation can be understood as another way of describing ethnography as a method of data collection (Gans, 1999). Thus, like Gans (1999) who utilized participatory observation because he felt first-hand experience was the most useful means of

explaining or elaborating upon the situation being studied, participatory observation was instrumental for my study because it provided information for me which contributed to the enrichment of the findings. Nicholls (2009) notes that participatory observation does not always take place in the same way; it instead “depends on how the observing researcher is situated” (p. 641). That means participatory observation may depend on how capable individual researchers are of gaining rapport with the participants, as well as their confidence. In other words, the researcher’s past experiences and the kinds of relationships they may have established with the participants are crucial. The relationship of the participants with the researcher, as well as their level of trust and the extent to which they feel at ease with each other influences the success of participatory observation as a process of data collection. This explanation resonates well with Creswell’s (2012) argument that “[n]o one role is suited for all situations, observational roles vary depending on your comfort at the site, your rapport with the participants and how best you can collect data to understand the central phenomenon” (p. 214). This was the case in my research, although I would say that participatory observation took place throughout the research process in a very unstructured manner in certain schools, that I felt more comfortable than others, and that I was able to engage comfortably in the participants’ activities—factors which allowed me to learn more deeply about the experiences of vulnerable children.

My involvement with the participants resonates well with Nicholls (2009) and Creswell (2012) who both suggested three different ways in which researchers can fulfill their role, depending on the potential difficulties they foresee. They each suggest that the first technique is for researchers to take an active role in the activities they are observing

in a particular setting, which is the approach I employed in this study. It involved direct observation that included engagement in participant activities, such as working with teachers and students during teaching and learning and also attending staff meetings. Although I felt fortunate to have the chance to participate in school activities, I found doing so to be quite exhausting and time consuming, which confirmed Creswell's (2012) argument that this approach can be the most challenging when it comes to taking notes or recording the information. In my case, neither recording nor note taking took place during participatory observation process. I opted to write my notes after each of the activities, which I found helpful because, despite the challenges, it provided me with "a richer experience of the complexities and nuances of [the] phenomenon" (Nicholls, 2009, p. 641).

The second approach in the participatory observation method is to assume the role of a nonparticipating observer. As the term suggests, "a nonparticipant observer is a researcher who visits a site and records notes without becoming involved in the activities of the participants" (Creswell, 2012, p. 214). In this case the researcher takes the position of an outsider, "sit[ting] on the periphery or some advantageous place" (Creswell, 2012, p. 215). This type of observation is the most commonly used approach in the field of healthcare, where researchers use a positivist approach and isolate themselves entirely from their participants (Nicholls, 2009). In this study, I used a critical approach because the focus required active participation and engagement with the participants. I did not use the non-participatory method in this research because as Creswell (2012) asserts that by not taking an active part, the researcher is removed from the actual experiences, and, as a result, the observations made may not be as concrete as those made through active

participation. It is for this very reason that I preferred the former approach for this research, as I was able to grasp even what the participants were either not bold enough or did not think it was important enough to express in words.

Like all methods of qualitative data collection, participatory observation has its strengths and weaknesses. Hatch (2002) has argued that its strengths outweigh its weaknesses due to the method's ability to provide the researcher with an in-depth "understanding of the culture, the settings, or social phenomenon being studied from the perspective of the participants" (p. 72). In line with this understanding, it is evident that the researcher benefits by using the participatory observation approach especially when validating and interpreting the data collected through interviews. Indeed, participant observation is instrumental in improving the degree of the validity of the findings originating from other sources used for the same research (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2002). In addition, Timseena (2009) contends that "the experience is the first stage of knowledge, and learning is due to curiosity and practice that enhances learned knowledge and verifies the gaps and adds new things in knowledge" (p. 75). By this, Timseena suggests that observation requires direct involvement, which in turn necessitates experiential and practical learning.

Another advantage of participatory observation is the opportunity it presents for the researcher to record information as it occurs in the research setting. To make the most of this opportunity, the researcher is advised to stay focused on the type and purpose of information he or she wants to get (Falk & Blumenreich, 2005). Having a clear goal and purpose opened up to other benefits of participants' observation, which included the ability to study actual behaviour and to see things often taken for granted. In addition, as

noted by Hatch (2002), participatory observation provided me with the opportunity to take note of some important aspects which participants did not share, or were uncomfortable to express verbally.

While the participatory observation method can be an excellent strategy of data collection, it has notable “complications” that may challenge the researcher (Falk & Blumenreich, 2005). Among its weaknesses is the likelihood of losing one’s focus on the intent of the research due to too many things happening at once during the observation (Falk & Blumenreich, 2005). A related limitation is the method’s unstructured nature of data collection, which can cause unnecessary difficulties when analyzing data (Cotton, Stokes, & Cotton, 2010). Cotton et al. (2010) suggest that the analysis of data collected this way is “harder than usual, simply because the researcher will need to make inferences about the key concepts of interest from naturally occurring conversation or descriptions” (p. 466). To overcome this difficulty, researchers must be extremely well-organized during observation. Yet another limitation is that the researchers may not observe participants’ natural behaviour due to the fact that participants are aware they are being observed (Hamersley & Atkinson, 1995, as cited in Creswell, 2012). This situation can be exacerbated when a researcher is viewed as an outsider and does not have personal support in the area where the research is happening. To overcome this limitation, the researcher will need to establish some rapport while working with participants in different activities.

Given the strengths and the limitations of the participatory observation method in data collection, I carefully took strategic steps that enabled me to benefit from the approach. Observation took place throughout the timespan of data collection. To ensure

the process was an effective means of gaining in-depth understanding of participants' perceptions about vulnerable children, I engaged myself closely with teachers by getting involved in their daily activities such as attending some classes and spending time with teachers during tea break. Although I had intended to attend formal staff meetings in all the schools, this was only possible in two of the schools. In the other schools I was able to attend only certain informal meetings, some of which were advisor meetings between teachers and students with special issues that needed to be addressed. My participation in these different activities was very instrumental because I was able to learn much from teachers' body language and pedagogical approaches. As suggested by Yin (2009), this process of observation offered me a unique opportunity to grasp the actuality of the school setting and how its characteristics influenced school experiences of vulnerable children.

In-depth Individual Interviews

Seidman (2013) stresses that, "at the root of in-depth interviewing is an interest in understanding the lived experiences of other people and the meaning they make of that experience" (p. 9). This statement resonates well with my experience in conducting this research. I found in-depth individual interviews to be an excellent means of data collection. Through this approach, I was able to create space for individual participants to share in-depth their lived experiences with regard to vulnerable children in the school. According to Creswell (2012), in-depth individual interview is a popular method employed in qualitative studies. Etymologically, an interview is a "form of conversation whose purpose is to enable researchers to gather data that address the study's goals and questions" (Savenye & Robinson, 2004, p. 1056). As a research process, an interview

takes place when a “researcher asks one or more participants general, open-ended questions and records their answers” (Creswell, 2012, p. 217). In addition, according to some scholars, interviews are generally accepted as being capable of providing valuable and powerful information on the phenomenon being studied (Boyce & Neale, 2006). Boyce and Neal (2006) also have suggested that before utilizing in-depth individual interviews as a method of data collection, researchers should understand the basic criteria to be observed during data collection.

There are two types of interviews: one-on-one interviews and focus groups interviews (Creswell, 2012). As noted above, both types were utilized in this study to ensure reliability. In one-on-one interviews, data may be collected through face-to-face dialogue, telephone interviews, or email interviews (Creswell, 2012). For this study, interviews were conducted face-to-face with school principals and school children identified as vulnerable. Creswell (2012) stipulates that face-to-face individual interviews are an ideal approach for those who prefer or have more confidence sharing their views individually. This approach is also ideal for participants who are not hesitant to speak and are capable of articulating and sharing their ideas comfortably (Creswell, 2012). Through the use of open-ended questions with participants, I realized that participants had the opportunity “to best voice their experiences unconstrained by any perspective of the researcher” (Creswell, 2012, p. 218). The issues examined by this study—the school experiences of vulnerable children, and the strategies, challenges and the gaps in meeting the learning needs of vulnerable children—are sensitive matters. For this reason, individual interviews were very helpful as they provided me with information that I could not have obtained from other methods.

Individual interviews are significant tools of research because they are capable of “uncovering a breadth of opinions and individual attitudes on a controversial topic” (Minkler et al., 2002, p. 22). Others, such as Boyce and Neale (2006), concur that interviews conducted appropriately have the ability to provide participants with a more relaxed atmosphere in which the researcher may be able to gather detailed information. In terms of this study, the use of individual interviews was an excellent means by which educators and other participants were inspired and encouraged to share informative insights that enriched this study.

Despite their benefits and like other forms of research, individual interviews have limitations. Among them is the possibility of causing participants emotional discomfort that may vary according to the subject matter (Mitchell & Irvine, 2008). Based on my experience in this study, I also found individual interviews to be time consuming, as I had to take time to prepare the participant and to make sure he or she had arrived at a comfort zone before I could begin asking relevant in-depth questions for the study. For example, I first conducted a brief casual conversation with the participants such as inquiring about their normal day-to-day routines such as how schoolwork and study was going for them. Depending on each participant, I also asked questions like what they thought about when they were first told about this research and what their concerns were. Depending on their responses, I explained to the participants about issues of confidentiality and their freedom to withdraw at any time or to skip questions which they did not feel comfortable answering. In addition, I explained to the individual participants how this research would benefit them and other people.

Other disadvantages of individual interviews include: data deception and filtered information. Data deception occurs when the interviewee hides what they know to be true and shares only what they want the interviewer to hear. The problem of filtering information occurs in the process of interpreting and reporting data as the researcher tries to summarize what they heard from their participants. In addition, as noted by Creswell (2012), the presence of the researcher can also contribute to the compromising of individual interviews. At times, researchers unknowingly affect participants by either their approach or their appearance in such a way that the interviewee's response is impacted.

To overcome some of the above-mentioned limitations of individual interviews, prior to this research I made deliberate efforts to prepare myself for the interview process. For instance, I conducted a thorough review of literature to make sure I had a solid grasp of best practices for interviews. Based on what I learned from Creswell (2012) about conducting individual interviews successfully, I used a tape recorder as a means of ensuring I did not miss what the participants narrated and also avoided note taking during conversation as it can discomfit a participant. Although tape-recording can also become problematic for some participants, I avoided this problem by choosing a recording instrument that was less intimidating based on its small size and modest appearance and also made sure everything was well organized prior to beginning the interview process. To avoid allowing my presence to discomfit participants in such a way that it would affect how they responded I used the technique of icebreakers to encourage them to talk. For the children, I used different icebreaker questions depending on my observation of each individual child as they walked into the interview room. In some few cases where I

noticed from the body language that the child was feeling uneasy, I asked them simple questions which encouraged them to tell me about themselves. For example, I asked them about what they like most in the school, their hobbies, the kind of sports they prefer and what they would like to be in the future.

Another step taken was based on Creswell's (2009) observation that individual interviews depend on the circumstances of the research and the relationship between the researcher and participants. Consequently, prior to data collection I was careful to reassure and emphasize to participants that I would do all I could to maintain confidentiality. Furthermore, to reduce discomfort in the participants and to help them build trust that it was safe participating in this research, I informed the participants in a formal written letter prior to the interviews about the protocols and procedures which would be followed during and after the research (see Appendix: 1 a & b; 2 a & b). The letter contained a complete description of the research and protocols. Issues of confidentiality were also highlighted with special emphasis on my intent to use pseudonyms to protect the identities of participants and participating schools. On the day of the interviews, as in the other methods, I first took time with the participants to revisit the letters and consent forms. After they declared to me that they had understood and did not have any more questions, they then signed the forms and gave them back to me.

Another strategy that I utilized as an ethnographer was building rapport with the participants in the different research sites. This strategy differed slightly on each site depending on how much I felt at ease. The process of establishing rapport with the participants involved making some personal connections, such as frequent visits to the research site, getting involved with different people in those sites, and working with those

people. This started two years prior to the official beginning of this research. I worked in these sites on a volunteer basis. During my volunteer time, I had the chance to share in their meals and had long conversation with them. This experience helped the participants to get to know me and my interests and passion. All of this was instrumental in establishing rapport. When talking with the participants, I exhibited a warm and friendly demeanor by keeping a smiling face, using simple and understandable language and making jokes that demonstrated my sense of humor. I also used techniques such as: nodding when talking to them, shaking hands while greeting, avoiding making negative comments on what I observed in their environment and remaining always respectful of the cultural practices—all of which were important in building rapport. These strategies did not apply to all participants. Factors such as gender, age, professional status and religious beliefs determined the different approaches. For example, as a woman and for religious reasons, I was not able to shake hands with some of the men whose religious beliefs do not allow handshake. The kind of conversation also differed among age groups, gender and professional status.

By using these techniques to build rapport I was, as suggested by Creswell (2009), able to avoid the possibility of further marginalizing the participants. As a means of strengthening confidentiality and openness, I intentionally encouraged my participants to regard the research process in a more humanistic way. I did this by making it clear the goal of this research was not to describe the experiences of vulnerable children in the school, or to point fingers at what teachers or school leaders were doing wrong or failing to do, but instead was a process in which we were together seeking ways to make a difference in that educational system that would benefit children, especially the

vulnerable. By providing this information, participants were encouraged to view this research as an opportunity to have their voices heard.

In addition, prior to starting the interviews, I encouraged each participant to realize the significance of their respective contribution to this research. I also encouraged them to appreciate the importance of sharing their ideas and experiences as a way of being active change-agents and allies for the vulnerable and marginalized. On that note, and as discussed by Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999, as cited in West, 2011), I guided the participants to view this research as a process that involves a practical inquiry whose end is to generate practical knowledge for improving the lives and academic experiences of vulnerable children. Based on this perception, I conducted my interviews with participants in a conversational manner rather than as an interrogation by an all-knowing judgmental researcher.

The individual interviews took a maximum of one hour for the majority of the participants. For the purpose of clarity and to avoid intimidating participants, a small audio-recorder was used instead of taking detailed notes during the interviews. In order to make sure that participants were comfortable with being recorded, I asked each participant to sign the consent form (See Appendix 3A/3B). The issue of informed consent is quite sensitive in qualitative research involving humans (Mitchell & Irvine 2008). Qualitative research, like the one at hand, can sometimes cause psychological distress in the participants such as: trauma due to the recall of the past undesired experiences, a sense of shame, guilt, fear, anger, anxiety and the like. Because of this, the issue of informed consent is critical. However, as noted by Mitchell & Irvine 2008), there are differing ideologies and expectations among researchers and participants

regarding what constitutes proper informed consent. For example, it is unclear how much information the researcher must give the participants, as well as the manner and the time limit in which the participants should be informed. According to Mitchell and Irvine (2008) the controversy over participant informed consent is far from resolution. In consideration of this situation, prior to beginning my research by asking the participants to sign the consent forms, I first explained the research, their role in it, and their freedom to opt in or out.

The interview followed a sub-structured format involving demographic questions, which served as a means of preparing the interviewee. Examples of the demographic questions include participants' educational background and professional experience (see Appendix 6). Once the interviewee was prepared, semi-structured probing questions were asked as a way of starting up a conversation that helped the participants to share their experience and perception of the issue of vulnerable children, challenges facing educators, and strategies that educators employ in meeting such challenges. In the individual interviews, participants were also asked to provide their views on what could be done in the future to improve school experiences of vulnerable children (See Appendix 7).

Focus Group Interviews

Focus group interviews as a technique of collecting data in qualitative studies has gained popularity in the past few decades (Acocella, 2012; Rodriguez, Schwartz, Lahman, & Geist, 2011). While definitions of "focus groups" have slight differences, two aspects or words characterize most of them, namely, "group" and "interaction" (see, for instance, Acocella, 2012; Gill, Stewart, Treasure, & Chadwick, 2008; Morgan, 1996;

Redmond & Curtis, 2009). In this method, interaction is central. According to Flores and Alonso (1995), the interaction between participants in focus group interviews “is as crucial as the interaction between the interviewer and interviewee” (p. 85). Morgan (1996) described focus group as a technique of collecting data in which the researcher invites those interested and willing to participate in a “group discussion on a particular topic organized for research purposes” (p. 130). In addition to the latter definition, Morgan outlined three characteristics of focus groups:

1. Focus groups are a research and data collection methodology.
2. Focus groups rely on group interaction as the source of their data.
3. The method acknowledges the researcher’s active role in creating the group discussion for data collection purposes. (p. 130)

Morgan went further in explaining the need to distinguish focus group interviews from other types of group interviews. In his view, focus groups are different from other groups because (a) they are conducted in informal settings, (b) the researcher uses nondirective interviews, and (c) they use an unstructured question format.

In another study examining methodological issues arising from the use of focus groups as a method of data collection, McLafferty (2004) found that most researchers knew the focus group method as:

1. A strategy for understanding attitudes and opinions.
2. A method that depends primarily on focused interaction among participants to generate data.
3. A method useful for reflecting on social realities of a cultural group. (p. 193)

Rodriguez et al. (2011) affirm these views. In a study that examined the historical background of focus group methods, they concluded that the use of focus groups is an excellent approach when conducting research with marginalized people. By analyzing studies that had utilized focus groups, they concluded that focus group methods offer researchers an excellent means of paying attention to cultural identities and ways of knowing their participants because it also offers insights into how participants interact with each other. In addition, according to Rodriguez et al. using focus group can also allow the researcher to be culturally sensitive by learning from, listening, and observing group dynamics. Based on the code of ethics that binds us as researchers, this aspect of cultural sensitivity is very significant. When researchers practice this aspect of “being culturally sensitive specifically in focus group development, it provides an atmosphere in which participants feel valued and understood” (Rodriguez et al., 2011, p. 413).

In my view, cultural sensitivity is indeed something that all researchers, whatever method they are using, must actively pursue. This is important because when participants realize that the researcher respects and upholds their culture, they are more likely to share their views authentically. Gill et al. (2008) have suggested that when a researcher utilizes the focus group method while giving intentional and serious consideration to participants’ ways of thinking and of living their lives, the research will generate knowledge from the “collective views of the participants and the meaning behind such views” (p. 293).

Likewise, Acocella (2012) suggests that, despite its popularity and consideration as an innovative data collection method that is “easy to organize” (p. 125), focus groups should never be taken for granted. Instead, the researcher must strictly follow procedures in order to reach the desired goals of the research. Acocella evaluated the advantages and

disadvantages of focus groups and recommended that researchers who utilize this approach be extremely well-organized and develop sound knowledge of the cognitive and communicative risks involved. Neglecting such factors might jeopardize the quality of the research results. Instead, when well-understood and utilized appropriately, focus groups can be one of the most valuable means of eliciting in-depth insights from participants (Gill et al., 2008; Nicholls, 2009).

As suggested by West (2011), my role as a researcher using focus groups involved encouraging participants to develop and maintain a platform of equitable social relations through working collaboratively in the small groups and giving chances to different individuals to share their views freely. I also encouraged respect for each other's opinion and the need to maintain confidentiality. Prior to beginning focus group discussion, when explaining the protocol of this research to the participants, I emphasized these aspects of respect and confidentiality. Basit (2010) contends that a researcher in the focus group discussions plays a role of being both a facilitator and moderator of the group. While listening carefully to the discussion, the researcher can occasionally interject by asking questions or making remarks for the purpose of clarification or as means to encourage participants. Based on this view, I was also responsible for establishing and facilitating group discussion by posing some guiding questions for the participants to discuss (see Appendix 12). At some locations, in some of the groups when I realized that a few members were taking over the discussion and preventing others from sharing their views, I kindly requested that turns be given to those who would like to share their views and had not had the chance to do so. By so doing, I found focus group

interviews to be one of the most interesting and appropriate methods that contributed significantly to this research.

Speaking of the focus group method, Freire (1968/2004) in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* emphasized the importance of conducting research with people rather than conducting research about people. Based on this view, it can be argued that the focus group method is a good way of sharing some ownership of the research with the participants. In this research, the five focus groups (one from each of the five schools included in this study) were actively engaged and each participant contributed to the discussion. This does not mean, however, that all groups or individual participants were engaged to the same degree; some groups were very active, and the same applied to individuals in the groups. Nevertheless, from my experience, I found focus group discussion to be one of the best ways of getting more people involved.

The five focus groups involved in this study each comprised 6 to 12 teachers. Although some schools might have had more teachers who might have wanted to participate in the research, the number was intentionally limited because, as noted by Cameron (2005), by limiting the number, the researcher is able to maintain dynamism and energy within each group, and participating members are able to develop trust in a small group which in turn enables them to engage freely and actively. For the purpose of diversity, interested participants were recruited based on gender, age, job seniority, and educational experience. To facilitate the selection criteria, prior to the day of data collection, I had a conversation with each of the school principals to discuss the criteria for teacher participation. School principals shared the criteria with all the teachers before inviting them to volunteer to participate in this research. On the day of the actual

research, I first conducted a demographic survey, which enabled me to recruit the participants based on the predetermined criteria. After recruiting participants, ethical procedures were then observed; that is, research protocols and issues of confidentiality were explained and consent forms were signed before proceeding to discussions (see Appendix 3A/3B). Each focus group interview took a maximum of one to two hours.

According to Morgan (1996) the use of focus group interviews as a technique of data collection, like all other methods, has its own strengths and weaknesses. One of the strengths that I experienced in using the focus group approach in this study was the ability to hear various perspectives within a limited time. In the focus group discussions, I learned not only from what was said but also from the body languages. For example, when one member was sharing their views, I could see other members nodding. This kind of body language helped me to understand the participants' comfort level and other non-verbal clues. In some instances, especially when discussing the aspects related to challenges they experience and the kind of future intervention strategies they hope to implement in the future, many participants would clap their hands. Culturally, clapping of hands is an indication of consensus or acknowledgement. The discussion was open and the participants demonstrated enthusiasm about the topic. As they were getting excited with their discussion, I was able to ask further questions that contributed in expanding the discussion and gaining deeper knowledge. As a result of such discussion, I was able to collect data filled with a wide variety of views which were enriched as participants asked questions of each other's viewpoints. The interactions among participants contributed to the depth of the information included in the data. As the participants interacted, I also found another venue in the focus groups of reading body languages which also

contributed to my understanding of the issue studied. In addition, this method enabled me to contribute to the improvement of synergy among participating educators and also to give participants a platform to air their views.

Based on examples of how body language contributed to this research approach, it is worth stating that the use of focus groups also increased my ability to gather group experiences which can be deemed necessary for holistic understanding of the problem under investigation. As a result of dynamics that exist among the focus group participants, this approach as noted by Nicholls (2009) provided me with deep understanding of the issue under investigation due to various insights I obtained from both spoken and unspoken word. From this experience, the depth of the information I gained from the different groups was highly determined by group dynamics which led to new and critical thinking among participants. On that same note, and as Nicholls (2009) explains, group dynamics as well as body expressions and the seriousness of the conversations that went on during the meetings enabled me to gain some understanding of the meanings and interpretations participants give to their daily experience concerning the issue of vulnerable children. Finally, I found focus groups to be very powerful because of their informal, open dialogue that provided me with the opportunity to observe such things as the interviewees' agreements and disagreements with each other. Ultimately, through focus groups, I was able to obtain in-depth information that contributed to the enrichment of this study.

Nonetheless, despite the aforementioned strengths of focus group interviews, this approach is not exempted from setbacks. According to Morgan (1996), focus group discussion makes it difficult to maintain confidentiality, and at times the presence of a researcher as a moderator can hinder participants from providing genuine responses.

Although it is not always possible to know for certain that the study was not affected by lack of confidentiality and trust, given the nature of this study and my rapport with the participants I am of the assumption that this was not the case in this study. I have come to this conclusion based on the nature of the study and its significance to the participants. In the first place, the issue of vulnerable children is a social problem that has become pandemic in the schools. It is a topic which, from my experience as an educator in a similar context, can easily be discussed in normal open circumstances but with due respect toward the victims. In other words, the problem we discussed was a social issue of concern to the majority. In addition, I prepared the participants to see the issue of vulnerable children as a systemic problem rather than an individual, group, or school problem. Still, another issue of focus groups which I experienced in this study and as highlighted by McLafferty (2004) was keeping the group discussions focused and preventing some participants from dominating others with their views. In two of the groups, a few participants kept talking for such a long time that they dominated the group and overpowered other participants. At some points within the focus groups, I experienced some inconsistency of ideas especially when I asked the participants to share about the kind of strategies they implement in supporting vulnerable children in their schools. For example, some participants expressed that they were not implementing any specific strategies due to their own vulnerable conditions while others in the same group highlighted several examples of what they do as individuals and as schools, including counselling and providing material support. Other setbacks of focus group discussions as a technique of data collection are associated with the challenges of staying “on task” and

addressing specific research issues given the range of input from the various members (McLafferty, 2004; Nicholls, 2009).

Questionnaires

In this research, I administered written questionnaires to a group of 26 children between the ages 15 to 19. According to Drever (1962, as cited in Aksu, 2009), questionnaires are one of the most popular and important instruments of collecting data through utilization of questions that focus on the issue being investigated. In order to tap into the children's views and their school experiences without causing unnecessary discomfort, I gathered the 26 children who had volunteered to participate in this research to respond to written questions that I had formulated prior to the time of this research. The questions were self-explanatory and were based on the four research questions that guided the study (see Appendix 8).

Prior to administering the questionnaires, I provided detailed information about the research as a follow-up to the message they had received from their Matron based on the letter of request to participate in this research and the letter of information and consent I had sent to her prior to the time of research (see Appendices 10A/10B). In the explanation, I emphasized the purpose of this research, its significance, and how it would benefit them and other school children. I also emphasized the issue of confidentiality, freedom to answer only questions they felt comfortable with, and their right to withdraw from the study at any time without facing any consequences.

After the detailed explanation, the children were then invited to ask questions for clarification and were given the opportunity to opt out of the study or to have their data withdrawn at any time. When all was done, they then signed the consent forms after

which they completed the demographic forms (see Appendix 5). After all the children in the room had completed and handed over their demographic forms, they then received the written questionnaires, which took a maximum of 45 minutes to complete (see questionnaires in Appendix 9). For the purpose of confidentiality, the children were asked not to write their names on any of the papers. They were also asked not to talk to each other about the questions and what they had written on the answer sheet during or after the research.

The use of questionnaires was very beneficial to this research. I found the method to be very practical and easy to utilize with children, especially those who might be a little shy or hesitant about the issue of confidentiality. Since they were asked not to record their names on the papers, the children seemed to feel very comfortable with answering the questions. As a result, I was able to gather a lot of information in a very short time. Because of anonymity, I believe the children were more confident and they were able to provide genuine answers to the questions. Another advantage is that the information I gathered was well organized which made it easier to transcribe, understand, and analyze the data. Like any other forms of data collection, there are some pitfalls in utilizing questionnaires as a method of data collection. One of the shortcomings I experienced has been highlighted by Aksu (2009) that some children provided incomplete answers on which I was not able to do any check back to find what was missing after the children had handed the answer sheets back to me.

Research Guideline

Prior to entering the research field, I developed sample questions according to each of the four methodological approaches of data collection, which I utilized as a

research guideline. The development of research instruments was among the major challenges I faced in planning this study. My insider/outsider positionality contributed to the dilemma of coming up with the research instrument. I was aware that my past experience both as a student and a teacher in Tanzania and how that has been reshaped by my exposure to a Western graduate education influenced my approach to the study. This awareness helped me to be more mindful of my researcher position. Mertens (2004) emphasized the importance of selecting a research instrument, arguing that, “if the appropriate measure cannot be found then the researcher must adopt an existing instrument or build a new one to meet the needs of the proposed research” (p. 178). Based on these suggestions, four different instruments created specifically for this study were used to solicit information corresponding to the issue of vulnerable children in the selected schools (see Appendices 7 to 9, 12, and 13). Each instrument was designed according to the method of data collection and groups involved. They included: (a) a list of sample questions that directed focus group discussion; (b) two different sample questions for individual interviews with school principals and the children, respectively; and (c) written questionnaires for vulnerable children participants. A slightly different set of questions guided discussion with the different focus groups. Each tool had two sections; for teachers and school principals, the first section addressed demographic questions that inquired about gender, age, level of qualification, number of years in the teaching profession, and the duration of stay in their current school. For the children, demographic questions asked about gender, age, school level, and background. The second section then focused on answering the research questions.

In order to appropriately facilitate focus group discussions in a manner that would encourage participants to be actively engaged, I designed a research guide. I followed Johnson and Christensen's (2008) suggestion, which was to use open-ended questions with all focus groups so that participants had the freedom to address the issue in the manner they felt most comfortable and convenient to them. The purpose of this kind of flexibility was to ensure that the participants owned the research and felt comfortable about the process.

In order to encourage active interaction among group members, boost trustworthiness of the findings, and to provide opportunity for everyone's voice to be heard, participants were provided with a piece of paper on which they listed what they considered to be major challenges in meeting the academic needs of vulnerable children. This activity highlighted "members' similarities and differences and gave rich information about the range of perspectives and experiences" (Lambert & Loiselle, 2008, p. 229). After the participants had finished writing, their lists were then posted on the walls or read aloud for further group discussion.

For the purpose of individual interviews, structured and semi-structured questions were utilized to solicit information. The follow-up questions were open-ended and flexible; that is, the second and subsequent questions were mostly determined by the responses from previous question(s). This technique followed Creswell's (2005) recommendation that the instruments used to collect data should be formulated in a manner that motivates participants to think freely and critically.

Site Selection and Rationale

Creswell (2005) also recommends that the participants and the site be “identified based on place and people that can best help us understand our central phenomenon” (p. 203). Hence, my research took place in the “real world” locations of five schools—three primary schools and two secondary—and in one centre for orphaned and vulnerable children, all located in the Singida region of central Tanzania. My previous visits and involvement with orphaned and vulnerable children in 2011 and 2012 served as a basis for the selection of sites for this research. I also chose this site based on its geographical location. Singida suffers from various catastrophes, such as droughts and floods, which result in hunger and severe poverty that contribute to the high number of vulnerable children in this region. Another reason for the site selection is that it is located on an international highway; trucks transport goods from the harbour of Dar es Salaam to hinterland countries like Zambia and Malawi. As a result, human trafficking has become a major concern and many children who are not in school are exposed to this illegal trade (National AIDS Control Programme, Tanzania Ministry of Health and Social Welfare [NACP], 2009). Other reasons for choosing Singida include social and cultural factors, such as high rates of divorce that often leave children with grandparents who are economically poor and are unable to take care of them. As a result, many children are reduced to homelessness and move to bigger cities in search of food and shelter for their survival.

Another related cause for the high number of vulnerable children in Singida is the increasing rate of the HIV/AIDS pandemic that has left many children orphaned or vulnerable due to lack of adult care and support. According to a report by the Tanzania

Commission for AIDs (2012), Singida, with a population 1,370,637(census 2012) and an annual growth rate of 2.7%, has an HIV prevalence rate of about 3.3% of the sexually active population between the ages (15-49). In addition, Singida region, like other regions that include Morogoro, Dodoma, Arusha, Manyara, and Tanga, has been identified as an area where human trafficking is also rampant (NACP, 2008). According to Kamazima (2009), women and children from Singida are allegedly taken to big cities, especially Dar es Salaam, Arusha, Kilimanjaro, Zanzibar and Mwanza where they work as house-maids or bar maids. The women and children fall victims to this trade because the traffickers seduce them by promising an end to poverty and a life of bliss in the cities. As noted in Kamazima's (2009) report, in the regions from which children are trafficked, particularly Singida region, "investing in children's education is not a priority to a majority of the community members" (p. 23). Given these facts, conducting this research in Singida was worthwhile because meeting the needs of vulnerable children in schools will be a useful means to overcome the cycle of poverty and vulnerability that puts them at a high risk of being trafficked.

One final reason why I selected Singida region for this study is because of my personal relationship and familiarity with the region's schools and the centre for the orphaned and vulnerable children. This familiarity gave me the advantage of acting simultaneously as an insider and an outsider, which means that collaborating with the participants and getting involved in their daily activities was easier for me than it would have been for a person completely new to the area. But concurrently, as an outsider to Singida region and based on my Western graduate educational experiences, much of the study was new and unknown to me. As an outsider also, I was able to disrupt my role as

a researcher as expert and be open to discovering new things from the voices of the participants themselves.

Participants

A critical ethnographic approach requires active collaboration between participants and the researcher. In order for such a collaboration to take place, research suggests that those with more lived experience with the issue being investigated be given first priority (Myles & Simpson, 2001). In addition, Creswell (2012) has noted that the purpose of an ethnographic study is to ensure an interactive discussion with the participants. Such interactions serve as a means of bringing to light participants' experiences, which can generate informative data. Thus, in order to gain in-depth insight and a holistic understanding of the central phenomenon of vulnerable children in the schools that were involved in this study, participants were recruited through purposeful sampling (Creswell, 2012; Gordon, 2008). According to Creswell (2012), this process involves identifying characteristics of the type of participants desired. In my case, some aspects such as age, gender, and lived experience were used as criteria for participation selection. More specifically, in the case of educators, criteria included number of years of service. For the purpose of balancing participation, gender was also considered for both educators and vulnerable children. For vulnerable children, age was a major criterion because those below age 15 did not qualify for the study. Gender balance among participating vulnerable children was also important because I wanted to understand how school experiences of vulnerable children differ between girls and boys. Finally, in order to strengthen the findings and to ensure credibility, data were collected from multiple groups of participants, as suggested by Brington (2009) and Shelton (2004) to gather

diverse perspectives that would be instrumental in gauging educational practices and their impact on vulnerable children.

Hatch (2002) contends that "researchers interested in developing an understanding of how participants make sense of their world require participants who are willing to allow researchers to watch them acting in their natural environment and/or talk with them about their actions and intentions" (p. 48). According to Nicholls (2009), researchers must identify participants who are capable of providing appropriate and adequate insights related to the particular context and problem under study. Based on this background, I made sure that those selected based on the criteria were knowledgeable and capable of offering an in-depth and rich knowledge of the situation from personal experience. It was for this reason that age and years of experience were very important. In addition to depth of knowledge in the research, Nicholls emphasizes this point arguing that we must recruit "people who can represent the breath of human experience" (p. 639). This point was crucial to my qualitative research because for the purpose of reliability and trustworthiness I needed to obtain saturated data (i.e., data that could be referred to as constant) or ensure that, in Nicholls's words, "[n]o new findings would emerge with further data collection" (p. 140).

According to Horowitz, Ladden, and Moriarty (2002), identifying research participants is a major methodological challenge that researchers must be prepared to deal with for the success of the research. The challenge is even greater when a study involves vulnerable communities because issues of power between the researcher and the participants are greater and the participants are put at greater risk. To overcome this kind of challenge, researchers need to be clear about "inclusion/exclusion criteria while

remaining realistic of who should be involved in their research” as indicated by Horowitz et al. (2002, p. 118). Hence, the participants for this research represented three categories: children identified as vulnerable, school principals, and teachers recruited from five neighbourhood schools. Each of the three categories of participants was recruited following different basic criteria. The first criterion used for the category of children was that they were already identified by the community as vulnerable and were living at the centre for the orphaned and vulnerable children at the time of this research. The second was that the children attend school in one of the five schools that participated in the research. The children were also selected based on gender, age, and grade level. Older children who have been either orphaned or vulnerable for longer periods and are in upper grades were preferred.

For the second category (school principals), seniority and gender factors were considered; those with more experience in the particular school were preferred. However, in cases where the school principal or assistant principal was new to the school, this criterion was overlooked. The third category comprised teachers who were contacted through school principals. In order to avoid confusion or the possibility of frustrating teachers who would have wanted to participate but did not qualify, school principals were instructed to communicate the criterion for participation to those who would volunteer to take part in the research. Basic criteria used for teachers who volunteered to participate in the focus groups included gender, and age; teachers with longer teaching experience at the research site were preferred. However, a basic requirement for all teacher participants was at least 2 years of teaching experience.

Participants Demographics

As noted in the previous passage, this research involved three different groups of participants. The first group comprised 26 schoolchildren identified as vulnerable by their communities and living at a centre for orphaned and vulnerable children. At the time of this research, all 26 were attending either upper primary or secondary in one of the five schools involved in this research. All 26 children were between the ages 15 to 19; among them, 21 were in secondary and five were in primary school. Twenty of the children were boys and six were girls.

Although I had planned to have a gender balance among the participants, I later realized that this was not possible because of the criteria that children who would be recruited to participate must be above 15 years of age and must have been identified as vulnerable. The children were recruited from the centre for the orphaned and vulnerable children where I found out that the majority were boys. For this reason, it was impossible to balance gender. I had wanted to have equal representation of voices from male and female participants. While it is difficult to make conclusions that can explain the reasons for such disparities, it can be argued that there are a variety of possible reasons. Some of the reasons are based on my personal experience with Tanzanian cultural beliefs and practices that treat boys different from girls, especially when they are in vulnerable conditions. Based on anecdotal findings, boys are more likely to be abandoned than girls due to cultural practices such as property inheritance. For example, when a girl gives birth before marriage, parents or relatives will more readily adopt a girl than a boy child for fear of future responsibilities when the boy child becomes an adult. According to most African cultures, a boy has the right of property inheritance from the father's side.

But it becomes complicated when a child is born outside marriage because the father of the child might not be known or might reject the responsibility. As a result, boys born outside of marriage are often neglected. While this situation may not be true for certain cultural groups in Tanzania, based on observation and as found by this study, there are more boys than girls on the streets and at centres of orphaned and vulnerable children.

According to the demographic reports narrated by the children themselves, there were a variety of factors that rendered them vulnerable. Ten of the 26 children who participated in this research had been forced by severe poverty to live on the streets from which they were brought to the centre for orphaned and vulnerable children. Seven were born to teen mothers who had either dropped out of school or did not have an opportunity to obtain formal schooling and were unable to take care of their children. The children were left with grandparents or extended family members who, after failing to cater to their needs, surrendered them to the centre. Three of the children were socially orphaned by the fact that they were totally abandoned by their biological parents due to broken marriages and hostile family conditions. Four children were orphaned following the physical death of their biological parents and were brought to the centre because other members of the family were poverty stricken and could not afford catering to the basic needs of these children. Two others were vulnerable due to incurable diseases suffered by their parents or caretakers. Most of these children were left with grandparents (usually grandmothers). Unfortunately, due to age and poverty, the grandmothers failed to support the children and so they too surrendered the children to the centre for the orphaned and vulnerable. All these children together with many others who did not participate in this

research lived at the centre from which they got some support and were able to attend different schools.

The second group of participants included five school principals; three were heading secondary schools while two were in primary schools. For the secondary schools, two principals were female and one was male, while for the primary schools there was one male and one female. All 5 school principals had long teaching and leadership experience. Four out of the five school principals had been in a leadership position for more than 5 years.

The third group of participants included 29 teachers; 15 were female and 14 were male. Their ages ranged between 25 and 54 years. They all had teaching experience of not less than 2 years. The majority of male teachers were in secondary schools while the majority of female teachers were in the primary schools. For example, in one primary school where a focus group had a total of 10 teachers, only two were male, while in a secondary school where a focus group had a total of 12 teachers, only three were female. Based on these demographics, it is evident that teachers shared about their school experiences with vulnerable children from personal experience and not from mere hearsay, which contributed greatly to the enrichment of the findings reported in the next chapter.

Demographics of the Research Site

In this study, the participants from each of the five schools demonstrated a high degree of consciousness about the issue of vulnerable children, the challenges they face, and the role which schools have to play in order to support their learning process. Unfortunately, most schools were incapable of successfully supporting vulnerable

children to the extent desired. Based on the finding from environmental scanning and observation as well as from respondents' views, the schools that participated in this research were critically lacking basic materials such as furniture, laboratories for secondary schools, books, and other stationery supplies, to name but a few. For example, in one of the schools, some of the children had to sit on the floor as the classroom did not have enough benches or chairs for all children. None of the five schools had running water or electricity—a lack that put the hygiene and the health of the children in jeopardy.

In addition, most of the schools in this study were overpopulated with students but had very few teachers. For example, one of the secondary schools had a total of 841 students (402 boys and 439 girls) but only 24 teachers (13 male and 11 female). Likewise, a primary school with 421 students (191 boys and 230 girls) had only 14 teachers (eight female and 6 male). In all of these schools, teachers were multitasking as they were responsible not only for teaching classes but also taking care of extracurricular activities such as counseling, advising, sports and supervising students during manual activities such as gardening and cleaning the school environment. In other words, the schools did not have school counselors, social workers, or special education teachers. The limited number of teachers and the lack of help from other professions such as social workers and school counselors was a great disadvantage to the school and to vulnerable children in particular.

Although the schools promoted education as a key to better living, as was clearly stated in their school mottos, some educators who felt incapacitated by their financial setbacks admitted that their school mottos unfortunately were (and would continue to be) mere slogans until constructive steps could be taken to improve school demographic

conditions. In their views, schools need to be well-equipped with various teaching materials and with personnel such as qualified school leaders/administrators, teachers, social workers, and school counselors. In addition, school facilities themselves needed to be improved in order to ensure a better teaching and learning environment.

Role of the Researcher

My role as a researcher and how I played it was, without a doubt, crucial. Kincheloe et al. (2011) emphasized the significance of the researcher's role when they cite Paulo Freire who said that, "researchers must immerse themselves into the daily practices of the people with whom they are investigating a social phenomenon for the purpose of change" (p.164). Following McLaren et al.'s point of view, my role as a researcher involved immersing myself within the communities in which this research took place. I did this by taking time to be with staff members in the schools and participating in their usual daily activities. By so doing, I was able to create a positive relationship with the participants such that I began to develop a strong rapport. In turn, this was helpful in capturing the views of the participants during the research process. For example, when I first met the teachers in one of the schools, they were at first quiet and did not show much excitement about the work we were about to begin, but as the days went on and I shared more about my experiences as a former classroom teacher, many of them became interested and felt a little more comfortable discussing their own experiences as teachers. In other words, sharing my personal experiences and treating my research participants as colleagues contributed greatly to the results of this study. I believe that personal sharing with the participants was a source of encouragement and led

them to think more critically about their experiences and to be open and truthful in sharing views about the issue of vulnerable children in their schools.

I view my role in this research as a catalyst that triggered critical thought and reflection in the participants. For this reason, it is worth acknowledging the skills and experiences that enabled me to conduct this research successfully. In all humility, I dare say that my past experiences as a classroom teacher in a similar context, my sense of humour, simplicity, and ability to relate and adapt to the context were critical.

Additionally, my ability to involve participants as partners was very instrumental in this research. Thinking of my role in this research, Kincheloe et al.'s (2011) remarks critic regarding Paulo Freire seem apropos; like Freire, I gave participants “the opportunity as co-researchers to investigate, examine, critique and reinvestigate the problem under study so that they all became more critical and able to recognize the forces that subtly shape their lives” (p. 164). As a technique to encourage active involvement, I kept the number of participants in each focus group small. It is understandable that many people prefer sharing their ideas in small groups of people they can trust. While the participants appeared to be comfortable in these small groups, this approach also gave them enough time to speak and listen to each other. I also gave them opportunity to share some leadership roles in the focus group discussions such as having one of them acting as a chair-person of the group. This set-up encouraged them to ask questions of each other, to critique and to investigate the problem of vulnerable children in their midst.

Data Analysis

Given the purpose of this research, which was to gain in-depth insights into the phenomenon of school experiences of vulnerable children, and to understand the kind of

challenges educators face and the strategies they utilize in supporting the learning process of these children, the approach for analyzing data was significant. Strauss and Corbin (2008) describe data analysis as a process of eliciting meaning and gaining understanding. This procedure was critical in capturing and developing empirical knowledge that could be shared with not only the participating community but also with a wider community, particularly those in the same field of study.

Prior to beginning the first stage of data analysis, the data collected from different sources were read and translated from Kiswahili to English. After translating the data from all sources, I organized the findings into four categories representing data sources and research questions that were being answered. This arrangement reduced the data into manageable chunks through a process of open coding. Strauss and Corbin (2008) define open coding as breaking down data to discover the most significant themes. Following their suggestions, two major components of the open-coding process were utilized as a means of breaking down and organizing data according to main ideas. The two processes including comparing data and creating relevant questions. For example, what are the participants saying here? What are the main ideas contained in their answers? What are the similarities and differences in them? By asking such questions of my data and breaking it down, I was able to come up with the key themes that I have reported in the following chapter.

Dey (1993) noted that, “the significant process in qualitative analysis is also exemplified in interactive methods through which qualitative data is often produced” (p. 38). Likewise, in order to be successful in this kind of research, as suggested by Mertler (2006), I spent an ample time in continually reviewing and assessing the data, and

developing the codes. Hence, based on this standpoint, after coding all the data, I organized them to be in sequence that enabled me to see the patterns that evolved from different sources.

The second stage of data analysis involved describing the data. At this point, I analyzed the relationship between different themes and sub-themes and related them to my research questions. Mertler (2006) suggests asking, “How does the information in this category help me to understand my research topic and answer my research questions?” (p. 128). Hence, during this second stage of my analysis, I identified findings that were contradictory to the main themes.

The third stage was the interpretation of data. It involved attempts to make sense of my data. In this stage, I continued looking for relationships, similarities, and contradictions among the different categories I had created in the previous stage (Dey, 1993). The most important element of the interpretation was to determine if the data answered my research questions (Mertler, 2006). At this stage, I continued to ask critical questions of my data, such as “What do I find important in the data and why is it so?” Another important question I asked which helped me learn from the findings was “What can I learn from my data and what does it entails for this research?” By answering these questions, I was able to come up with well-articulated research findings as reported in Chapter Four.

Ethical Considerations

Creswell (2007) notes that, “regardless of the approach to qualitative inquiry, a qualitative researcher faces many ethical issues that surface during data collection in the field and in the data analysis and dissemination of the qualitative reports” (p.141). As this

research followed an approach involving multiple methods of data collection—including participatory observation, individual interviews, focus groups interviews and questionnaires—there were a considerable number of ethical dilemmas that required thoughtful consideration. Authorization to conduct research was mandatory and was obtained from both the Research Ethics Board (REB) at the University of Windsor and the Tanzania Commission for Science and Technology.

To ensure credibility for this study and to respect the dignity and interests of those participating, it was vital that I consider the four common key ethical principles discussed in previous studies (Halai, 2006; Gordon et al., 2011; Harrowing, Mill, Spiers, Kulig, & Kipp, 2010). The principles include: (a) informed and voluntary consent, (b) confidentiality of the information shared, (c) anonymity of research participants, and (d) benefit or at least no harm to participants (Halai, 2006, p. 8-9). According to Hatch (2002), when a researcher utilizes a qualitative approach whereby teachers and students are invited to become resources of information, the likelihood of exploitation is high, because the nature of their position in the schools puts them in a situation where it would be difficult to opt out of the study. To ensure that this research was conducted ethically, the four aforementioned principles were scrupulously observed. Creswell (2012) clarifies ethical considerations by stating that researchers must seek consent of the participants, and make sure that participants know the purpose of the study and that they have the option to withdraw.

Hence, prior to data collection, all necessary protocols were followed conscientiously as a means of ensuring this research was conducted in an ethical manner and that the participants did not feel compelled to participate. To ensure freedom of

participation and confidentiality, prior to collecting data, I provided clarification and specifications of the protocols (see Appendices 1A/1B & 2A/2B). After explaining the purpose of the research, its significance, and relevance to the participants and confirming with them that they had understood their role in this research and its impact, all participants were asked to sign a consent form. By so doing, the participants declared that they were participating in the research freely and that they gave permission for the researcher to utilize data collected from this research for purposes such as publication.

In order to prepare participants ahead of time, they were sent a letter of invitation containing the details of the research. On the data collection day, participants were given another chance to hear more about the research, the protocols, and their part in it before the official start of both individual interviews and focus group discussions. They then had a chance to ask questions before the consent forms were distributed and completed. There were three types of consent forms—the first was signed by the individual who participated in the individual interviews, the second was for the focus group discussions, and the third consent form was for audio-recording (see Appendices: 4 a & b). The issue of confidentiality was emphasized in all consent forms. In addition to having them sign the consent forms, I strongly asked all participants to maintain maximum confidentiality both during and after the study. For the purposes of confidentiality and anonymity, their real names were not used in reporting the findings, and data were secured in a locked room that only I could access.

Strengths and Limitations of the Study

Denzin and Lincoln (2011) have emphasized the importance of conducting qualitative research in a natural setting in order “to interpret the phenomenon in terms of

the meaning people give to them” (p. 3). One of the strengths of my research is that it was conducted in a natural context with the active participation of the respondents. The natural context of this research was part of the strength of this study because it helped in capturing the meaning of what the participants were saying. In addition, I conducted this research with maximum respect of the participants’ ways of life and ideas. Although the participants were bilingual, I opted to use Kiswahili, which is the language the participants know best or are most comfortable using. This enabled the participants to engage in active dialogue with each other and with me. In addition, a careful analysis was done to make sure that the views of the participants were not lost during translation. For this reason, some of the participants’ key or noteworthy responses are recorded in this document in the Kiswahili language in which they were spoken. To ensure that non-Swahili readers get the main ideas presented in Kiswahili language, English translation is provided immediately after each Kiswahili quote. Another strength emanating from this research is that different sources of information were used to gather the data. By putting the data together, I was able to find consistencies and themes that strengthened my research findings and made the report more reliable.

I also purposely designed this study to explore a very significant aspect of vulnerable children in the schools that other studies have overlooked. For this reason, the study contributes to the issue of vulnerable children, which, in itself, is one of its underlying strengths. According to Creswell (2007), qualitative research is conducted for a variety of important reasons, such as to explore a specific issue from scratch, to hear silenced voices, to obtain complex details about the problem, to obtain details by talking directly to people concerned, to encourage individuals to share their stories, to understand

the context, to explore the problem rather than using predetermined assumptions and so on. Based on these fundamental aspects, the involvement of vulnerable children was a very powerful source of data because I was able to gain much insight and draw some important conclusions from their stories regarding the issue of vulnerable children in the schools rather than merely listening to others speak about them.

In addition, for the purpose of this study, I employed a purposeful sampling approach to recruit participants and selected the research site in a manner recommended by Creswell (2012). More specifically, I employed a critical sampling strategy. In this strategy, I chose to involve schools that are known to have high numbers of vulnerable children and I also selected children who have experienced what it means to be vulnerable and marginalized. This approach contributed significantly to the study's rich findings because the participants were able to provide me with first-hand information regarding the issue of vulnerable children. Based on their lived experiences, participants remained engaged throughout this research and they eventually offered meaningful and practical suggestions for future intervention, thus addressing one of the study's primary objectives. The study represents the perspectives of a select group of students, teachers and school leaders in the Singida region of Tanzania. The findings of the study are not generalizable to other groups or other regions in Tanzania or elsewhere. The study also presents a particular account based on gender of the participants who volunteered for the study.

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented a broad discussion on the research design and methodologies which I utilized as a means to achieve the purpose of this study. This

study investigated school experiences of vulnerable children using five schools and one centre of orphaned and vulnerable children in Singida Tanzania. With the support of literature from previous scholarly works, I described the critical ethnographic research approach which enabled me to get closer to the research participants in order to understand the problem from experience. In the chapter I also provided an in-depth explanation of the four methods of data collection which included participatory observation, individual interviews, focus group discussion, and questionnaires. In the discussion, I noted that because each of these methods have their strengths and weaknesses it was necessary that I employ the four so that they could give me the opportunity to triangulate the findings for the purpose of a better understanding of the issue under study. In addition, in this chapter I also discussed the background of the research site, where I highlighted the issue of high poverty rates, the increase of vulnerable children in the region as indicated by statistics, and the issue of human trafficking in which children are among the victims of this illegal trade. I also noted my past involvement with the schools and the centre for the orphaned and vulnerable children there as one of the factors that motivated me to choose Singida as the focus areas of this study.

Prior to concluding this chapter on methodology, I also discussed the steps that were taken to ensure the research met the ethical requirements. In this section, I elaborated upon the kinds of protocols I observed in conducting this study after I had obtained clearance from both the University of Windsor and from Tanzania. Providing clear explanation to the participants, with the emphasis on their freedom to opt in or out

was significant. Finally I concluded the chapter with a brief explanation about the strengths and limitation of the study.

With these in mind, in the next chapter, I discuss the findings that emerged as a result of the procedures that I have discussed in this current chapter. The chapter is organized according to the themes as they came up in the findings. Among the major themes discussed are: the dichotomies of conceptualization of vulnerable children, school experiences of vulnerable children and their challenges. The findings also highlighted educators' challenges in educating vulnerable children, strategies they implement and the kinds of interventions needed for future improvement.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS PART I

The next two chapters contain the analysis of the research findings from the different sources of data. Chapter Four covers part one of the findings which were synthesized from the responses to question one. Question one inquired about school experiences of vulnerable children, how the children perceive themselves and how they are perceived by their educators. In addition, the current chapter reports on the challenges children faced and the kinds of expectations which vulnerable children viewed as a way forward for improving their school experiences. Data were gathered from a variety of sources utilizing different methodological approaches described in chapter three. The objective of this study was to make a constructive contribution towards the production of knowledge required for creating more awareness among government leaders, policy makers and educators regarding the issue of education for vulnerable children in Tanzania. It also aimed at understanding how vulnerable children experience school and how they are perceived and supported by the school. The study also explored the kind of intervention initiatives that must be taken by different educational stakeholders and government leaders in order to create a better world for vulnerable children by means of the education which they acquire. In order to achieve this quest, a critical lens was used in the process of analyzing the data. The process of analysis began with transcribing data from Kiswahili to English and then reading it over in order to identify themes from various data sources. The findings presented here are mainly perspectives from different participants, which have been synthesized and grouped under coherent themes with much care not to dilute the thoughts and ideas of the contributors. Among the themes presented

here include first, the dichotomy of conceptualization regarding vulnerable children; second, general characteristics and school experiences of vulnerable children; third, vulnerable children's challenges which include their lack of basic needs, poor school environment or context, and their status as vulnerable children—a status that makes them victims of negative misconceptions that turn their experience of school into a daily struggle filled with hopelessness; fourth, vulnerable children's expectations of their schools. The chapter concludes with a brief recap that prepares the reader to transition to chapter five which contains an analysis of the findings drawn from the participants' responses to questions two to four that guided this study.

For the purpose of capturing and maintaining the essence of what the participants intended to convey, some citations have been presented in the original language of Kiswahili as it was spoken by the respondents. To ensure no readers are left out, an English translation of each quote is provided. For ethical reasons, all names that appear in this analysis are pseudonyms.

Dichotomy of Conceptualization

In the effort to understand how vulnerable children were conceptualized in the context of this research, a dichotomy of opinion emerged between teachers and students. When school principals and teachers were asked to define vulnerable children in their schools, they did so in terms of advocacy conditions. In their context, educators saw vulnerable children as those whose basic necessities such as food, clothing, shelter, health services, and parental/adult care were unmet due to various challenges in their families and community. In their view, such children included those orphaned due to the death of one or both parents or due to total abandonment, or those who were living with parents or

caretakers with life threatening illness such as HIV/AIDS. The respondents also added that, due to the harsh climatic conditions in their region, other children were vulnerable due to severe poverty which brought about hunger which in turn resulted in homelessness, alcoholism, teen pregnancies, mental breakdown, hostile family life, and broken marriages. The participants noted that their schools were populated with children coming from all such conditions in which their basic human needs were not met.

Contrary to their teachers and school principals, some vulnerable children expressed their sentiments by taking note of their past and current experiences as well as their future hopes, which suggests that they see themselves as resilient children who, if given ample opportunity and basic necessities, are capable of being successful and making their future lives brighter. However, a few child-participants' viewpoints were not too far from how their teachers regarded vulnerable children, and they indirectly defined themselves as needy children who lack the assurance of basic needs. They also defined themselves as children who are in need of someone who can listen to them, care about them, and give them the support that they deserve as children.

In addition, some vulnerable children saw their dire circumstances as having forced them to live with feelings of uncertainty, and at times they were overwhelmed by feelings of fear and preoccupation about the security of their lives and how others perceive them. For example, in response to the written questionnaires which were answered by the children anonymously, one of them wrote,

Unlike other children who come to school from homes where they have parents to care for them, my school experience is filled with many preoccupations and thoughts about life. I think a lot about how I am perceived by teachers and my

peers because they know I used to live at the bus station with other homeless children. Such thoughts make me feel uncomfortable to be with other children. Sometimes I am discouraged about school but I don't want to give up. I know education is important to my life and I want to continue fighting until I succeed.

This expression shows the kind of struggles which vulnerable children go through and how they are determined to remain motivated, focused and persistent in working towards their education and life goals despite the many challenges. Another child wrote,

When going to school I feel very happy and excited. I think I am fortunate to have this chance of going to school. Many of my friends with whom I stayed in the streets and at the bus station, are still there and they have no hope of going to school. I have the chance to learn something at school and when I go to the centre I get food and I have a safe place to stay. My life is better now and I am working hard in order to succeed in my education and I can get a good life.

Furthermore, in response to the question on what the children would like to see changed in their school as a means of ensuring a better school experience, the respondents provided answers which demonstrated clearly that vulnerable children are resilient. One aspect that showed the presence of resiliency in these children was their ability to see things with a critical lens and the courage to demand their rights such as the right to be listened to and to be heard. For example one of them wrote: "I want my school principal and teachers to listen to me more." The respondent added, "Teachers should stop telling our problems to the public especial during school assembly because it makes us feel very bad." This expression is an indication that vulnerable children are aware of how educators use their vulnerable status to further marginalize them. The children also know

well that when educators use labels associated with their vulnerable conditions they are negatively affected. Speaking of this situation during the interview Melinda noted a teacher's command on one occasion: "Wakati mwingine mwalimu huweza kusema niitie wale watoto wa Kituo cha Malezi." [Translation: Call for me the children from the Rehabilitation Centre]. Melinda explained further why she did not like to be addressed as a child or children from the centre because of stereotypes associated with being at the centre for the orphaned and vulnerable children. Melinda and other children, who participated in this study, indicated that they are aware of the misconceptions and generalizations about the children who stay at the centre due to past life experiences for some of them who were homeless. The arguments or concerns that these children are raising clearly demonstrate their capability to resist marginalization and to demand the respect they deserve as children. I also see in these children the courage to confront their educators as a means to be successful in pursuing their academic and life goals. I was intrigued by a response from one of the children who wrote, "I want my school to have teachers who are passionate about their work and who care for their students, in this way I am sure I will be able to learn." To sum up, I find such viewpoints to be an expression of how vulnerable children define themselves, which is different from how their educators perceive them. In a nutshell, school principals and teachers in this research defined vulnerable children by their conditions and circumstances while vulnerable children described themselves as being determined, focused, persuasive, courageous and even resilient. In other words, the children are clearly aware of their life condition, and the significance of education in their lives.

Characteristics and School Experiences of Vulnerable Children

In order to understand school experiences of vulnerable children, principals and teachers were asked to describe their experiences and how they view vulnerable children. Table 1 represents what school principals and teachers highlighted as general characteristics of these children. In order to ensure anonymity, the schools have been labeled using letters of the alphabet. Note that the characteristics are reported the way they were identified by each school, which means there is some repetition. As shown in the table, these characteristics are the conditions of many vulnerable children—conditions which unfortunately are used to label these children.

Based on the characteristics of vulnerable children as listed in Table One below, all the five schools perceive vulnerable children as deficient and deviant. Any analysis of the table shows that educators tend to pathologize students as disruptive and lacking in academic and social skills. They present such a negative picture that there seem to be no room for success. They do not necessarily see their vulnerable students as capable and resilient enough to cope with everyday demands of schools.

Contrary to how educators conceptualize vulnerable children as represented in the table below, the findings from data collected from vulnerable children as reported in the section that will follow indicate how vulnerable children perceive themselves differently to how they are perceived by their educators.

Table 1

Principals' and Teachers' Characterization of Vulnerable Children

School A	School B	School C	School D	School E
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Stressed and unhappy – Lacking confidence – Academically challenged – Lack of motivation to learn – Lacks basic necessities – Easily drops out of school – Misses school or classes frequently – Some of them join peer groups with bad morals. They may be involved in bad activities such as stealing, sexual abuse, drugs, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Stressed and lacks attention in the class – Poor performers – They wear dirty clothes and lack basic learning materials – Unhappy and lack motivation to learn – Easily frustrated – Misses class often and can easily drop out of school – Tend to isolate themselves – They lack trust in their ability to succeed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – They are slow in their learning – Easily frustrated, depressed and stressed – Loss of hope – Poor school attendance – Lack of confidence and trust in themselves and others – Suffer inferiority complex – Malnourished and disorganized – Join gang groups with deviant behaviors – Can be disrespectful and defensive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Untidy/ not well dressed and malnourished – Lack basic necessities – Misses school, drop-out or fail – Unhappy and depressed – Lack seriousness in their studies – Gets angry easily, nervous, physically weak – Tend to isolate themselves – Lack confidence and self-acceptance – Feels inferior and fear of the unknown 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Many suffer stress and have difficulties relating with others – Dwells on emotional & easily discouraged – Academically limited – Find difficulties getting actively involved in the class due to lack of self-trust and confidence – Miss school/class very often – Some of them especially those who have been homeless have some disciplinary issues – Tend to give up learning and drop out of school – Physically weak and hungry or tired – Psychologically disturbed and traumatized.

The following are sub-themes that arose from both written questionnaires and individual interviews with vulnerable children who volunteered to participate in this study. The themes include how children perceived themselves and the kinds of challenges they experienced at school. In most cases, the children shared about their experiences and setbacks at school in comparison to other children whom they thought had better life conditions compared to theirs.

“We have Unique School Experiences”

Vulnerable children face many challenges in and out of school that make their school experience distinctly negative in comparison to that of their peers. According to many respondents, multiple factors contribute to this situation. As was expressed by several vulnerable children, lack of basic needs like food, stationery supplies, adult care, love, and moral support, among other needs, contributed greatly to making their school experiences difficult and different from the experiences of other children.

However, as was expressed by most participants, amidst the challenging situations that these children face both at their homes and at school, they have persistently kept going to school because of motivating factors that also contribute to how they experience school. For many, as they noted, the socialization aspect of school played a great role in motivating them. For example, some children admitted that they went to school to find friends to “hang out” with while others went because they had a chance to participate in social activities such as sports. For example, during the interview, Kasimu expressed in Kiswahili the reasons that kept him going to school:

Naipenda shule yangu kwa sababu nyingi, mojawapo ni kwamba, nakutana na marafiki na pia ninapata nafasi ya kuwa mchezaji wa mpira wa miguu. Kwa

kufanya hivyo napunguza mawazo, na najisikia vizuri kuliko kukaa tu nyumbani siku nzima” [Translation: I love school for many reasons, among them is that I meet a variety of friends and also I get to play football with the school team, these two help me to reduce stressful thoughts. In addition, going to school makes me feel better than just staying at home the whole day.]

Similarly, the majority of the children who participated in the interviews expressed how their school experience was different from that of other children because they did not have someone at home to tutor or to encourage them in their studies. Despite this situation, the children said that they persistently went on with school because they believed that education is the key to life. As a result of such belief, many children alleged that they went on with school because of ambitious positive hopes of achieving a better life in the near future. More particularly, children who are vulnerable, especially due to acute poverty and social disadvantages, suggested that they went to school believing strongly that the education they receive will eventually liberate them from their vulnerable conditions. Regrettably, as found in this study, some children are not so fortunate. Their school experience is appallingly unique because it is characterized by trauma, stressful learning conditions, worries about meeting their daily basic needs, and fear of dropping out of school due to the failure to contribute to the financial upkeep of the school or to meet school requirements such as having school uniforms. For example, some vulnerable children expressed how they experienced school differently compared to other children who are not vulnerable. One of them, Gibson who spoke eloquently about his personal school experience said,

Nikiwa shuleni najiona tofauti sana na watoto wanaotokea makwao ambako wanawazazi wanao wajali. Kwangu mimi kupata mahitaji muhimu ya shule kama vile michango na unifomu ni vigumu sana ukilinganisha na watoto wengine. Cha kuumiza zaidi ni kuona kuwa waalimu wengine hawatusikilizi shida zetu na wala hawataki kujua, wanachotaka wao ni kwamba kila mtoto akidhi mahitaji ya shule na sio juu yao kujua kama tunauwezo au la! Hali hii inakatisha tamaa kwani hatujui tutafanikiwa vipi. [Translation: My school experience is very different from that of other children who have caring parents. I struggle getting what I need in order to be able to remain in school including school uniform and other financial contributions. What is even more disappointing is that our teachers do not listen to our problems. Some of the teachers don't even seem to care, what they want is each individual to meet their needs without minding whether we are able or not. This situation is very discouraging because we don't know how we can succeed.]

On that same note, Marina raised similar concerns about her school experience saying, Baadhi ya waalimu na wanafunzi hutuona sisi tuishio katika kituo cha Malezi kama watoto watukutu. Waalimu wengine huweza hata kuwaambia wanafunzi wasifuate mienendo yetu na wala wasiwe marafiki zetu. Hali hii hutufanya tujisikie wanyonge zaidi na kuwa katika hali ya kutengwa. [Translation: Some teachers and students alike think of us children who live at the centre as deviant children. I think it is for these reasons some teachers instruct other students to avoid us lest they get influenced by our characters. Things like these make us children from the centre feel even more miserable and marginalized.]

The quotes I have just reported above indicate that vulnerable children feel profiled by their educators. The quotes also reveal the presence of negative conceptualization about vulnerable children held by educators and how such conceptualizations hurt these children. In other words, vulnerable children have negative school experiences due educators' negative perception of these children—perceptions that are tantamount to profiling them.

“Context Influences Our Experience of Teaching and Learning”

Throughout my fieldwork, including the interviews with school principals and the children, the focus group discussions with teachers, as well as the participants' observations and responses to the written questionnaires, the participants frequently voiced both positive and negative sentiments about their teaching and learning context. For example, when asked to share about their school experience, one of the participants, Kanongo said “I love the environment of my school, it is an average school, unfortunately, it does not have the capacity to help us as students to succeed in our education, because it lacks teaching materials and we have very few teachers” In this statement, Kanongo was referring to school location, properties, and teachers as elements of school context that influenced his school experience both negatively and positively. Similarly, when I asked Muna about her school experiences, she discouragingly exclaimed,

My school experience is generally not good, the school is not in a good condition, it lacks many things which we need in order to learn properly, for example, we don't have enough desks, books, laboratories, and many other things. This situation is discouraging because we can't study well and succeed.

In this statement, Muna suggested that the severe lack of basic needs fulfilment in the school contributes to negative school experiences of vulnerable children as they cannot afford some of the same basic needs fulfilments available to their peers. As noted by some school principals in this research, the schools are incapable to meet the needs of vulnerable children due to severe poverty experienced in Singida region. According to Mr. Makishe, Singida faces severe poverty resulting from prolonged and repeated droughts, poor infrastructure, lack of investment, and scarcity of employment.

Consequently, the schools have high numbers of vulnerable children whom they are unable to adequately support. Overpopulated classrooms and limited learning resources were also highlighted by participants as some of the major factors contributing to how vulnerable children without any other reliable means of getting what they are lacking, experience school differently. Speaking of this situation, Gladwell noted,

My school experience is not good like other children, who have parents, to give them what they need like books. Other children have parents who can pay good teachers to tutor them about the lessons that they don't understand in the class.

But I don't have the same opportunity. When I return to the centre, our matron asks us to work in the garden so I don't have time to study. This situation makes my school very difficult.

Despite the many aspects that negatively influence how vulnerable children experience school, some of them still hold steadfastly to the national slogans about education as the key to life and the only hope for disadvantaged children. For example, Kanongo highlighted this point when he said, “Mimi ninaamini kwa dhati kuwa nisipofanikiwa katika masomo yangu, maisha yangu ya baadaye yataendelea kuwa mabaya zaidi,

ninajitahidi na ninamwomba Mungu niweze kufanikiwa kwani Elimu kweli ndiyo mkombozi.” [Translation: I strongly believe that if I do not succeed in my studies, my future life will be worse. I am working hard and praying to God to help me so that I may succeed because education is the true liberator of my life.] Other children, who also believed in education as key to life, expressed their concern about their schools’ inability to ensure them relevant education that could be a source of improvement in their lives. Speaking of this situation Kassimu argued, “Shule ninayosoma, ni ya wastani, lakini haina uwezo wa kutusaidia sisi wanafunzi tuweze kufanikiwa katika mambo ya Elimu na maisha ya baadaye” [Translation: “The school I go to is an average school but it does not have the capacity to help us students to succeed in our education and for our future life.] Likewise, Kigoda who also believed in the power of education shared about his negative school experience saying: “My school experience is not good because we do not have teachers, many times we spend the whole day in the classroom without a teacher to help us in our studies” Similarly, Dorian noted,

I consider my school experience to be both positive and negative. It is positive because I enjoy going to school and meeting with other children. It is also negative because teachers do not teach us well and when students complain that they did not understand, some teachers tell us to assume we do. This is very frustrating for me because I want to learn.”

Like Dorian and Kigoda, most of the children who participated in this research expressed the conviction that if they had well-qualified teachers and reliable teaching and learning materials, then their education and/or life chances would be great. For example, Mamuna expressed this kind of conviction when she argued,

Mimi kama mtoto anayeishi katika mazingira magumu, natambua vema kuwa ili niweze kufanikiwa katika masomo yangu na maisha ya baadaye, ni muhimu kusoma katika shule, yenye vifaa vinavyohitajika kama vile vitabu na maabara. Ningependa pia tuwe na waalimu wenye Elimu ya kutosha, wanaoipenda kazi yao na wenye uchungu na ufaulu wa wanafunzi wao na pia ambao wako tayari kutolea muda wao kutusaidia sisi. [Translation: As a child who is living in vulnerable conditions, I recognize the significance of education in my life. I know that for me to succeed in my education and future life it is important to study in a school that has the necessary learning resources like books and laboratories. It is also important to have teachers with enough qualifications and teachers who are mindful and passionate about the success of their students. They should also be teachers who are committed and willing to sacrifice their time for our success.]

Regardless of the challenges that these children see as roadblocks in their studies, including continuous poor academic performance, they still bought into the national dream of quality education for all. Many see education as still being within their reach even when the conditions in which they are learning portray just the opposite. For example, when I asked some of the children about their vision and goals for their future life and career there were a variety of responses which indicated that most children had high hope that their academic goals were still within their reach despite the struggles they were encountering in their schools. For example, Muna spoke with excitement on how she hopes to continue with her studies to the university level to pursue medicine. When I further asked her what she might be doing to pursue her goals, she said, “Nasoma kwa bidii sana, ila naona sipati mashirikiano mazuri na waalimu wangu. Ningependa baadhi

yao wabadilishwe kwani hawana msaada wowote wa kimasomo kwetu sisi wanafunzi. Kwa maana nyingine, hatuwaelewi wanapofundisha pia baathi yao wanamazoea ya kukosa vipindi mara nyingi. [Translation: I am studying very hard but I do not have good cooperation with my teachers, I would like some of them to be changed because they are not helpful to students. Some of them miss class many times]. This point was also highlighted by five other children namely, Kara, Milingo, Mwangavu, Tonge and Mazi who in their own way expressed how they were still hoping that the education they are receiving would give them chance to succeed and possibly become mechanical engineers, medical doctors, and teachers all of which require successful learning. Most of these children seemed convinced that this would happen even when they know from the experience of those ahead of them that their chances of doing well in school are very narrow. When I further asked some participants how they hope to pursue their visions, Kara argued that,

The schools where we go are ill-equipped, in order for us to succeed in these schools our government needs to consider us and the kind of education we are getting. They need to visit our schools more frequently and provide us with competent and committed teachers. If they do this, we can succeed in our studies and then we can get good jobs and better life.

In addition, the overwhelming majority of the children complained about unfair treatment in the school as one of the factors that contributes to their negative school experience. For example Calvin argued that it was unfair to be punished by teachers because of the difficulties he experienced in understanding some of the subjects such as Mathematics and English. Calvin presented this point arguing,

At my school, there are children who have chance to get special tutors for some difficult lessons like English and Mathematics. When these children come to class, they understand the teacher faster than others. As a result, those of us who do not have this opportunity, we don't understand as quickly as they do. This situation is a problem because those who do not understand are punished by the teacher and are considered not as intelligent. Some teachers ignore us even when we ask questions. Sometimes they refer us to ask our fellow students who understand.

Many participants who spoke of this situation, indicated how they felt intimidated, ignored, and humiliated by their teachers due to the struggle they go through as a result of the different learning levels in the classroom which is the consequence of some children having special tutors and some not. Explaining the criticality of this condition, Aian noted,

Teachers should stop being too fierce, instead, they should be kind and understanding, build more positive relationship with students as a way of giving us a peaceful mind which we need in order to learn. I suggest that our teachers avoid favoring some children and ignoring others due to their poor status because not their choice or their own fault.

In addition, Godson underlined similar views on how vulnerable children experience intimidation and fear unjust treatment by their teachers saying, "I am usually filled with fear and anxieties due to some teachers who hate me and say derogatory words about me and other children who live at the centre." Elaborating this point further, Godson noted, "I wish my teachers would stop labelling and suspecting me for bad behaviours. I also

wish teachers could treat us children from the centre like any other children in the school, instead of ignoring and neglecting us.” When I asked Godson to explain further how this situation happens, some of the participants said that they associated it with some occasional instances when their questions in the class were ignored and often left unanswered by some teachers. Describing this situation, one of the participants, Malaki, noted,

Baadhi ya waalimu wetu wana ubaguzi hata darasani, mwanafunzi anaweza akauliza swali, mmoja akajibiwa na mwingine asijibiwe. Nimeona hii ikitokea mara nyingi kwetu sisi tunaotokea mazingira magumu. Mtu anaweza kuuliza swali akaambiwa subiri na lisijibiwe ila la mwingine litajibiwa. Hii imenitokea mara nyingi na ikanifanya nijsikie vibaya. [Translation: Some of our teachers are discriminatory even in the way they respond to students’ questions in the classroom. I have often witnessed instances when we ask questions some are answered while some are not. This situation makes me and other students feel left out and regarded as hopeless.

Furthermore, a number of children spoke of how their educators hold negative perceptions of who they are as vulnerable children. Taking note of this situation,

Mamuna maintained,

Ningependa waalimu wetu watambue kuwa, ijapokuwa tunaishi katika mazingira magumu, hatukupenda tuwe hivyo, naomba watutambue sisi kama watoto wengine na watupokee na watutunzie utu wetu. [Translation: I would like our teachers to recognize that it was not our choice to become vulnerable, and that

vulnerability does not take away our human dignity for this reason we deserve to be treated well like other students.]

In addition, most of the children spoke of their negative school experience indicating how they were treated as burdens or as children incapable of learning and so not significant as others, which marginalizes them and makes them feel miserable at school. For example, Apolo explained about this situation when he said,

Kusema kweli maisha yangu shuleni siyo mabaya sana, ila ninaona sifaidiki na kwa Elimu ninayopata kwani waalimu wangu hawana moyo wa kunisaidia sana. Mara nyingi ninahisi kuwa waalimu hawanisaidii kwani wanaona kama vile mimi niishie kwenye kituo cha watoto watokao katika mazingira magumu sina faida yoyote kwa jamii. [Translation: In truth my school experience is not too bad. However, I don't think I benefit much by my going to school. I say this because I see my teachers as if they are not willing or have time to support children like me. Sometimes I think that teachers are unwilling to support me because they most probably think that we who come from the centre for the orphaned and vulnerable children do not have any benefit to the society.

Teacher–learner Relationship

The teacher–learner relationship is one of the issues that came up strongly in this study. The majority of the children who contributed to this study expressed that the teacher–learner relationship was one of the most important aspects of their learning that they needed most in order to make their school experience more meaningful and to become successful in their studies. The children noted that their vulnerability had jeopardized their chance to be in a close and positive relationship with adults. At the

centre for the orphaned and vulnerable children where they lived, the children had few opportunities to be in close relationships with adults as there was only one matron that looked after more than 40 children. I believe it was as a result of such conditions that the children found themselves striving for adult relationships and care.

It is no wonder that, when asked in the questionnaires about how educators could be more helpful, some children responded by saying that they would like their educators to establish a more positive relationship with them both inside and outside the school environment. For example, one of the participants anonymously wrote, “I would like my school principal and teachers to help me with advice for my education and life because I do not have someone else to rely on for a good advice.”

Although this issue came up strongly, there were contradictory opinions among responses from different children and also within the responses of the same child and among children that went to the same school. Some children claimed to have experienced a positive relationship with their teachers while others wrote about a mix of positive and negative experiences in terms of teacher–learner relationship. There were also those who claimed to have had negative relationships, which they saw as a hindrance to their learning process. For example, one of the participants anonymously wrote, “Since I started school my experience has been positive because our teachers treat all equally. I enjoy a good relationship with my teachers and peers. When I have a problem they help me.” Another one with a mixed view wrote:

I consider my relationship with my teachers to be good but it is also bad because some teachers are not teaching us well and when we say we have not understood some teachers tell us to assume we have understood this makes me unhappy.

Most children who participated in this study indicated that they suffered because of their weak relationship with their educators. For example, an anonymous child indicated his disappointment as follows: “My experience is not good. Sometimes I experience all kinds of discouragement. My relationship with some of my teachers is not good. I feel like my teachers do not like me and they don’t seem to care about me.” However, this same child expressed his wishes for the future: “I would like my school principal and teachers to show me more kindness and love and to support me in my learning in order to have a good life in the future.” Another student anonymously wrote:

Nilikuwa nikiomba waniwezeshe Kitaaluma na upendo ndio nitapata Amani shuleni kwangu ninaposoma, kwani upendo ndio msingi wa maisha bila upendo hatutaweza kusoma. [Translation: All I am asking of my teachers is to support me with love, in that way I will have peace while in school for I believe if I am peaceful I can study because love is the foundation of life and without love it is hard to focus in the study.]

On that same note, another respondent anonymously argued that “I think if there is a good relationship between teachers and all students our school experience would be good, but now it is not, because for any little mistake, we get punished which means it will be difficult to establish a good relationship.”

Similarly, in response to one of the written questionnaires that inquired about what the children would like their school principals to do for them in order to improve their school experience, one of the respondents wrote, “I would like our school principals to be more supportive, to listen to us and follow up with teachers as a way of making sure we are appropriately and without discrimination.” These responses amazed me because of

the level of critical thinking achieved by these children. It seemed to me that they were very perceptive in taking note of all that happened to them at school. They observed how both teachers and students perceived them on a daily basis. It became clear to me that in the world of vulnerable children, nothing is taken for granted. It is also evident that these children had very high expectations of their teachers.

Students who participated in this study suggested that in order to experience school more positively teaching and learning ought to take place in a context characterized by reciprocal love and care. Their views seem to resonate well with Kosnik and Beck's (2009) study that described teaching as a relational act, meaning that in order to effectively teach there must be a positive teacher–learner relationship. To put it another way, if a teacher enters a classroom and demonstrates to the students a high sense of humor, integrity, higher expectations for each child, passion for the children and for his/her work, ability to keep students engaged, and possession of clear objectives and knowledge of the material, the student will most likely take up the same zeal and strive to be like their teacher. The opposite is also true. That is, if a teacher is lacking most of the qualities I have just listed, his or her behaviour will influence the students negatively and learning is less likely to occur.

“Lack of Basic Needs Fulfilment Makes School Life Stressful and Daunting”

All the respondents in this study indicated that severe lack of basic needs fulfilment for vulnerable children contributed to making school life stressful and daunting for teachers and students alike. For example, Mrs Gitonga expressed how she felt distressed as she witnessed some of their children going hungry the whole day with

nothing available at school to give to these children. Mrs Gitonga noted this when she argued,

The issue of vulnerable children in our school is a big problem. The whole school community is suffering because of this situation. As a teacher, standing in-front of a child who is hungry is not easy. I get stressed too because I know that I don't have a quick answer to solving this problem.

On their side, the children who suffered due to a lack of basic needs fulfilment noted that this situation was causing them a lot of stress. The children expressed that as a result of such stress their learning process was severely affected. For example, Mwangavu shared that “the stressful moments I have at school affects my learning ability.” When I further asked Mwangavu to tell me whether his school experience is different from that of other children not identified as vulnerable, he quickly retorted,

Oh yes, my school experience is different in many ways; I am often overwhelmed by all kinds of thoughts about school, how to get my basic needs like food and learning materials and sometimes about what will happen if I don't pass my national examinations.

Additionally, Mwangavu noted that he is often overwhelmed and deeply stressed by the thought of how he is perceived and treated by other children in school. He added that because he had lived on the streets for more than 4 years, he wondered what those who had seen him as a homeless child might be thinking of him. His explanation resonates with me because from my personal experience in Tanzania, children who are found roaming and living on the streets are generally regarded as delinquent children. Such children are derogatively referred to as “Chokora” a Swahili term that means street

children. This situation affects the children, their motivation to learn or even to be in school due to the negative status that they must live with every day. As I discussed in the previous section about the need for a strong teacher and or/educator relationship, these vulnerable children need to have a strong relationship with their educators who can show them trust and understanding as a means of building in them self-confidence and learning morale.

Marginalization and Stigmatization Lowers School Morale

Vulnerable children in this study expressed that they often felt marginalized and stigmatized in a number of ways that contributed to lowering their school morale. Some of the incidences that made them feel that way included: frequent remarks about their status as vulnerable children; being streamed or singled out and treated differently compared to other children in the school; the use of other that differentiated them from other students (e.g., being called by the name of the place where they lived rather than by their names); being told they must work harder to overcome their disadvantaged conditions; being suspected for unacceptable behaviours; being ignored and/or not trusted like others; being referred to as examples of children with undesirable behaviours who must be avoided; and being censured more harshly than other students in many things, including poor academic performance.

According to most participants, such experiences were the cause of low morale for learning, and had in some cases become a source of despair. Speaking of how he sees himself marginalized within the schools, Tonge said that, “When I am at school I do not feel like I am enjoying the freedom which other children have. Instead, I feel caged and judged from the cage.” Other children expressed further that experiences like those noted

above had led some of them to hate school to the point of giving up totally. The aspect of low morale was also noted by several teachers. Those teachers maintained that based on their experience with vulnerable children, the children had low school morale that in part affected their educators' attempts at teaching. This explanation indicates that there is a serious dichotomy between how teachers view low school morale in vulnerable children and how the children themselves regard it. There is therefore the need to analyze the issue of low school morale further in order to trace its root causes and to resolve it.

Daily Struggles and Hopelessness

Most respondents in this study, particularly the children, indicated that they experience school as being less a rewarding experience than it is a daily struggle to be endured. The children's responses to the written questionnaires included a long list of factors that had led them to view school as a daily struggle, including: lack of understanding between them and their teachers; severe lack of basic needs fulfilment; worries about the possibility of failing national qualifying examinations; misperceptions of who they were as vulnerable children; being judged by their past life; worry and uncertainty about their near future; and being profiled and judged by other children, to name but a few. Based on these points, it is evident that school was indeed a struggle for these vulnerable children. In their responses to the questionnaires, the children indicated that their school experience is more about endurance rather than a positive learning experience. Many children highlighted this point when they shared about their school experiences and what they expect from their schools. For example, one participant wrote: "My school experience is not good sometimes I feel left out and discouraged because some teachers do not help students who have not understood, it is a waste of time to stay

in class if I am not learning.” Another student also wrote about their disappointment with the school: “I don’t like my school, my experience is bad because teachers discriminate us and they speak ill of us children who leave at the centre for orphaned and vulnerable children.” On that same note, still another student described their school experience as filled with dissatisfaction and discouragement as they stated: “My school experience is not good, some days are better than others, I enjoy when teachers come to teach us, but some days they don’t, because of this my school is not preparing me to improve my life, I am discouraged.”

Similar experiences of hopelessness and of school as a struggle also came up during individual interviews. Some children told me in the interviews that they had often considered quitting school altogether but did not because they saw school as the only place they could go, even if they were not really enjoying it. For example, Milingo, one of the children participants, who seem to be craving an education that would guarantee him a better life shared about the struggle he experiences in the school and the daunting nature of such experiences. With a sad face, Milingo took a deep breath before he raised his voice:

Mimi naona shule kama ni mateso makubwa kwangu. Kwanza waaalimu hawanipendi, kila siku ni adhabu na kufundishwa hatufundishwi vizuri. Mfano siku nyingine tunakaa darasani siku nzima bila Mwalimu au mara nyingine, kiranja huachiwa notes atuandikie na sisi tunakili, lakini cha kusikitisha, tulichokiandika mara nyingi hakifundishwi, au Mwalimu hupitia harakaharaka. Mwenye kuelewa na asiyeelewa yote sawa. Kwa sababu hizi mimi hushawishika sana kukaa tu nyumbani kuliko kwenda shule. [Translation: I see school as being

great suffering to me. In the first place, teachers do not like me, we are easily punished and we are hardly learning or being taught. For example, some days we spend the whole day in class without a teacher. Other times the head prefect is given notes for us to copy. What is more frustrating is that at times the teachers do not teach on the notes we copy or if they do, it is done in such a rush and without care whether we understand or not. For these reasons, many times I am tempted to stay home rather than going to school.]

I also found out that most of the children held onto the ideological slogan “education is the key to life.” Despite their strong belief in this slogan, the children also indicated that they were slowly realizing that their dream of achieving the kind of education that would realistically be their key to life was merely a fantasy. Several children shared that they were affected both psychologically and morally as they observed those ahead of them failing their national qualifying exams year after year. The children noted that witnessing such massive failures on a yearly basis made them realize that they had little chance of achieving what they had hoped for through education—“a good job and a good life”. In other words, the children were hoping to get a kind of education that is emancipatory. For example, Melinda argued; “Mimi nilikuwa nikitegemea nisome nipate elimu nzuri ambayo itaniondoa katika hali ya unyonge, lakini kwa hali ilivyo sina matumaini tena, kwani kila mwaka naona wenzetu wanafeli vibaya sana”. [Translation: I was hoping that by going to school I would achieve a kind of education that will get me out of miseries, but the way I see things happening with those ahead of us who continue to fail their national examinations, there is no hope that things will be different for us.]

Expressing similar feelings of hopelessness, Apolo argued,

Najitahidi sana kusoma, lakini kuna mambo mengi yanayonikatisha tamaa ya kuendelea na masomo. Baathi ya mambo hayo ni kiwango cha chini cha ufaulu wa shule za hapa kwetu ukilinganisha na mashule mengine nchini. Wanafunzi wengi wamehitimu masomo yao lakini hawajaambulia chochote kwani walifeli mitihani ya taifa na sasa wameishia mitaani. Hali hii inanikatisha sana tamaa ya kuendelea na masomo. [Translation: I do my best to study, but there are many things that discourage me from continuing with my studies. Among them is the low academic performance of our schools. Many of the students who were ahead of me whom I knew as hardworking students did not do well in their national examinations. They have now disappeared into the villages with no hope for a better future. This situation is very discouraging.]

As in many countries, the Tanzanian school system is designed in a way that before students make the transition from primary to secondary education or to the tertiary level, they must pass the qualifying national examinations that are considered high stakes. The examinations are highly competitive and the results are published in the mainline newspapers, different blogs and through the National Examination Council of Tanzania (NECTA) website. Students, continuously observe what is going on in their schools and in the country. They know who is failing and who is passing the examinations. No wonder the children in this study described their school experience as a struggle filled with hopelessness. Sharing about school experience, fear and anxiety, one of the students noted, “Sometimes I feel like asking to change school or decide to quit schooling” (Marina). Similarly, Kiko spoke of his anxieties and fears about his schooling saying, “I

am more concerned about the education I am getting and how it will prepare me for my life especially when I will no longer be getting support from the centre.” The kind of fear and anxieties that these children were raising derived from watching national examination results that dashed their dreams. The children also expressed how their hope in education as a means of a better life was melting away due to the poor conditions of the schools they were in and the poor academic performance of those ahead of them. For example, speaking of this situation, Mazi expressed his discontent with the school he was attending as he noted, “My school does not have the capacity to help students to succeed in our education, sometimes I feel like we go to school just to pass sometimes there, it is difficult to see the benefits.” Mazi further explained how he was beginning to lose hope for a sound education, saying that his school was too ill equipped to support him. Mazi noted,

How can I be successful, when I hardly learn at school? How can I perform well when I am competing with other schools in Tanzania that have all the learning resources and our school hardly has any? We are told to read hard, but our school does not have books; we do sciences like chemistry, biology, physics, and geography but we don't have laboratories where we can conduct the necessary experiments. I believe it is as a result of this situation and also lack of good teachers and books that the majority of those ahead of us failed their science examinations. I knew some of them as being really intelligent and I did not expect them to fail so badly.

Thoughts such as these were echoed by many of the vulnerable children who, although they indicated that they still believe in education as the key to increase their life chances,

had begun to significantly lose hope. They seemed stressed, disheartened, and frustrated by the kind of education they experienced.

It was most probably for the above reasons that one of the respondents, Chini, expressed quite emotionally that “I go to school just for the sake of it. I don’t think it is helping me.” In a nutshell, the children have learned that the situation of their schools do not promise them a better future. The children also know that there are alternative options of schools where other children go and benefit from education. However, due to their current financial situation, they also know that they do not have such options. The children pointed out some of the better schools in the area and expressed how they wished they could move to those schools where their friends were successful. In short, the children were essentially saying that they were aware that their schools were failing them. In other words, the children believed that if only their schools had more resources, if their relationship with their teachers improved or if they work really hard, then they might get a kind of education that might improve their life chances. Muna underlined this point when she argued, “In truth our experience as children living in difficulty situation is not good because teachers discriminate and at times they punish us for the reasons that are not clear.”

On that same note, Suluhu described her disappointment with the situation of the school that she viewed as not being helpful. Suluhu noted:

I have many fears especially when I have to go to school and missing something which we were ordered to bring to school such as school contribution, learning materials which I often do not have, I fear to be sent away from the school. Sometimes teachers can send me home because I don’t

have shoes or because my school uniform is dirty or torn. I fear if I am sent home I will remain behind, I will not be able to do well in my studies.

The children also know well that because of being in poor and vulnerable conditions their chances to benefit from education are limited, and as a result they see themselves trapped in the cycle of vulnerability with little hope of getting out of it. These kinds of thoughts came from Malaki who with a sad tone expressed his frustrations and worries about his education and his future saying,

I have many great fears because sometimes I am not sure if I go to school I will have the opportunity to learn or if I will go to work in the fields the whole day instead of studying. The way the school is I am afraid it is not helping me. I am more concerned about the education I am getting and how it will prepare me for my life after I move away from the centre.

“We are Victims of Negative Misconceptions”

In this study, it became evident that vulnerable children have negative school experience, and are misunderstood and victimized. Many of them saw their previous and current status as the reason for which they were being victimized or corporally punished. One of the participating children wrote, “I have fears about what my day will be like, how the teacher will treat me, the kind of names I will be called and how I might be suspected.” Similarly, another one noted,

When I get up in the morning I feel good that I am going to school, but there is a teacher who treats children from the centre (centre of the orphaned and vulnerable children) very badly so this makes me worry about the possibility of meeting with such a teacher.

Several other students, particularly boys, felt targeted for wrongdoing. They also felt that when they made mistakes, their teachers were more severe with them than they were with other students. Describing this situation, Aian argued,

I know some teachers do not like me because they know I used to live on the streets before I came to the centre. At times when I have a problem and I tell the teacher, I do not get much help instead they mock and despise. I know too that they do not trust me or other children who stay at the centre. For example, if I want to borrow a book, the teacher does not allow me, but other children are allowed to take the book home.

Related to misconception and victimization is the aspect of corporal punishment. Although corporal punishment is not unique to vulnerable children, they express strong opinions about it because they feel particularly targeted. Many of them expressed concerns about the corporal punishment that still exists in many Tanzanian schools, saying that they are often made victims because of misconceptions about who they are as vulnerable children. Due to such misconceptions, the children felt that they are being targeted, profiled, mistrusted, blamed, and not liked as much as the other students. They also expressed that they are often seen as a burden because they are unable to make the required financial contributions to the school. The children believed the misconceptions held by their educators were the reason for which they were frequently caught making minor mistakes that led them to receive corporal punishment. Some children noted that corporal punishment was overwhelming and not at all helpful; in fact, it made them hate school. Expressing objections to corporal punishment, Bwejuu said, “My life is itself a punishment, if teachers love me, they will not punish me. I wish they could talk to me

instead of beating me.” Critiquing the use of corporal punishment, Kigoda expressed, “I wish my teachers would encourage me in my studies by showing me love and care rather than using a stick and beating me up like a criminal and at times with no explanation.”

Corporal punishment that resulted from negative perception was also expressed as being the source of fears, anxiety, and concern about safety issues. It is natural that children who have or are going through traumatic experiences in their lives have multiple fears and anxieties. Through the study’s questionnaires, I had asked the children to answer anonymously whether they were experiencing any kinds of fear or anxieties while in school. In response to this question, a few children indicated that they did not have any fears or anxieties. For example, one of them wrote; “I have no fears or anxieties; I feel good about going to school and to be with other students and to learn together.” Likewise, another one stated, “I have no fears, I am happy to go to school because I know this is a preparation for my life and I do well in my studies. In addition, I don’t really have fear or anxieties because when I am at school I feel like I am at home with my family.”

Contrarily, the majority of the children indicated that they had different types of fears and anxiety, and at times they felt unsafe. For example, some children said that they were always afraid about what might happen to them on their way to school as they had to walk a long distance, sometimes on isolated paths. Others were anxious and afraid about what would happen to them at school because of the culture of corporal punishment. For example, one of them stated, “I always have fears and anxieties especially when we have homework and I am not sure I understood my teacher. Because

if I don't do it right then I will be punished." Likewise, another child indicated he/she was always afraid because of the inability to meet academic expectations:

Ni lazima niwe na hofu kwa sababu ninapokosea kujibu maswali ninaweza kuambiwa, "unalelewa na huku unafanya hivi, unakula ugali wa watu bure na unachezea hela za watu" Kwa sababu kama hizi ni lazima nipate wasiwasi na hofu ninapotaka kufanya jambo siwezi kujiamini kufanya kitu kwa uhuru.

[Translation: I must have fears because when I fail answering questions, I am often reprimanded and told that, "I am playing with the donors' money, eating for nothing." Due to reasons such as these, I am always overwhelmed by doubts and anxieties. I feel helpless, without freedom to act and at times, it is difficult to trust my ability to do something well.]

Other children indicated that they feared the possibility of being sent away from the school due to a lack of basic necessities, such as school uniforms and books, or because of insufficient financial contributions. In addition the children wrote about having deep fears and anxieties due to concerns about not achieving their academic goals for a brighter future. One of them made a strong statement on the latter topic:

Ninapoenda shuleni napatwa na hofu kubwa kwanza nafikiria nikienda shuleni sina uhakika wa kusomeshwa, iwapo hakuna waalimu darasani huenda tukaishia kufanyishwa kazi za nje tu. Saa zingine naona bora nikikaa nyumbani nijisomee mimi mwenyewe itakuwa afadhali. Naogopa iwapo nitaendelea na shule kwa namna hii uwezekano wa kufaulu ni ni kidogo sana. [Translation: When I go to school I am often afraid and anxious because if the teacher does not come to school then we will end up doing manual labour. Sometimes I consider staying at

home to simply study on my own. I am also afraid if I continue with school the way it is now, the possibility of passing is very little.]

In addition some children had fear and anxiety because of how they were being treated at school. For example, one of them noted, “I am usually filled with fear and anxieties because of some teachers who hate me and say derogatory words about me without telling what I have done wrong.” Another child who had fear and anxiety due to safety issues stated, “I fear going to school when it rains due to floods and I have to cross a river.”

Resilience and Ability to Thrive Through Hardships

Resilience and the ability to thrive through hardships was one of the themes that also came up strongly in the responses from the children. During the individual interviews with some of the children, I inquired about how they fared with school despite the many challenges, including the lack of their most basic needs. The children had multiple responses that clearly demonstrated their resilience and ability to thrive through hardships. For example, Kibe put it this way:

I thank God because it is only a few children like me that get the opportunity to be in school. I feel good that I am in school. I will not play around with such opportunity. I know the challenges I am facing have an end.

Responding to the same question, Marina stated, “School life is very difficult for me, but I keep going because I value education and I like what I am learning and my teachers because I know they are preparing me for a good life.” Similarly, Malaki expressed, “I like going to school because there I meet many friends and when I have a problem I can

tell the head-teacher or my class teacher and they understand me and can help me.”

Similar to the others, Kiko described what truly motivated him to keep going to school:

Naamini kwa dhati kuwa Elimu ni ufunguo wa maisha na kwamba Elimu hiyohiyo itanisaidia katika kumudu maisha kulingana na mazingira ninayoishi na hivyo kupata kuishi maisha yaliyo bora zaidi. [Translation: I strongly believe that education is the key to life and that if I am successful, it will enable me to cope with life in my environment.]

Furthermore, during their individual interviews, some children noted how on a daily basis they face adversities and threats that cause them trauma, stress, anxieties, and uncertainties. Despite of all these experiences, the children endured their hardships and kept going ahead with life as it unfolded. For example, Mamuna described the following experience saying:

Since the demise of my parents, I developed many fears and uncertainties about my life and that of my younger sibling. I had to worry about food and other basic needs for the two of us. After we ended up on the streets I worried not only about food and other needs but also about safety because police always tried to send us away from the streets. When we fortunately left the streets to stay at the centre and to go to school, I thought it was the end but it was not. To date I am still worried about getting my needs, about school and about many other things.

Despite all these, I have not given up, I am still hoping for the best.

Responses such as these were for me the sign posts that indicated clearly that these children had through adversities developed positive attitudes towards life that help them to remain strong and resilient. Because of the resilience that they had developed, the

children were able to survive and to continue on through many other adversities. It broke my heart when one of the children, Kiko narrated her lived and painful experience:

Having become orphaned and homeless at the age of 7, I experienced many troubles. The plights of life forced me to learn many survival skills and to be strong. When I was hungry, I had to do whatever I could in order to eat. Since then, I have learned that in life we have to keep trying because I know one day my life will be good. This is true because, when I was living on the streets, I never thought that I would one day be in school as I am today.

Kiko's experience is a good example of what it means to be resilient. Moreover, the children's willingness to freely share about their past and current experiences was also clear evidence of deep-rooted resilience.

Another aspect that characterized the resilience of these children was their ability and willingness to connect with others. For example, Kassimu demonstrated such resilience when he said to me,

I love spending time studying and in sports, the two go together and school is for me the place where I can get these. In addition, I love school because I get the chance to be with other students and to do things together. From the school I am also getting the formation that I was not fortunate to receive from my parents.

Some of the children also spoke of their intention to give back to their communities after they grow up and become successful. Calvin showed such determination by noting "I want to study very hard to get a good education so that in the future I can have a good life and I can help children like me." This statement was for me an indication of powerful resiliency. With these kinds of statements, it was clear that because of their resilience,

children like Mdoe no longer think selfishly. They were instead thinking beyond the periphery of their own lives. Though Shaffer et al. (2007) argue that there is no “magic bullet” approach in fostering resilience, the vulnerable children who participated in this study evidently had fostered resilience that helped them through many hardships.

Vulnerable Children’s School Expectations

In order to grasp the experiences of vulnerable children and to get their views about what they expect of their schools as a way of breaking from the cycle of vulnerability, I asked children to write down what they considered to be the most basic and urgent need for their academic success. I also asked them to provide their views on what they would like to see changed in the school and how they would like their teachers and school principals to support them. The answers to these questions revealed that vulnerable children are very attentive to what goes on in their school and they have many constructive suggestions to offer. The majority (nearly 99%) highlighted schools’ physical environment as one of the major aspects that they would like to see improved. Specifically, the children suggested that the government should seriously consider providing learning resources to their schools. Likewise, approximately 70% of the children recommended that educators should do more to support vulnerable children psychologically, socially, and morally. For example, one of them stated, “I would like my school principal and teachers to show me more kindness, true love, and also to support me in my learning in order to have a good life in the future.” Another one expressed identical sentiments, saying, “All I need from my teachers is love because without love in the school it is difficult to be in school and to study peacefully.”

Furthermore, some of the children indicated that what they expected from their educators was greater understanding and a positive teacher–student relationship. On that same note, some children expressed that they expected that such a relationship would mean that teachers could provide them with good advice when they need it. Some children equally indicated that they were aware of the fact that their conditions had deprived them of adult care and support. Noting this situation, one of them stated, “I would like my school principals and teachers to help us and to encourage us in our studies and also to give us good guidance so that we are able to live good life in the society.”

In addition, the children emphasized some additional expectations for their school principals and teachers. First, the children indicated that educators must make an extra effort to eradicate bullying and all forms of stereotypes used against vulnerable children. That is, they want an end to the use of patronizing names such as “Chokora” meaning street children and “vibaka” meaning pickpockets. The children further noted that being called by such derogatory names causes them psychological damage which in turn influences their school experience and learning morale. Second, the children want school to consider the use of open dialogue between students and school council. The children noted that such dialogue would give them a forum to air their views, which can contribute to the improvement of how they experience school. Third, the children wrote that they expected their educators to talk to them and listen to them with respect, trust them and support them, call them by their names rather than labels, show them compassion and love, and finally provide them with adequate learning resources and a good school environment.

This chapter focused on the presentation of the findings from both the children and educators regarding school experiences of vulnerable children. The chapter highlighted the dichotomy of conceptualization regarding the education of vulnerable children from the perspectives of educators and the perspectives of the children. Major themes which arose from the responses of the vulnerable children regarding their school experiences, challenges and their suggestions for what can be done to improve their school experiences were also described.

CHAPTER FIVE

FINDINGS PART II

This chapter reports on three important segments of the main findings in the study. The first section reports on the challenges educators face in supporting vulnerable children's learning process. The challenges reported comprised difficult working conditions, dealing with learners who experience traumatic stress, inadequate government support and lack of policy to safeguard the wellbeing of vulnerable children in the school, poor physical environment, the culture of academic failure in the schools, and lack of parent/guardian involvement. The second section reports on the kind of strategies implemented in the schools to support vulnerable children in their learning process. Although the teachers were inconsistent in implementing strategies to respond to the students' needs, there were some short-term and long-term strategies that were highlighted as found in this report of the findings. The third segment is a report on various strategies which were highlighted by educators as possible interventions necessary to mitigate obstacles experienced by vulnerable children and educators. Among the strategies reported in this chapter are, improving working and learning conditions in the schools, establishing and implementing policies that can safeguard vulnerable children in the schools, encouraging teacher development programs, ensuring collective ownership and commitment to efforts of solving the problem of vulnerable children in the school by all educational stakeholders, introducing positions for school counselors and social workers in all schools.

Educators' Challenges

Because of dire poverty and the spread of diseases that claim many adult lives, the number of vulnerable children in Tanzanian schools has increased drastically. As a result, schools are becoming less capable of supporting them due to many setbacks, including the poverty that surrounds schools as well as the lack of teacher preparedness.

As noted in this study, the increase in the number of vulnerable children is challenging to educators. One of the questions that directed this study was an inquiry about the kind of challenges educators face as they attempt to support and scaffold vulnerable children's learning processes. In response to this question, teachers and school principals provided some answers that demonstrated that educators, comprised of 5 principals and 29 teachers, are aware of the responsibilities associated with their respective positions. In their responses, educators expressed that their experiences in fulfilling some of the key responsibilities, such as helping children to overcome trauma and stress in order to be in a position to learn effectively, has not been easy. The teachers repeatedly identified and emphasized the aspect of fulfilling their educational roles towards these children as one of their most disturbing and stressful tasks. In other words, the teachers do not feel equipped to deal with the children's social lives and psychological needs (e.g., counseling).

From the five focus group discussions that were held in five different schools, the participants noted that educating children who have been traumatized by difficult living conditions and those whose basic needs go unmet creates overwhelming stress among teachers. They further explained that supporting vulnerable children in the schools has

many challenges that hinder educators from fulfilling their roles towards such children.

One of the teacher participants emphasized this point:

It is demanding to deal with students who come from extreme vulnerable conditions such as those living with hostile families, those abandoned by parents and care takers due broken marriages or selfishness, and those who are or have been homeless and have adopted challenging behaviors such as aggressiveness, disrespectfulness, extreme anger and nervousness, ineptitude, lack of seriousness and tendency to join gang groups which may lead to many other deviant behaviours (Mr. Makiponya).

The teacher further explained that such behaviours are challenging and have negative impacts on teaching and learning. Speaking of the same problem and how it was hindering teachers' efforts in fulfilling their responsibilities towards meeting the learning needs of all children, Mr. Kigoli boldly argued, "they interrupt my teaching, I am not comfortable with keeping up with my teaching because most of [the vulnerable children] have given up learning, they lack motivation and it is difficult to motivate them" Another teacher participant expressed a similar viewpoint:

Educating some of the vulnerable children can be very challenging because some of them are always angry, rude and over sensitive because of their past experiences. They tend to weigh everything that a teacher or their peers say to them or to each other around them and if they feel attacked by some of the words, they quickly change their moods and may attack back (Mrs. Mleba).

It was also evident that educators are aware that vulnerable children, as well as the marginalized or poverty stricken communities that surround them, view schools as an

end to the cycle of poverty and vulnerability. This view was discussed by three different focus groups who reported how some parents would come to school asking teachers to keep their children in school even when they are not able to pay their financial contributions, or at least provide them with basic learning materials. The parents saw schools as the only place where their children could go to pass time and remain safe from disruptive and corrupting influences. A teacher (Ms. Helina) cited one of the parents who said: “Tafadhali, usimrudishe mtoto wangu nyumbani, kwani unapomrudisha, wewe unataka mimi nimpeleke wapi?” [Translation: Please do not send my child back home, because I have nowhere else to send him]. The parent clearly expressed frustration with the school and that she has no other options. Such a statement indicates how parents of vulnerable children have high expectation that schools would be the only answer to the struggles of their children. Expressing how the problem of vulnerability had become a pandemic and a critical challenge to educators, one of the teachers in the focus group, Mrs. Mapinduzi, noted the following:

Our region has many vulnerable children, many people in the community have closed their eyes, thinking that the problem of vulnerable children is someone else’s responsibility. Some think it is the responsibility of the government or their families and relatives. There is a lot of finger pointing trying to allocate who should be responsible for our own vulnerable children. In reality, we are all responsible. However, as educators, we have more chances of taking more responsibility because these children spend most of their time with us.

In addition, when sharing their perspectives, the participants indicated that they were cognizant of their responsibilities towards supporting vulnerable children in their

schools. For example, some of them expressed that as teachers, they know that they have a role of building capacity in all their learners and providing them with the kind of education that will eventually become a gateway for a brighter future. However, the teachers were also aware that, given the conditions in which they worked, the awareness about their roles remained idealistic because they were unable to implement them. The teachers noted that in their schools, the basic teaching and learning resources are extremely lacking. Consequently, they could hardly imagine fulfilling their basic educational roles. In addition, teachers and school principals alike highlighted some specific challenges they meet in the attempts to fulfill their roles towards vulnerable children.

Difficult Working Conditions

During the interview with school principals as well as in the focus group discussions, the aspect of hard working conditions was identified by all the five schools as one of the major factors that hinder educators from providing adequate support to their students who come from vulnerable situations. Speaking of this condition, Mr. Kimori argued;

The conditions under which we work as teachers incapacitate us, our hands are tied, we have no time, no motivation, and we are discouraged, as a matter of fact, we consider ourselves ‘vulnerable in some sense’, we are unable to reach out to our students who are vulnerable.

Under the theme of educators’ challenges in supporting vulnerable children, a strong and recurrent sub-theme pertaining to difficult working conditions evolved. All the teachers said that they were incapacitated by the deplorable conditions in which they worked.

While noting that the issue of vulnerable children was already pandemic and a national disaster, the teachers wondered why nothing was done at the national level to support teachers so that they could in turn support their children. As noted by teacher Kimori above, the teachers felt that they too were vulnerable because of the challenges of their working conditions. The teachers saw unacceptable working conditions as one of their greatest impediments. The teachers discussed this challenge further by identifying some elements that contributed to such difficult work environments.

The first element was teachers' underpayment. Due to the low teachers' salaries and frequent payroll delays, many teachers claimed that they had lost their teaching morale and neglected their professional commitments to their students. They noted that instead of spending time in school thinking of what to do in order to support their learners, they were forced by the situation to search for alternative ways in which they could cater to the needs of their families and to cope with life. They noted that many teachers have resigned themselves to taking up part-time jobs at the market or in their farms to supplement their income. Speaking of the criticality of this challenge, one of the respondent teachers shared the following:

Some teachers for example, in the primary school are paid as low as 300,000 Tanzanian shillings per month [equivalent to \$190 USD] and 560,000 [\$360 USD] for secondary school teachers. The majority of these teachers have families to take care of plus other expenses. This amount of money can hardly meet family expenses for up to half way the month. As a result, teachers are often under stress and preoccupied about how to make ends meet for their families and have very little time to think about vulnerable children in their classes. (Mr. Salati)

Second, the teachers identified absolute poverty as one of the factors that contributes to the challenges they faced in educating vulnerable children. They noted that due to the high population of vulnerable children in their schools (whose families were unable to make financial contributions necessary to bolster the limited financial support received from the government), the schools were lacking basic materials that they needed for teaching and learning. One teacher respondent, Mr. Doyo, gave an example of how the situation of absolute poverty affects teachers:

It is difficult to watch how some of our children starve the whole day. It is impossible to teach a hungry child; we have tried to initiate a feeding plan but it did not work. We asked parents to bring maize that we would put together to have some lunch for all children but this was not successful, as parents hardly have anything to feed the children at home.

Along with absolute poverty, the respondents identified a severe shortage of qualified teachers servicing a large population of students as a factor that hinders them from paying attention to the needs of children who need special accommodations. The teachers noted that sometimes an individual teacher had as many as 80 children or more sitting in a single classroom. Teaching such a class affected the way they taught and how they treat their students, both in class as well as during extracurricular activities. It is no wonder that some children who participated in this study complained that they felt neglected at school.

Like their vulnerable students, teachers complained about lack of teaching and learning resources in their schools as another factor that prevents them from meeting the needs of vulnerable children adequately. For example, Kibuku noted that,

It is hard to imagine that in a classroom of let us say 50 to 80 children sitting with just one teacher and the only resource that this teacher had is the blackboard, a piece of chalk and one copy of a textbook for the teacher. What do you do in such a situation?

In addition, some respondents added that the shortage of qualified and motivated teachers, as well as a lack of teaching materials such as books, laboratories and equipment, furniture, and stationery supplies made their responsibilities as educators much more daunting. They noted that without these basic necessities, it is difficult to imagine what more they can do to support vulnerable children. Speaking on this challenge, Mrs. Sanya exclaimed painfully that

We are fully aware of the conditions of our vulnerable children, how we wish we were able to do a better job supporting them, it pains us. We seem not to make any difference. Every year we bear the blames from parents and even of government officials for poor examination results but nobody seem to challenge or to question the conditions under which teaching and learning is carried out in our schools. The conditions are demoralizing we cannot expect our vulnerable children to succeed without providing them with learning conditions and the basic materials needed.

The respondents concluded that unless the schools are improved, vulnerable children can hardly get the chance to do well academically. For this reason, they proposed that constructive action needs to be taken from the high levels of government down to school administrators before teachers could be expected to offer additional help to vulnerable children.

Dealing With Learners Who Experience Traumatic Stress

Nearly all the teachers and school principals in this study said that dealing with children who experience traumatic stress was one of the major challenges in meeting the learning needs of vulnerable children. According to the discussions in the focus groups, the respondents explained that traumatic stress created a climate of fear and anxiety that in turn affected the children's learning process. Speaking of this challenging situation, Mr. Majengo stated that, "Some vulnerable children come to school when they are deeply stressed and overwhelmed by their home problems and they are unable to concentrate or to stay focused in their studies." In addition, some respondents explained that the traumatic stress experienced by vulnerable children affects everyone, including teachers. Deni, who happened to be both a teacher and a parent, described how traumatic stress in a student can influence a teacher:

Mimi kama mwalimu na mzazi, naona vigumu sana kufundisha mtoto anayeishi katika mazingira magumu. Ninaona vibaya ninapojua kuwa mtoto anateseka kwa kutendewa vibaya na mzazi au mlezi wake ambaye hamjali mtoto huyo kama watoto wengine na wakati mwingine hutendewa mabaya kama vile kunyimwa chakula, kufanyishwa kazi ngumu kupita uwezo wake na mara nyingine kuadhibiwa kwa kushindwa kutimiza mashariti anayopewa na mlezi huyo

[Translation: As a teacher and a parent, my heart breaks when I have to teach vulnerable children who live with a guardian who mistreats them by denying them food, forcing them to do heavy work beyond their capacity and sometimes punishing them for failing to accomplish their orders.]

Deni added that dealing with critical situations of vulnerable children such as this was a big challenge for teachers because the majority of them were not formally prepared to handle special education cases, such as helping children who suffer from psychological trauma.

Apart from the lack of skills to deal with such problems, the teachers in most focus group discussions identified student–teacher ratio as a factor that adds to the challenge of helping individual vulnerable children in the classroom. Despite the critical problem of traumatized children who needed help in order to learn properly, the respondents explained that none of the five schools has a trained social worker or school counselor in place. As a result, teachers found themselves dividing their time between trying to teach and trying to deal with children who needed psychological support.

Inadequate Government Support And Lack Of Policy

Among the most common challenges identified by respondents was the absence of government support and school policies that would regulate how vulnerable children should be supported in the school. The respondents noted that although the government of Tanzania has worked hard to ensure vulnerable children have access to schooling, very little was being done to support them while in school. They noted that there were no policies in place to protect and to promote equity in education. As a result, schools lack basic necessities for supporting vulnerable children, and because the government does not have direct and well-stipulated policies that educators can follow to make demands on behalf of vulnerable children, the children themselves become victims of such a deficit. Mr. Mabibo added to this point, saying, “We all know that the issue of vulnerable children is a national epidemic and yet, the government has not taken serious strategic

steps for intervention.” While highlighting the lack of policy and limited government support as one of the most disturbing challenges, many respondents viewed such shortcomings as a problem that victimizes educators in the field who have to face the daily consequences of what goes on in the school. Such outcomes included unsatisfactory teaching and learning environments, unmotivated teachers, and poor academic performance of the children for which educators are often blamed for not doing an adequate job of teaching.

The respondents added that they were discouraged due to being blamed both by government and parents who have failed to examine other related issues that contribute to students’ failure, such as lack of qualified teachers, books, and laboratories, among other factors. Additionally, the respondents discussed how poor academic performance affected them as teachers. For example, Mr. Likoko questioned how education is defined in Tanzania and how its vulnerable children can be expected to succeed when they lack even the most basic needs fulfilments. Likoko added that he did not believe that a child who is hungry and starving could learn effectively.

The respondents further added that the time had come for the government and all Tanzanian people to begin thinking more critically about education and how it is offered. The respondents declared that they no longer felt respected as teachers because they are being blamed for all that went wrong in schools. Speaking of this situation, Sirika questioned “I know government officials pass around and they see the children on the streets and they seem not to do something practical to help them; why then blame the teachers for everything?” Another participant added that teachers indeed were doing a lot

but they needed more direct support from the government. The same teacher noted that some parents have not been cooperative with teachers in helping these children.

Poor Physical Environment

Among the major challenges identified by most respondents (educators and students alike) was the poor physical environment of the school. Based on my observations and what I learned from all respondents, physical environment affected the teaching and learning morale in the schools. In brief, physical environment includes school buildings and all they encompass, such as furniture, latrines, playgrounds, and other resources used for learning such as blackboards and laboratories, where applicable. Other aspects related to schools' physical environment included clean water, electricity, and accessibility. All these aspects were assessed because of their ability to affect the way children experience school.

Most participating schools had generally a poor school environment that did not encourage teaching and learning. The interviews with the children revealed an outcry about poor sanitation that puts the health of the children in jeopardy. For example, one student complained about the latrines that were too near to the classroom and the schools often lack running water both for drinking and for hygienic purposes. It was painful to hear that children did not have water to wash their hands after using the latrines. The schools did not have electricity—a lack that forced teachers to work in very dark classrooms, especially on cloudy days. With all these shortfalls, it easily can be concluded that the physical environment of these schools did not provide the children with a positive experience.

Moreover, the schools' poor physical condition contributed to the stressors and adversities that place vulnerable children at greater risk and cause them to lose the hope of achieving the kind of education that they expected would liberate them from the cycle of vulnerability. I was surprised when at first I asked the children to tell me what they would like their schools to do for them in order to improve their learning conditions. One of them stated, "I don't believe my school is capable of doing anything supportive." To elaborate the point, the respondent child cited two major points: schools were ill-equipped, and educators seemed unwilling or unavailable to make extra efforts in support of vulnerable students. These responses indicated that the participants were aware that the physical conditions of their schools had demoralized both the students and teachers, thus affecting the whole school system which in turn disadvantages vulnerable children.

Lack of Transparency

Lack of parental or guardian transparency about the vulnerable conditions of their children was underlined by focus groups and school principals as one of the obstacles that contributed to the challenges educators face in supporting vulnerable children. Transparency, comprising openness and the sharing of relevant information with those concerned, is an important aspect that institutions such as schools must maintain in order to operate effectively. School principals and teachers noted that transparency was lacking in regard to the issue of vulnerable children. They noted that in order to meet needs of vulnerable children, they first needed to know who they were and to be aware of their problems. The respondents indicated that the majority of vulnerable children, with the exception of those who were already known because they lived at the Centre for the orphaned and vulnerable children or in similar places where they get support were

unknown. This is because both parents and children treated their vulnerable conditions in a very secretive way. They did not share about their challenges until something was not functioning well. The respondents added that the problem of transparency was also experienced with parents and caretakers of the vulnerable children. Although it was unclear to me why transparency was an issue, I surmised that the children and their parent(s)/caretaker(s) had either known that the schools were not prepared to support them or simply were afraid of being stereotyped and profiled, which they might have witnessed in relation to other vulnerable children.

Speaking about how the lack of transparency affected their relationships with vulnerable children, one of the teachers, Ms. Makidemi, narrated how she accidentally found out about her vulnerable children:

Sometimes in our schools we have been working with children who were homeless and were spending their nights under water culverts in town. These children had never shared anything about their situation. Some teachers had suspected one of them to be in difficult conditions; the child denied having any extraordinary problem until one day when one of our teachers was passing by very early in morning she saw three of our students coming out of the water culverts with their books. The teacher was flabbergasted and approached the children to ask, that is when one of them with a scary face said, teacher we are homeless, this is one of the places where we sometimes spend our nights and come to school.

Mr. Kinabo described how he had experienced the lack of transparency with some of his students:

We have known some children who would always look sad, and physically weak, but when we approached them to ask what was going on, the children would simply say, “Nothing” until when one day their mother came up to say that she was unable to make her financial contribution to the school for her two children because her husband had died and she was also very ill.

Such examples were clear evidence that despite the limitations of the school in supporting vulnerable children, the issue of transparency needs to be dealt with in order to allow schools to do whatever they can to provide some kind of support for these children. The teachers suggested that schools need to have policies and guidelines that give them clear and well-stipulated directions for identifying vulnerable children without causing them more harm or discomfort.

Lack of Parent/Guardian Involvement

Like Park and Holloway (2013), I found out that the involvement of parents and guardians of vulnerable children was a major challenge to educators. From my experience as a former teacher and school principal, parent involvement is one of the indispensable aspects in the children’s learning process. Parents’ role in educating their children should not end at the door when a parent drops off his or her child. Regrettably, as I learned from most respondent teachers and school principals, parents/guardians were seldom involved in the education of their children. While the respondents saw this as a major problem, they associated lack of parental/guardian involvement with contributing factors such as severe poverty and limited academic background that had forced some parents to neglect their roles and responsibilities towards their children’s learning process. One respondent shared an incident of a parent who because of poverty wished

that his son would perform poorly in the exams so that he did not have to bother with educating him any further. Mrs. Bonyea cited the parent who said, “You better not let my son pass because I have no money to take him to secondary school.” The respondents explained that it had been extremely difficult to assist vulnerable children without the involvement of their parents or guardians because the teachers knew very little about their students and thus were not sure exactly what kind of support the children needed.

Previous studies have shown that “[h]igh levels of parental involvement has the possibility of influencing the environment at home and also the outlook of the children’s education in the school” (Sreekanth, 2010, p. 43). Unfortunately, as I found out in this study, some parents are still unaware of their responsibility and accountability towards the education of their children. While some refuse to participate even when teachers took steps to call them to school, as was reported in this study, some parents refuse with the argument that it is the teacher’s job to deal with the children on educational matters. As noted by the respondent cited above, other parents have been a source of discouragement both to their children as well as to teachers. And once again poverty became an aggravating factor, as the respondent teachers noted that parents in such conditions discouraged their children’s involvement in school, particularly girls who could be sent to work as housemaids in the cities in order to support their families.

Lack of Opportunities to Exchange Views

Lack of opportunity to be together as a community of educators in a particular school in order to learn together and to exchange views was also highlighted as one of the challenges facing educators in relation to the issue of vulnerable children. Mrs. Kibuku discussed this point as a challenge and argued that, “the issues of educating vulnerable

children effectively require working together, communication, sharing experiences and knowledge, as well as brainstorming strategies for handling the challenge.” There were many factors that led to this problem. In some schools the respondents identified the conditions in which they worked as the major setback that prevents them from coming together as educators to discuss the issues facing them and their vulnerable students. For example, Mr. Mponde said that, “given the large number of students in the classroom and the amount of time we must put into implementing our teaching roles, it is difficult to find time for extra work.” Mponde further explained that, due to their underpayment and the stress of their own life, teachers had to use the little spare time they had to engage in other jobs to compensate for what they do not earn as teachers. This means that teachers were not always in school when they should have been. It also meant taking time to discuss issues regarding vulnerable children was not their priority and they had to first deal with their own life challenges. In one of the schools, teachers expressed that apart from the challenge of time, they hardly shared or exchanged views about what they could do together to support their vulnerable students because very little was known to them about such children. Given this situation, teachers saw lack of transparency and parents’ non-involvement in the school as contributing to this problem. They then suggested that there is a need to improve the working conditions of teachers so that they have more time to dedicate to discussing urgent issues like those of vulnerable children in their schools. They also recommended that there be clear strategies created, suggesting how they might get to know more about their students. They suggested that the best way of knowing their students would be to get parents actively involved in the education of their children. Emphasizing this point, Mrs. Mande said, “we have no clue about the background of our

students, parents hardly share even when there are serious problems, children come to school day in day out and we assume all is alright.” This argument suggests that there is the need for participation between educators and parents.

Disciplinary Issues

In the interviews with vulnerable children, it was evident that most of them had experienced hostile life conditions. Some had lived with people with behavioural problems that might have influenced them negatively. It is not surprising that, in the study with school principals and teachers, the issue of discipline was identified as one of their major challenges. Speaking on the issue of discipline, one of the teachers, Mr. Toyo pointed out that,

Many of our vulnerable children spend time on the streets where they learn survival skills from their peers with whom they form gang groups. The gang groups practice some unacceptable behaviours such as stealing, smoking marijuana, and at times they abuse each other and other people. These children come as they are while trying to pass some of the behaviours to other children thus causing problems.

Adding to this point, Mr. Toyo explained that, “when children such as these come to school, they are very brilliant and courageous. It is unfortunate that, due to lack of appropriate support, these children do things which affect their learning progress.” The respondents acknowledged that the issue of discipline was problematic because it was hard to judge the children due to what they knew already about them. Emphasizing this aspect, Mr. Kibenzi argued,

It is hard to take a serious action against some behaviours of vulnerable children because we know that if we follow the right channel on how to deal with some misbehaviour like stealing, we might end up losing them for good, so what we do is talking to them and showing them that what they are doing is unacceptable and cannot be tolerated.

Absence from school or from class is another disciplinary issue identified by the respondents who noted that some vulnerable children were often missing school, and some of them were dropping out. Explaining the criticality of this challenge, one of the respondents argued that dealing with disciplinary issues involving vulnerable children is difficult because some of them use their conditions to justify the reasons for missing school or class, and it may be hard to know the truth. The respondents further argued that some vulnerable children might have had a negative experience with an adult, which may have resulted in the manner they related with teachers. In addition, the teachers felt that when they tried to encourage vulnerable children to stop some unacceptable behaviours, the children resisted because they most probably saw their teachers as more adults exercising their power to oppress them. Mr. Kitido described this situation:

We find difficulties helping vulnerable children to stop some unwanted behaviours, because some of them, for some reasons known to them, which we guess could be they were or they are being abused by some adults, they have developed resistance to adults who try to enter into their world. So telling them something that may not be pleasant to their hearing, they can easily develop hate and conflict with the teacher which in the long run may have a negative consequence on the teacher.

On that same note, another participant added, “It is difficult for teachers to keep balance when it comes to maintaining justice or balance when dealing with issues of discipline involving children who are vulnerable and those that are not.” Adding to this point another teacher, Mr. Demi, noted that “it is challenging to exercise some disciplinary measures like suspending a vulnerable child whom we know for sure the suspension will mean sending them to the streets, where they are going to join some dangerous peer groups.” With these few examples, it is therefore evident that the issue of discipline regarding dealing with vulnerable children in the schools is a major setback for educators.

The Culture of Academic Failure in the School

Academic failure can be a very disturbing part of life and is something that few individuals can be contented with, even if it is expected. In this study, it became evident that failure has become a regular experience for vulnerable children. The respondents in this study shared that most students in these schools were failing their national examinations. The participants acknowledged that the problem of academic failure had reached a critical condition and was a major source of discouragement both for teachers and students. One participant noted that failure contributed to a loss of motivation for teaching and learning. The respondents noted that they were dealing with this challenge in a variety of ways. For example, all the secondary schools had introduced remedial classes/evening tutoring and had asked for more teachers to be trained, thus making an effort to motivate teachers and students.

Lack of Motivation

Some respondents in the focus group discussions identified the problem of vulnerable children who come to school hungry, sickly, and too weak to maintain their motivation to learn. They further noted that dealing with students who are in distress due to some issues that make them vulnerable takes away schools' time to deal with purely academic matters, including teaching. As a result of this challenge educators felt that schools' educational goals were being jeopardized. They further noted that there have been cases where they had students who are ill with incurable diseases like HIV/AIDS. In this situation, the challenge was intensified because the children themselves were not sure how long they would live, and for this reason their motivation to be in school or to learn was badly affected. Educators find dealing with children who are sick and without hope takes a lot of time and energy from the teachers who are already overwhelmed due to the increasing number of children in the classroom. They also identified this aspect as a challenge because in order to actually teach these children and to achieve the academic goals, teachers must first spend time solving the individual problems of the children in the class who might be under stress. Unfortunately, not all teachers can afford such time and energy to do extra work.

Strategies to Support Vulnerable Children's Learning Process

In this section, I have recorded strategies highlighted by the participants and implemented to support the learning process for the vulnerable children. For the sake of clarity, the identified strategies are treated as sub-themes and are presented based on the categories of participants. That is, in the first part, I report on what the children who participated in this study believe their teachers and school principals are doing to support

them. In the second part, I report on those strategies identified by school principals and their teachers.

Children who were involved in this study were given the opportunity to reflect on the kind of strategies that educators implement to ameliorate their learning experiences. In order to do this, the children were asked to anonymously respond to written questionnaires. Such questions included: “How has your educator been supportive to you or to other vulnerable children? Or in other words, from your experience, what is your school doing to support vulnerable children?” The children’s responses to these questions were quite interesting. By their responses, the children demonstrated themselves to be eloquent, respectful, confident, considerate, and they also demonstrated that they were positive and hopeful despite the challenges.

However, there was a dichotomy of views between what the children had stated in the previous questionnaires when they spoke of the challenges facing them at school and what they felt their educators were doing to support them. For example, some children had written that they did not think that their schools were able to support them in any way. But then when it came to answering the question on what teachers or school principals might have done to support them or other vulnerable children, numerous strategies were cited. During individual interviews, I also noticed contradictions between what children from the same school had to say regarding how their teachers were being helpful to vulnerable children. For example, one child claimed that the school was doing an excellent job in supporting vulnerable children and the other would say completely the opposite. For instance, Mambo stated that, “teachers give us a lot of support by talking to us and encouraging us to remain strong in time of difficulties and to study hard for our

better future.” Mambo added that some teachers provide them with food or with learning materials like books when needed. On the other hand, Sugu, a student from the same school as Mambo, saw things differently:

Wakuu wangu wa shule na waalimu wangu hawana masaada wowote kwangu. Naona kwamba hatakama wanajua wazi kuwa naishi katika mazingira magumu hawanijali. Wakati nikiwa na shida nikiwambia mwalimu anaweza kunipa kashifa za ajabu na saa nyingine mwalimu huyo anaweza kukutafutia sababu mpaka waalimu wengine wakuchukie. Hali hii inaweza kunikosesha hata hamu ya kuendelea na masomo. Wakati mwingine naona shule kama kitu kigumu sana na cha uchungu kwa sababu tu ya mwalimu mmoja. Mara nyingi majibu ninayopata wakati nikiwa na shida hunikatisha tamaa na kunikosesha hata raha ya kuendelea. [Translation: My school leaders and teachers do not do anything to support me as a vulnerable child. Although they know my situation, they seem to have no time to care about me. Instead when I am in difficulties and I try to share with them, I sometimes end up in more trouble. A teacher may misinterpret my problem share it with other teachers and influence other teachers to hate me. Sharing my problem can lead to bigger problems that can be very discouraging and can cause some feelings of discomfort.]

In general, children did not have similar experiences of what educators were doing to support them. However, there were some strategies that were commonly identified by some children. In the following pages I describe the most common strategies that were identified by either both the children and educators or by a single category of the participants. For the purpose of clarity, the explanation is provided to

indicate whether both the children and educators identified the strategy listed. The strategies are placed in two categories, which are short-term and long-term as stated below.

Providing Short-term and Long-term Strategic Support

The findings of this study also indicate most schools were providing both short-term and long-term support to their vulnerable children. The first short-term strategy taken was identifying who vulnerable children were and building positive and caring relationships with them. This strategy was mentioned by educators from all the five schools that participated in this study. Although they regarded this as their initial baby step, they claimed it was significant. Most respondents admitted that supporting vulnerable children in the schools was complicated and required careful identification of the children and evaluation of the reason for their vulnerability. The respondents explained that they needed to take this initiative as a way of identifying those children that could be exempted from paying financial school contributions as stipulated by the government. The respondents noted that there were too many needy children due to the prevailing poverty in the community that surrounded their schools. For this reason the strategy of identifying and sorting out details was a way of avoiding being accused of favouritism.

The respondents—particularly educators—indicated maintaining positive relationship was an indispensable strategy for supporting vulnerable children—particularly those experiencing hostile family conditions and/or neglectful parents, or those living without parents at all. Some respondents viewed this “unofficial” strategy as a means of enhancing vulnerable children’s personal image and of making them feel

socially and psychologically accepted and comfortable. The respondents regarded this strategy as a gatekeeping step that enabled them to form a reliable base for understanding their vulnerable children. When I inquired further how this was done, some respondents claimed there was no set formula for building positive relationships; instead, individual teachers had their own way of establishing positive relationships with their learners depending on each context. A respondent teacher Mr. Kimambo said that “This is something that comes just naturally, you don’t have to plan for it. You see a child, looking miserable, downcast, physically weak, and you start wondering, ‘what is going on with this child and what can I do?’” Mr. Kimambo further discussed how he implemented this strategy in relation to child who always looked miserable:

For a long time I had observed one of my students who always looked unhappy and frail. Although at first I did not know what was going on with this student, just by looking at him I was able to guess that this student was either starving or facing critical problems at home. In order to learn his situation, I first called him to my office and then gave him some money to go to buy some snacks from the people that sell them at our school. When he brought them to me I asked him if he would mind taking some for himself. The boy took some snacks and walked away from my office with a gentle smile on his face. When I saw him the next day, I could tell the boy was feeling at ease with me. As I took my second initiative to find out who he was and how life was faring for him, it was then when opportunity dawned for him to narrate his painful story to me.

Mr. Kimambo concluded by saying that this was a simplest way he was able to build a relationship that allowed him to carry out the responsibility of being supportive to vulnerable children.

The second short-term strategy implemented by schools was providing psychological support, counseling and capacity building. Both the children and educators identified this second strategy. On their part, the children claimed that this strategy was implemented to support them in the schools in certain times of severe crisis. More particularly, this strategy was especially applied when a child was grieving for a dear one or when their caregivers had a terminal illness. Mamuna spoke of this strategy saying:

I do not see much being done at school to support vulnerable children like me.

However, when a student has some family problem such as illness of parents and other members of the family or at the time of their death, then our teachers help us. Many times, they come to be with the family and they also send other students to be with us for the funeral.

This expression was an indication that educators were aware of the psychological needs of their vulnerable learners. It was probably for such reasons that they made an effort to be available to their students to encourage them and to support them psychologically.

Likewise, the children noted that their educators implemented capacity building as a strategy for supporting and enhancing the well-being of vulnerable children by way of creating support groups. In one school, the children identified faith-based groups that were formed and organized by students themselves. Their educators encouraged these groups and the children found them helpful because they found in them what they needed to feel safe and understood. The groups were also a source of encouragement and

support. The children noted that other students acted as mentors to them, which they also found helpful. Other types of capacity building groups included study groups that teachers strongly encouraged students to form. Within these groups, vulnerable children found the academic and moral support that gave them some motivation to learn and to persevere in their studies.

Educators who participated in this study also identified offering psychological support, counseling and capacity building as one effective strategy they have implemented in support of vulnerable children. The participants emphasized that this strategy was very important for those children who have had or are still going through traumatic experiences. Despite the emphasis placed on this strategy, only one out of the five schools trained two of its teachers for this purpose. However, the teachers were not freed from their teaching duties in order to deal with the duties of providing counselling. The other five schools did not have specially trained school counselors, and instead implemented this strategy by utilizing the general counseling skills which they had learned in the teachers' college. Many of the teachers noted that they did not have an organized place or time for counselling and instead provided such services informally, such as pulling aside a child who might be acting up in the class in order to speak to him or her. Melinda, one of the children participants, confirmed how counselling took place informally in her school when she argued, "some teachers talk to us to encourage us to study" and "teachers provide advice to students who have problems" (Melinda).

The third and simple short-term strategy implemented as a means of supporting vulnerable children in the school was providing the children with opportunity to form peer support groups for various purposes. The groups varied from those formed for the

purpose of study to faith-based groups. The teacher respondents believed that providing children with opportunities to form peer support groups was a helpful way to reach out to vulnerable children. As Mr. Masanja noted, “We try to show love and care by giving them support groups for study and others for general discussions and sharing about their faith that helps the children to be comfortable at school.” On their side, vulnerable children found this strategy to be one of the best ways through which they were able to overcome some of barriers they were facing in their studies and in socialization. Medida spoke of how he benefits from this strategy saying, “I like my study group, when I discuss with other children I understand well than when I am in the classroom with the teacher.” Other children, including, Malaki, Kasim and Kanong also spoke of how they found peer groups helpful, for both their social life and for their learning.

The fourth short-term support strategy implemented by educators in the five schools was locating sponsors for their identified vulnerable children. Those who took this initiative did so by first talking to the children and encouraging them to consider moving from the streets or from unsafe places into the centres where other vulnerable children were living. Marina provided an example of how some educators had implemented this strategy saying:

When my younger brother and I were left by our mother and we were living on the street from where we came to school, our teacher helped us with many of our needs including food. We were also helped by the same teacher to find the place where we are now living.

Other educators, after taking the first step of speaking to the individual child about the possibility of being allocated to a safe place, consulted local families who would be

willing to accommodate the child. For example, Mrs. Malinde shared how she was successful in supporting their vulnerable children especially those who were in desperate conditions. Mrs. Malinde noted,

In this area there are so many children who are living in at-risk conditions, we have tried different ways to support them, but there is very little we can do. I have helped a few of them by identifying families that were willing to take such children to live with them in their homes. Among the people I approached were our teaching staff members and administrators. Many of them have adopted children who were either abandoned or orphaned. I find this to be one of the best ways we can help our children.

Some teachers shared about the importance of sponsorship as a strategy to help vulnerable students, especially those living in extreme poverty and those without adult care or supervision. Mr. Kisambo remarked that

We have learned from our experience that vulnerable children who live at some of our centres where they are supported by either the government or by some NGOs are better off than those who are still struggling in their families or living on their own.

Like Mr. Kisambo, many respondents noted that vulnerable children, especially those who were homeless or were living in homes headed by children, were much more likely to receive additional academic assistance when they moved into community centres such as Kititimo and Upendo Centre, among others. For this reason, in some critical circumstances, many teachers were taking it upon themselves to advise some vulnerable

children to go to these centres. Once the child accepted such advice, the teacher would then seek out vacancies and make recommendations to those running the centres.

The respondents added that at other times they advised the children to meet the local leaders so that they were able to get the necessary support from the government. Still others took on further personal responsibility towards their vulnerable children and invited them to live with them and to become members of their family by adoption. As teacher respondent Mrs. Kiwale confided, “Some teachers volunteer to give accommodation to children that are in desperate conditions.”

The fifth short-term strategic support involved providing material support.

Although both the children and educators underlined this strategy, it was mostly implemented at the individual level and was very limited. Very few children indicated that they had received some material support from their teachers which included stationery and other materials for personal hygiene. A few too had received support for nutrition. The children, however, noted that the support offered was dependent on the individual person. For example, Kara noted this point saying, “if you are lucky to find a nice and wonderful teacher who is merciful and passionate, you can get some help, like buying you exercise books and pens.” Kara added that she had been one of those lucky children who received some help from a teacher. The teacher provided her with resources such as exercise books, pens, and even a school uniform.

The sixth short-term support strategy implemented by most schools was providing remedial classes/tutoring. All participants identified provision of remedial classes as a practical strategy for supporting vulnerable children. This strategy served two different goals: the first was to help improve the children’s academic performance, as the majority

of students failing the national qualifying examinations were children living in vulnerable conditions; the second goal was to prevent children from being too idle, a pitfall that could lead many of them into the streets. Speaking of this strategy, one of the teacher participants, Ms. Sakida noted that

Remedial classes which are taught in the evening helps to keep most of our children busy, because some of them when they go home, they do not find any adults to supervise or to encourage them to do their school work, so having them come back for the evening school is a good thing for them and for their families.

The seventh strategy also regarded as short term was creating awareness about the current issue of vulnerable children and getting the parents or guardians involved. Speaking of this strategy, most respondents, particularly school principals, claimed that they were creating awareness both within and outside their schools about the plight of vulnerable children and the schools' responsibilities towards such children. For example, one of them explained this saying,

I find it critical that as a school leader I should make it a point to educate my teachers, school committee and students on the need to develop a positive regard for the most vulnerable children. Failure to do this contributes to the persistency of negative perception of vulnerable children (Mr. Mgoe).

In another school the participants noted that the question of creating awareness was critical because some people (including certain teachers) were using derogatory terms when referring to vulnerable children. In another school, the participants said that in order to protect vulnerable children from being bullied by peers, the teachers avoided identifying vulnerable children publicly by not singling them out.

In addition to creating awareness the participants also shared how they were taking the initiative of encouraging parents or guardians concerned with particular vulnerable children to get more involved with the school. In elaborating this particular strategy, the respondents maintained that it can be very useful in supporting vulnerable children, but they were finding it quite challenging due to lack of cooperation of the parents and guardians. Some of the methods the participants used to elicit such involvement included sending letters of invitation to parents and guardians to come to the school and meet with teachers to discuss issues regarding the well-being of their child. If the parent or guardian would not respond, some teachers would send the child home to bring the parent to school; in some cases the child was ordered not to come back to school until the parent was able to come. Another strategy used when dealing with parents/guardians was calling for open meetings with the latter to discuss general issues related to education and the role that all parents must play.

Despite all these efforts, educators found that it was difficult to deal with most parents. Some parents simply did not want to co-operate with teachers. Teachers suspect that there could be a variety of reasons for parents' reluctance to participate, including lack of education that in turn creates unfamiliarity with the school experience and its implications in their children's lives. Others could not co-operate because they were too busy during the day struggling to secure or maintain daytime manual-labour jobs to earn money simply to feed their children. In addition, some educators thought that certain parents were unwilling to collaborate with the school because of a variety of other minor reasons, such as feeling embarrassed by their children's poor academic performance, or believing that the children's education was purely the teachers' responsibility. Based on

the above, some respondents felt that educating parents, grandparents, and guardians about their roles and responsibility in supporting the education of their children was a crucial strategy, even though not all schools were implementing it. In the case of children already identified as vulnerable, especially those who were living in the centres for orphaned and vulnerable children, the respondents said they usually invited the leaders from the different centres to meet with school principals in order to discuss how they could be of more support to their children. All the six short-term strategies described above, none of them was implemented in an official or agreed upon manner. In other words, there were no binding policies to ensure that these strategies were executed.

The eighth and last short-term strategy implemented by all the five schools was exempting vulnerable children from paying some of the mandatory financial contributions. Unlike the six previous strategies, this seventh strategy was mandated by law in their local government. Reporting on how such exemptions were made, one respondent noted that a careful inquiry was needed to identify the children who qualified for this exemption. The respondent further noted that it was not always easy to decide who qualifies for such exceptions because the majority of students come from financially challenged families. It was also noted that while some students wanted to take advantage of such support, students who were exceptionally vulnerable were often hesitant to ask for fear of being ostracized. For example, one respondent described an incident in which two children from the same family who were frequently absent from school would not provide any explanation for their absences, until their mother was called to the school. It was at this occasion that the mother shared that the family was going through a crisis involving terminal illness. After the school administrators heard about the situation, the

two children were exempted from paying their financial contribution and started coming to school again. Situations like this were reported to be common among vulnerable children in different schools.

In addition to the short-term kind of support provided to vulnerable children, one of the five schools had introduced a life-skills education for self-reliance as a strategy of meeting the long-term needs of vulnerable children. According to the children who reported this strategy, teachers in their school had established a life-skills educational program through which they were given the opportunity to acquire some technical skills such as tailoring and embroidery. Those who took this course gained some skills that they could use after school as a means of income to help them cope with the challenges of life.

Strategies for Future Intervention

Knowing a problem is one thing; taking strategic action is a different thing. Educators who participated in this study know much about vulnerable children. Evidently, various strategic efforts are being made to address the issue of vulnerable children. However, schools are still facing critical challenges that require further intervention strategies.

All participants noted that well-articulated strategic steps for intervention are urgently needed in order to be more supportive of vulnerable children and to deal effectively with the unprecedented challenges that they are currently facing. Based on this standpoint, the respondents made recommendations for what they considered to be necessary and relevant strategic next steps towards achieving this goal. The following section reports the suggestions made by both student and educator participants.

Most respondents maintained that the first and foremost strategy is for government leaders, policy makers, educators, and communities to collectively own-up to the growing problem of vulnerable children and to demand an effective solution to its end. The respondents insisted on the significance of this strategy as they expressed their frustration about the growing phenomenon of vulnerable children and its impact on the schools and the nation. Speaking in an emotional manner, Mrs. Shukuru maintained:

It is only through education that these children can have a good life; if we don't get this we are preparing a group of hooligans for the nation and for this reason, we need to determine what kind of school we need in order to ensure these children have a good education.

Expanding on this strategy, the same participant deliberated further that the government needs to do more for Tanzanian schools, and particularly more for the vulnerable children. Others declared that the reluctance of government officials, policy makers, and some communities to address the growing phenomenon of vulnerable children was disheartening to educators. Speaking of this situation, Mrs. Peshna emphatically expressed:

So many of our leaders pass around the cities and see so many of young children who are out of school, roaming about searching for their survival and say nothing or do nothing about it. No wonder our schools do not have policies for supporting such children.

The participants further argued that collective ownership means that leaders should make a firm commitment to address the problem of vulnerable children, starting from its roots and then moving up into schools where these children expect to receive an education that

can liberate them from the cycle of vulnerability and poverty. Speaking elegantly, Mr. Mpepo argued:

We have seen that the problem of vulnerable children has its roots in the broken marriages, hostile family conditions, alcoholic families, all of which contribute to the increase of poverty and disease which leads to the increasing number of vulnerable children. It is also true that poor family planning contributes to the problem of vulnerable children. For this reason, there is a need to educate our families about responsible parenthood and how to plan well for their family so that they may only have the number of children they are able to cater to their needs.

Other respondents suggested that Tanzanians should engage in a national discourse as a strategy to address the issue of vulnerable children. In their view, such a national dialogue would highlight the problem from all corners of the country and thereby recognize its pervasiveness and how it already affects the entire nation. Likewise, the respondents also believed that such a national discourse would inspire government officials to take action and establish clear educational policies that safeguard the rights and well-being of vulnerable children in the schools. They further noted that such discussions likely would lead to the improvement of schools, especially those in the rural and marginalized communities attended by vulnerable children.

Another intervention strategy that was proposed by all respondents, particularly educators, was to assign full-time personnel for guidance and counseling in each of the schools, with full responsibility for providing such services to children in need. On that same note, the respondents further proposed that schools need to create a position for a

social worker who, like a school counselor, may through full-time or part-time employment actively and responsibly deal with issues of vulnerable children from a social worker's perspective.

Another strategy considered by teachers was the creation of teacher development programs. The respondents insisted that some teachers were trained in the "old days" when the challenges they were currently facing did not exist. For this reason, the respondents suggested that providing an opportunity for teachers to attend teacher development programs, seminars, workshops, or conferences would be the best intervention strategy for not only improving their teaching but also for supporting vulnerable children. The respondent teachers and school principals were of the opinion that such professional development programs would help motivate teachers and help them to avoid making mistakes in their approaches to teaching—mistakes that have at times caused discomfort to vulnerable children. As Mr. Kinabo confided, "In the past there has been a negative reaction from children identified as vulnerable and orphaned because teachers unknowingly used some terminologies in their teaching that were derogative and hurtful to children. This caused a huge problem in the school." Mr. Kibuku added:

There is a need to ask the Tanzanian ministry of education to introduce a program which will prepare teachers on issues of vulnerable children, in other words, have special education programs. In this way such teachers would be of great help not only to students who need special accommodation but also for teachers who were trained in the old system when the issue of vulnerable children was not an issue of concern as it is today.

Offering proper orientation to vulnerable children when they first come to school was another strategy proposed by the educators, particularly for older children. In Tanzania, children are supposed to begin Grade 1 when they are younger than age 7. But as found in this study, some children delayed beginning school due to their vulnerable conditions; some were in Grade 1 at the age of 9 or 10 and others were much older, which forced teachers to make such children skip the lower grades due to their age. The respondents felt that such orientation programs should be mandatory for children who had experienced or continue to experience extreme vulnerable conditions such as homelessness, substance abuse, or abusive and hostile family environments. The participants insisted that this strategy was indispensable because of its possibility of preparing children to transition from their past negative experience to the new school experience where they would be introduced to caring and loving adults and peers. Such orientation programs would thus become part of a healing process for children, without which their learning process and growth in relationship with educators and peers may be hindered. The respondents suggested that such orientation could be one of the responsibilities of school counselors and/or school social workers, and recommended that this type of service should be carefully administered so that it does not become another way of profiling the students who are vulnerable.

More than half of the participants recommended the establishment of feeding programs in the school as a way of supporting vulnerable children. They emphasized that this strategy was needed urgently because most vulnerable children come to school when they are hungry and then stay hungry the whole day that makes them physically weak and unable to learn and to engage in school activities enthusiastically. To implement this

strategy, some participants proposed that the government should consider setting aside some funds during the annual budget to support vulnerable children in the schools instead of depending wholly on international/foreign donors.

Beside the feeding program strategy, all the participants recommended that hostels should be built to house vulnerable children who severely lack the most basic needs, such as food and shelter. Speaking further about this strategy, Mr. Kiasi noted “in this way we will save [the vulnerable children] from dropping out of school in search for survival and from other temptations that they might have adopted before they joined school”.

Improving the living conditions of Tanzanian teachers is another strategy proposed by most participants. The majority of them believed that the conditions under which educators work deter teachers from being more supportive to vulnerable children due to lack of time and commitment to the teaching profession. Speaking with deep frustration of how teachers in Tanzania are disregarded, one respondent expressed, “I think we need to solve the problem of teachers who are themselves living in difficult circumstances and feel vulnerable due to the negative perceptions which many people hold about the teaching profession” (Mr. Kigoli). Another teacher respondent boldly expressed, “Ask the government to recognize the value of and the dignity of being a teacher and the importance of teaching” (Mrs. Msoke), which was echoed by another participant who said that there was a need to restore the reputation of teachers and their role in shaping the society, and that “teaching should never be regarded as the least important career in the society, as a matter of fact as many of those who are teachers would argue, ‘a teacher is second to none’.”

For the above reasons, those graduating from high school should be recruited to teachers college not because this was their only option after completing their qualifying exams but rather because they love teaching and they want to dedicate themselves to the education of the nation's youth. In other words, those aspiring to become teachers should be recruited based on how they value the role of teachers in the labour market and the extent to which they show motivation. Stressing the significance of this strategy, some participants explained their views on the current criteria for the recruitment of teachers and maintained that many in the new generation of teachers enter the profession unmotivated and lacking the skills needed to understand learning needs of students because of the criteria that were used to recruit them, while for others a teaching career was not their first choice. One of the respondents stressed this point as he shared that "New teachers come into teaching when they are already tired. Some teachers go to college because that is the only option" (Mr. Kigo).

All educators as well as the students who participated in this study suggested that improving the learning conditions and making available learning resources would be a great way to support vulnerable children. For example, the children who participated in this study gave the following responses to the question "what would you like to see changed in your school that could be of more help to your learning?": change the current poor learning environment to a better one; bring more qualified teachers to our school; construct science laboratories; improve hygienic conditions such as move the latrine far from the classrooms to avoid polluting air; renovate classrooms to avoid dust and to prevent bugs and birds that often urinate on the desks and chairs; provide reliable and qualified math and science teachers; provide food/snacks or tea while at school; get extra

tutoring and means of transportation; assure learning materials like books; and finally, provide opportunity for dialogue among teachers, students, and educational officials.

Along with the strategy of improving teaching and learning resources, the responding educators noted that there was a need to provide support for upgrading teachers' education. This strategy could include short courses that could contribute to the improvement of teacher morale and commitment to their teaching profession.

A number of participants also suggested that schools should initiate civic education programs that would involve community members and parents as a way of encouraging the development of patriotism that would eventually motivate people to care for the county and its people. They insisted that due to a lack of co-operation of the local community and parents, teachers feel left alone and discouraged, to the point that they also gave up efforts to support these children. As a result, the children get a feeling that no one cares about them and so they lose hope in their ability to succeed both in their education and in life as a whole. Therefore, the teachers suggested that one of the most important strategies was to get the support of those taking care of these children and also the collaboration of the government at the different levels.

Finally, educators suggested educational issues should be separated from everyday politics. They noted that in Tanzania, education has become a business such that books keep changing but some of them do not provide the quality of education expected. For this reason strategic steps must be taken to control the way books are changed.

In sum, the respondents were all in agreement that strategies such as counseling and psychological support; capacity building and providing material support; providing

life-skills education for self-reliance; allocating safe places to live; building positive, caring relationships; and providing remedial classes/tutoring were some of many options that should be developed and/or explored further to support vulnerable children's learning processes.

This chapter presented the major findings regarding educators' challenges and the kinds of strategies they were implementing in dealing with such challenges. The chapter also reported what educators identified as possible strategies that need to be considered for mitigating these challenges as a means of improving school experiences of vulnerable children, and how educators can be of more support to the children. The chapter that follows recapitulates and makes sense of the main findings of the study using the theoretical framework discussed in Chapter One of this study.

CHAPTER SIX

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

To conduct this study, I utilized multiple approaches to collect data from school principals, teachers, and children identified as vulnerable from five schools in Tanzania. The diverse participants' perspectives regarding the issue of school experiences of vulnerable children were most valuable and significant to the study's immediate and long-term objectives. Their perspectives, all based on lived experiences, enriched the study with an in-depth knowledge and understanding of how vulnerable children are perceived by their educators and how the children perceive themselves. Likewise, the findings shed some light on the strategies educators employ and the challenges they face in their endeavour to support vulnerable children's learning process, and both the educators and the children alike recommended strategic actions that must be implemented in order to ensure quality education for vulnerable children.

This concluding chapter builds upon the previous section's analytical report of the research findings. The purpose here is to recapitulate those findings in order to discuss them and then pave the way for a meaningful conclusion. Additionally, I discuss the study's implications for the different groups that have some influence on the education of vulnerable children, beginning with government officials, policymakers, educators and parents. Finally, I conclude with recommendations for future research.

Summary of Findings

Reporting the plight of vulnerable children is a complex undertaking and several studies have recommended that researchers should ensure they have contextualized and defined their goals before beginning their investigation (Clark, 2007; UNICEF, 2004a; Walker & Smithgall, 2009). In line with these researchers' suggestion, I first enquired how educators viewed or

described vulnerable children and how these children perceived themselves based on their school experiences and living conditions. The findings derived from individual interviews, focus group discussions, participant observation, and written questionnaires indicated that there was a contrast between how vulnerable children view themselves and how they were regarded by their educators. From their point of view, the children perceived and portrayed themselves as victims of misfortunes that befell their families or the environment in which they lived. Such misfortunes included abject poverty, death or illness of their parents, family strife, and other social problems that had left them in jeopardy. As a result of such conditions, the children believed they faced a broad spectrum of material, social, moral, and psychological challenges. Yet, despite the children's difficult circumstances, they also portrayed themselves as being resilient, courageous, persistent, and hopeful. They did not crave sympathy; instead, they always seemed to be happy, cared for each other, and showed great resolve to achieve their goals both in education and in life.

Through their spoken and unspoken language, the children demonstrated a keen sense of humor, deep reflective responses, and excitement about their future and the vision that would get them there. Many of them spoke of how they wanted a good life both now and in the future. They expressed how they would like to become great professionals and active, contributing members of the community so that they could change the demoralizing style of life in their community. In addition, the children who participated in this study were convinced that education was the key to success and to a better life despite the different hardships that blocked their paths. Through one-on-one discussion with some of them, it became clear to me that in spite of their motivation, ambition, and zeal, the children were disheartened by the lack of fulfilment of basic personal needs, the dilapidated schools, and the shortage of both material and human resources. Such challenges not only lowered the quality of education but also affected

how children experienced and perceived school. For example, teachers' absenteeism and lack of commitment and accountability was one of the human-resource problems that affected children's morale. As a result of this situation, vulnerable children who participated in this study saw themselves as being at a crossroad; while they were not sure what to expect, they still hoped that something might be done to help them succeed. Unfortunately, the children seemed to be unaware of the checks and balances within the school system that hinder them and reduce their life chances.

Some of the factors that contribute to offsetting vulnerable children's school experiences include the hierarchical control of the educational system, the inequities in the distribution of resources, and other issues that impact classroom management techniques, testing procedures, and school leadership approaches. Based on the literature that informed this research and my experience of some aspects of various North American Educational systems, schools in Tanzania have similar characteristics to North American schools that influence the school experience of vulnerable children. For example, in Ontario the children of the working class, particularly those from very poor families, have few chances to enter post-secondary education (Curtis, Livingstone, & Smaller, 1992). Likewise, among the majority of Tanzanians living in rural areas where poverty is pervasive and social services are severely lacking, children have limited chances to enter higher education. The reason behind such a situation, is not the fault of teachers or students as has often been said, but it is rather the system that as noted by Curtis et al. (1992) is designed for failure. In other words, Tanzanian schools like Ontarian schools are designed to stream children into categories of winners and losers (Contenta, 1997). Most schools in the rural areas, such as those who participated in this study, lack necessary resources—a lack that hinders teaching and learning. As a result, the children of the poor in these rural schools have little

chances of passing the highly competitive standardized national examinations (Mamdani et al., 2009). Unlike them, the children of the wealthy and middle-class, those with chances to attend well equipped schools, have higher chances to pass the national examinations and to enter universities and colleges. Based on this condition, it is fair to conclude that children of the poor or vulnerable are set to remain in their class of origin.

Tanzania has a very centralized and hierarchical school system. As a result, individual schools do not have full autonomy and control of the intended curriculum. For example, school principals are assigned to schools by the major educational authorities. As a result of this, stakeholders of a particular school do not have a say on who can be their best leader. Likewise, teachers are posted to different schools across the country after graduating from teacher's colleges and universities. Teachers are also transferred from school to school based on school or community needs as determined by the Ministry of Education. In this case, the local schools (i.e., administrators, educators) do not have a say on who they think would best serve their school. In addition, school curriculum and how it must be taught is also determined by those at the Ministry of Education. As a result of these structures, the educational system is knowingly or unknowingly maintaining hegemony that prevents schools from being more creative in order to meet the needs of their vulnerable children. In other words, it can be argued that the educational system's design plays a major role in perpetuating and reinforcing hegemony that hinders schools' autonomy and ability to become more effective and inspiring places where vulnerable children's needs are being met.

Hegemonic Practices in Tanzanian Schools

At the schools level, a variety of hegemonic practices were evident, starting from individual institutions' leadership styles and extending to classroom management. The

hierarchical structures of the educational system were clearly reflected in the individual schools; in other words, teachers looked to the school principals for answers, and students looked to the teachers for answers. But from observations, there were also signs of good relationships between teachers and their principals. In most cases, school principals were sharing and discussing school matters with their teachers as colleagues. The language and the tone used in the discussion reflected some aspects of transformational school leadership that, as Hallinger (2003) observes, discourages hegemony through recognition of the potentials that every member brings to the institution.

During this study, I had the opportunity to attend a few informal meetings held during tea break. The meetings involved school principals and the teaching staff. In these meetings the educators shared views about different aspects of their school such as what was going on in their classrooms in relation to their teaching and their learners. It was during these meetings that I witnessed the presence of some aspects of transformational school leadership practices similar to those described in numerous studies (e.g., Bass & Avolio, 1994; Hallinger, 2003; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006; Marks & Printy, 2003; Marzano et al., 2005; Owens, 2004; Stewart, 2006). For example, in all the schools, principals were engaging teachers in discussions about matters affecting the smooth running of the school such as discipline issues. However, teachers' age, gender, or qualifications seemed at times to influence how they shared their views. For example, teachers with more experience, those with a university degree, and male teachers seemed to be more eloquent than those with less experience and without a university education. In schools where the majority of teachers were male, female teachers were very quiet during discussions. In each of the five schools, teachers and their school principals had formal and informal get-togethers. In some of these gatherings, they discussed issues related to their students and what

was going on in the school. As a way of getting teachers involved, most school principals shared their leadership responsibilities. For example, in each school, teachers shared weekly responsibility of running the school and were accountable to the school principals. Other teachers were assigned other roles such as being disciplinarians, teacher in-charge of school projects and the like. In this manner, I saw that the school principals essentially elevated their teachers into leadership roles (Marzano et al., 2005, p. 15). Still, despite the apparently strong teacher–principal relationship, teachers seemed to be somewhat powerless when it came down to matters related to policy changes that could directly help vulnerable children. In other words, teachers had to depend on school principals, who in turn depended on school board administration. This means that, however much school principals tried to involve their teachers, school structure still remained hierarchical, adhering to what we can call a top-down administrative model that ultimately impedes direct intervention on children’s behalf.

Hegemonic relations were demonstrated clearly in the classroom management styles. Based on what I gathered from the children’s responses and also from participant observation, the teaching styles were very autocratic. For example, the children spoke of how they would be punished if they tried to challenge their teachers in the classroom. Teachers used a rote learning approach, that encouraged memorization of the concepts and formulas, and students’ questions were often left unanswered. There was literally little or no dialogue between the teacher and the learner, which amounts to the control and domination of knowledge. As it appeared in this study, most children go to school with excitement to learn and to gain the kind of knowledge that will uplift the standard of their lives. Many of them go with the belief that their teachers will be instrumental in letting such learning happen. In this regard, the teacher was viewed as the “know it all” to whom learners either consciously or unconsciously relinquished all power. Students

were blamed when they failed to comprehend and regurgitate the information passed on to them, and they too blamed themselves as well their school. This situation reflects McLaren's (2009) view of "hegemony as the struggle in which the powerful win the consent of those who are oppressed and unknowingly participating in their own oppression" (p. 67).

Corporal punishment, a true symbol of power and control, is also seen as one of the challenges experienced by vulnerable children. In many of the schools, teachers carried canes with which they often used to punish the children. Many children received the whips silently, which was a sign of submission. My observations also included less overt instances of power and control and some moments that may correspond to cultural practices. For example, in most African traditions, younger persons are expected to always show a sense of submission to the older. In some ethnic groups such as the Sukuma and the Nyamwezi people of central Tanzania, for instance, women have to kneel down while greeting the elders, particularly men. Girls and women from other ethnic groups make a short genuflection while others have to stand still while saying the greetings and listening to the adult until they are allowed to sit or to move on with their activities. These cultural practices portray aspects of control and domination that must be challenged. Schools as institutions where teaching and learning takes place, are in a better position to challenge such practices by inspiring learners to think critically about their daily practices and what they mean to them. Unfortunately, as found in this study, schools contribute to maintaining practices that strengthen status quo. This was evident in even simple gestures such as formal greeting. For example, when I entered one of the classrooms, the students all stood up and one of them (the head boy) announced loudly, "greet the teacher" at which point the whole class responded with a resounding "Good morning Teacher"; the children remained standing until they were ordered to sit. Although this may look respectful, I found it problematic

because in a social situation like a school, something as welcoming as a greeting should be expressed more naturally instead of being tantamount to a military review.

Based on my long experience as both a student and a teacher in Tanzania and as confirmed by the findings of this study, Tanzanian schools tend to present themselves as offering equal opportunity for all their participants (egalitarian), as places where anyone can succeed if they work hard (meritocratic). It is unfortunate that the children, parents and teachers have been led to also believe that the school system offers an equal promise of success if only learners can work hard enough. This view is mere rhetoric because, as was evident in this study, children have learned that however hard they work, the possibility to succeed is very narrow. There are many competing realities that include severe limitation of both human and material resources that hinders vulnerable children from achieving quality education. Given the reality of current abject poverty in Tanzania, where more than 33% people live under the poverty line (World Bank, 2012a), where 80% of the total population are still living in the rural areas without reliable running water and electricity; and where social hierarchy and competing priorities are still prevalent, it is unreasonable to maintain that an education for all policy could be achieved. “Inequalities exist in various forms and levels. Rural-urban differences are in terms of average incomes, reflecting differences in access to better-paying jobs and social services including education and health” (United Republic of Tanzania, 2011, p. 3). In addition, it is evident that the inequalities that exist continue to be reinforced by a number of limitations in the educational system. According to Mamdani et al. (2009), the Tanzanian educational system has failed to guarantee quality education in a fair manner and the majority of the schools do not practice inclusive education. In addition, Mamdani and colleagues noted the unfair distribution of teachers and resources whereby the poor people living in the rural areas were the most

disadvantaged. In this study it was evident that due to low salaries rural teachers are forced to find other opportunities and means to supplement their salaries in order to make ends meet. It is therefore reasonable that in such a situation, a teacher may not be willing to work in schools located in the rural areas where finding good opportunities would be challenging due to lack of transportation and other basic necessities like water and infrastructure (Mamdani et al., 2009). As a result of this situation, it can be argued that children from such communities do not have equal access to education. It is also true that, with such inequalities, the notion of meritocratic education does not apply.

In conclusion, it can be argued that trying to convince all learners, particularly the poor, that they have equal opportunity to quality education and that they are accountable for their success is merely rhetorical and deceitful. It is true that, theoretically, all Tanzanian children have the right to access similar education based on one curriculum created by the Ministry of Education. However, as I have already discussed above, the poor and dilapidated schools that vulnerable children attend contradict the claim that all Tanzanian children have the right to education and that education is meritocratic. The taken for granted claims of egalitarianism and meritocracy in a country like Tanzania contributes to further marginalization of vulnerable children. As found in this study, the claim of egalitarian and meritocratic education creates a condition in which teachers and the children in these poor schools are unfairly blamed for the poor quality of education and the learning outcomes. Based on this situation, as already argued by Sifuna (2007), the Tanzanian educational system needs to meet the challenges of education that include the inequities in the provision of human and learning resources as well as the challenge of providing quality education for all.

The Hidden Curriculum and Social Reproduction

Another factor impeding vulnerable children from achieving a sound education was the presence of the schools' hidden curriculum that was subtle, prevalent, and pervasive. Despite the harsh learning conditions, educators and those in higher administrative positions expected vulnerable children to perform as well as the others. At one point, I asked the teachers what they might be doing differently to support the learning process of their vulnerable children. Many replied that, in their schools, every child receives equal treatment. While such a response may suggest the school system is equitable and just—in that every child, vulnerable or not, gets the same opportunity for success—such legitimization can be seen as a way of perpetuating the hidden curriculum. Treating all students as equals without considering their social and economic differences tends to privilege children from wealthier families who can continue to advance while the poor children's chances continue to diminish.

While commenting on the issue of equality in education, Bhalalusesa (2005) indicated that Tanzania was one of the countries that “signed a declaration acknowledging that all humans are equal and deserve the same right before the law as well as distribution of resources of various social services including basic education” (p. 70). While I found equality of outcomes in education in Tanzania to be blatantly absent from the classrooms and schools that I observed, some of the participants in this research merely discussed theory and waxed philosophically on how all learners have an equal opportunity for educational achievement regardless of their social, economic, and cultural circumstances. But the latter view also means that teachers can continue to be blamed for the poor academic performance of their learners, who in turn are blamed by their teachers for their inability to perform well. In other words, the educational system is characterized by a hierarchy of liabilities and condemnations from the highest educational

authorities to those at the bottom who are the end victims of a system that claims to provide equal educational opportunities that are in fact never equal.

Thomas Jefferson, the third President of the United States, known as the spokesman of democracy and human rights, was quite right when he stated that “There is nothing more unequal than the equal treatment of unequal people” (as cited in Coates, 1996, para. 1). Jefferson points out a common confusion of the terms equity and equality in the United States and it seems to apply to the Tanzanian context here in this study as well. Jefferson’s statement challenges the claim made by the teachers in the study that they strive to treat all children equally without paying specific attention to vulnerable children. I wish to challenge here the concept of equality of opportunity in education as implied by world declarations that promote education for all. I argue that individual nations must be very clear about exactly what equality in education or equal access to education means and how it can be applied in their specific contexts. Otherwise, schools will continue to perpetuate the hidden curriculum that maintains the status quo and quashes vulnerable children’s chances for success. In fact it can be argued that the kind of equality that is reinforced in schools is one of those taken for granted terms that create inequity. In fact, Espinoza (2007) highlights this notion arguing that, “When equality of access is not combined with the systematic provision of educational services that are necessary for equality attainment, equality stops and inequality takes over” (p. 347). This study found out that in Tanzania the emphasis on equality in education focuses on opportunity rather than outcomes. Though equality of opportunity may sound good, when examined closely and critically, it turns out to be one of those hegemonic elements that work against the vulnerable. This could be the reason for which Espinoza (2007) suggested the need to have “direct and focused intervention tailored to each student’s educational needs” (p. 348).

From my analysis, it became evident that the schools contribute to the growing disparities between the rich and the poor and maintaining status quo. In other words, schools play a major role in what McLaren (2009) terms social reproduction, including the way in which they direct students to attend certain schools. According to the findings in this study, the majority of the children who attended the five schools examined in this study came from the lower social economic groups, or to put it more openly, the majority of the children came from marginalized communities in which most families could hardly afford to provide breakfast for their children before school. This finding suggests that the children of the wealthier people in the community went to different and better schools. This finding confirms Samoff's (1990) arguments about privatizing education as a factor that contributes to societies' own regeneration.

As I discussed earlier, vulnerable children from impoverished families most often fail their examinations and thus are relegated to maintaining their low economic status. The children never escape their socio-economic status. For instance, the 2012 examination results for 127 students attending a public rural school show that 41 students scored a "D" average while another 86 students received an "F" for failing the exams. Conversely, examination results for a nearby private school attended by children from middle-class and wealthier families show that 55 students scored an "A," 29 had a "B," and only four students had a "C." Unlike the children from their neighbouring public school, all the privileged children from this private school will have the opportunity to continue with higher education, thus maintaining the social reproduction phenomenon.

Language is another factor that contributes significantly to schools' perpetuation of social reproduction. Though I will further discuss the ramifications of language later in this chapter, I note here the role of language in the success of education in Tanzania. According to the United

Republic of Tanzania Ministry of Education and Culture (1995), Kiswahili is used as a medium of instruction at pre-primary and primary levels while English is used at secondary and post-secondary level. This means that children have to abruptly shift languages at the point where they advance from primary to secondary school. Based on my personal experience as a student and a teacher in Tanzania, the sudden change of the medium of instruction can be very depressing to learners. Children who come from primary schools where the medium of instruction is Kiswahili, do not have the mastery of English that they need in order to actively participate in their learning process; as a result they are forced to observe rote learning that negatively impacts their outcome. Parents are aware that language is a stumbling block in the learning process of their children. No wonder that parents with a means take their children to private schools where English is the only medium of instruction. According to Mamdani et al (2009), “other parents supplement the limited learning in public schools by sending their children to ‘tuition’ classes in the afternoon” (p. 9). Unfortunately, the children from impoverished families do not have such options. This situation is another paradox in Tanzanian education and it ultimately suggests that because the children do not share a level playing field in education, schools are automatically major agents of promoting and perpetuating hegemony and the hidden curriculum that results in social reproduction.

Vulnerability and Marginality

Vulnerability and marginality seem to always go together. The more vulnerable people are the more marginalization they tend to experience. In this research, children expressed how they felt further marginalized because of their visible vulnerable conditions. It became evident when educators described who their vulnerable children were and how they experienced them. Educators had a long list of characteristics by which they defined their vulnerable children.

Unfortunately, what they cited contradicted how the children perceived themselves. Apart from defining them as children in critical need of basic living and learning materials, some educators further described (or perhaps labeled) vulnerable children in their schools as those whose difficult living conditions had reduced their chances of success. As such, vulnerable children were even further marginalized by their educators by this type of labelling. For example, some were not prepared to deal with children who were going through traumatic conditions in their classrooms, and others saw them as the source of indiscipline in the school. They saw them as being demoralized by their living conditions to the point that they had lost motivation, confidence, and hope of being successful in their studies and in life. In addition, some educators described vulnerable children as those who had a high risk of poor academic performance and of dropping out of school because they were academically challenged, easily frustrated, and had a tendency to join undesirable peer groups or street gangs known to engage in deviant behaviours. On the one hand, these descriptions contradicted those of the children. Yet, on the other hand, they reflected literature regarding possible consequences of post-traumatic stress experienced by vulnerable children. For example, Cohen and Mannarino (2011) and Kirkpatrick, Rojjanasrirat, South, Sindt, and Williams (2012) showed vulnerable children have the tendency to be unhappy, withdraw from others, or to act with anger due to emotional distress, which of course affects their learning process. This study challenges and disrupts this misperception.

A look at how vulnerable children define and present themselves and how their educators view them presents a paradoxical message because on the one side educators see them as a problem, while on the other the children see themselves as eager to learn and to achieve their goals but believe they are not given the opportunity due to poor learning conditions of the schools. Many personal and school based factors deterred the children from having a positive

school experience. However, the problem cannot be attributed so much to the children or to the educators; it is something far beyond the schools. After a critical examination of the Tanzanian educational system and its policies, it is evident that the problems facing schools in relation to the issue of vulnerable children has its roots in the Tanzanian educational system itself. The system is either knowingly or unknowingly structured to fail the poor and marginalized and to continually work in favor of the wealthy, thereby maintaining the status quo. In the next section, I discuss how I view the Tanzanian educational system as operating as a tool of oppression against the poor and marginalized.

Tanzanian Educational System as a Tool of Oppression

My findings suggested that the Tanzanian educational system operates in an oppressive manner in many ways. First and foremost, the overall conditions and demographics are creating a pedagogical model that does not favour nor condone the kind of learning that involves learners' active involvement. Classrooms in all five schools involved in this research were overpopulated. In the lower grades, teachers had trouble keeping all the children focused on learning. Children, particularly the youngest ones, were hardly involved in their learning. All they had to do was to repeat the requisite words or numbers after their teacher had finished lecturing, thus putting pressure on them to memorize what they do not understand. For example, in one of the schools, the children had learned to recite greetings in the English language, but from my observation, the children had memorized it without a clue of what the greeting meant—for instance, many children greeted me with a “good morning” no matter the hour of the day, followed quickly by “I am fine thank you” even if not asked. This example of rote learning seemed disconnected from their daily lives and clearly demonstrates the lack of a child-centred approach to learning. The situation confirms the argument made by Mamdani et al. (2009), that due to lack of “opportunity

for interaction or questioning of the information presented, there is little opportunity to develop creativity and analytical skills” (p. 9). In other words, children like these are missing the chance to achieve the very essence of schooling—to develop the skills necessary for improving their livelihood. In this case, it is right to argue that the educational system is oppressive in that, it does not provide all the children the opportunity to be successful as stipulated in the 1995 Education and Training Policy.

As mentioned earlier, language is another feature of Tanzanian schools that leads to the oppression of vulnerable children. Tanzania is a bilingual country where both Kiswahili and English are recognized as official languages. Every Tanzanian-born citizen speaks Kiswahili, but English is spoken by only a very few Tanzanians. Qorro’s (2013) investigation revealed that Tanzanians who are fluent in the English language generally comprise an elite group. It is also true that some Tanzanians who can afford paying for their children to attend Tanzania’s English-speaking schools or send their children to schools abroad and to neighbouring English speaking countries like Kenya and Uganda, add to those who speak fluent English in the country. In a recent speech, the Deputy Minister for Education and Vocational Training Philip Mulugo said that, “The reason for parents to send their children abroad was for mastery of the English language.” He also noted that “in the country there are international schools, which teach good English and there are good teachers” (“Tanzanian Deputy Minister,” 2012, para. 1). Bilingualism has been enforced by policy in the Tanzanian educational system, but as observed in this study, teachers and students view such enforcement as another pitfall and barrier to effective teaching and learning. Many studies have addressed such language barriers, and policy makers have been advised to reconsider English-language policies that impact the majority of Tanzanian children. In Qorro’s (2013) analysis of 18 related studies, he established that only one critic recommended

that English should be used as the primary language of instruction at the secondary and tertiary levels, while another recommended the use of both languages. As Qorro remarked, the remaining 16 studies (including Brock-Utne, 2004, 2005, 2007; Galabawa & Lwaitama, 2005; Galabawa & Senkoro, 2006; Mlama & Matteru, 1977; Mwinsheikhe, 2002, 2003, 2007; Qorro, 1987, 1999, 2004, 2005; Roy-Campbell & Qorro, 1987; Vuzo, 2002, 2007) had a different viewpoint. According to Qorro, the large majority of studies recommended a complete shift of language policies in Tanzanian schools. In their views, “English should be taught effectively as an additional language; and that the language of instruction in secondary schools should be changed from English to Kiswahili” (Qorro, 2013, p. 37). Brock-Utne (2007) agrees with the latter view, noting that “when a foreign language is used, English in this matter, there is a much larger spread in test performance between students” (p. 509), meaning that Kiswahili should be the favoured language of instruction at all levels in order to reduce or eradicate the disparity between exam results of English- versus Kiswahili-speaking students.

However, I question the latter studies’ position because they tend to compare Tanzania with industrialized countries that use their own languages as a medium of instruction in schools. Such a comparison may be considered inappropriate given Tanzania’s economic status and the limitations of the Kiswahili language. To date, Kiswahili is spoken fluently nationwide only in Tanzania and Kenya. It is also spoken partially in other 9 countries namely: Uganda, Congo, Rwanda, Burundi, Ethiopia, Zambia, Malawi, Mozambique, and Madagascar (Pawliková-Vilhanová, 1996). Although Kiswahili has grown and is currently considered as the official and national language in Tanzania, it still lacks a comprehensive scientific vocabulary necessary for it to be used effectively as a medium of instruction at all levels of learning. Therefore, given its limitation, it is important that Tanzanians give themselves time for their

language to grow more both in written and spoken forms before it can be utilized effectively at all levels of schooling. Like world-renowned African critic Ngugi wa Thiong'o, I realize the significance of a local language such as Kiswahili as a means of harkening to our cultural identity and contextualizing learning (Wa Thiong'o, 1994). I also realize that overemphasizing a foreign language over local languages contributes to the eradication of cultural values, because as argued by Wa Thiong'o (1994) language and culture are interdependent and are excellent vehicle(s) through which people are able to understand themselves and their place in the world.

Tanzania realizes the significance of using Kiswahili as a medium of instruction, as a means of maintaining cultural identity. Efforts have been made to keep Kiswahili as a medium of instruction at the primary level of education. Unfortunately, the system does not seem to be successful. This factor can be explained by the mushrooming of the so called English medium schools which tend to be expensive and are mostly attended by children of a few wealthy Tanzanians. The presence of English medium versus Kiswahili medium schools is contributing to stratification in education. In essence, it plays a significant role in strengthening hierarchies and systems of oppression which continue to exploit the marginalized. From the findings in this study, it appears that the use of both languages without proper mastery or preparation for students to shift from Kiswahili at Primary level to English in the secondary school is becoming a predicament in the learning process.

Language is crucial in competing in the international job market, and in social and economic development. For this reason, in a country like Tanzania that is still struggling in its development, there is a need to keep connected with the international world. To keep this connection, Tanzanians require mastery of the English language. I believe that adopting English as the medium of instruction at all levels may not necessarily extinguish Kiswahili language or

cultural identity. In other words, I suggest that the issue of language be considered critically so that all Tanzanian learners acquire mastery of both languages. Additionally, I think that if Tanzania can decide to make Kiswahili the major language of instruction without disadvantaging some of its citizens, the country must become socially and economically sufficient before it can cut itself off, linguistically speaking, from the outside world and still be able to compete globally. This means that Tanzania should provide its citizens, and more particularly in this case vulnerable children, the opportunity to master a more global language—English. In my view, all children should learn and use English as a medium of instruction from the first day of school. Since Kiswahili is spoken at home and everywhere in the country, the children can continue learning Kiswahili and still have a mastery of it for the sake of maintaining national identity and connections to their nation's and families' past. Ultimately, the adoption of the English language as the primary medium of instruction would be aligned with the URTMEC's (1995) *Education and Training Policy* that claims that education is “a process by which individuals acquire knowledge and skills necessary for appreciating and adapting to the environment and the ever changing social, political, and economic conditions of society as a means by which one can realize one's full potential” (p. i).

Observations in the Field: Application to Theory

During my fieldwork, I returned home one day feeling exceptionally distressed after co-teaching in one of the primary schools, primarily because of the students' apparent lack of participation in the classroom. After the first 45 minutes of the first lesson ended with students in complete silence, I suggested a new approach to the teacher involving different activities to make the lessons more student-centred in order to stimulate students' interest and to make them more actively involved in their learning. In the subsequent lesson, we implemented what I had

suggested; although it took some time to rouse the students' interest, they eventually participated (albeit not at the level that I had expected). From this experience, I realized that this was something new to them, as they obviously had become accustomed to listening silently to all their teachers.

A student-centered approach is crucial to meeting the needs of all learners but more so the vulnerable children who are severely impacted by their vulnerable condition. Vulnerable children are in dire need of a student-centered teaching approach because it can be a good means of getting them involved. Such involvement can lead them to overcome traumatic stresses which they may be experiencing and adjust to their learning atmosphere. In this I am suggesting that as a means of supporting vulnerable children a teacher centered approach should be avoided. The teacher-centered approach can be viewed as a tool which many traditional teachers use in order to maintain power and control (hegemony). Although it is commonly used, teacher-centered approach does not help learners to become conscious critical thinkers who can eventually learn how to solve their own problems. As a result of such an approach, learners especially those who are vulnerable do not achieve the kind of education they ought to as a means of improving their livelihood and escaping the cycle of vulnerability.

During my participatory observation process in this study, I found that most schools were employing teacher-centered approaches in their teaching. The experience reminded me of one of the powerful arguments made by Paul Freire concerning the banking concept of education where “knowledge is viewed as a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing” (Freire, 1993, p. 53). On that same note, Freire highlighted the authoritarian teacher- student relationship noting that, “education must begin with the solution to the teacher-student contradiction, by reconciling the poles of contradictions

so that both are simultaneously teachers and students” (p. 53). Given this reflection in relation to my observation of that day, it was clear that the banking system and the authoritarian teacher–student relationship was clearly evident in the teaching approach that I had observed. In this reflection, many things came to play that led me to see the struggles of the teachers that force them to adopt the banking approach as the only alternative. First, the classroom was overly populated with about 72 children aged between 11 and 13 years. Second, the teachers did not have access to learning resources other than a piece of chalk, the blackboard and one textbook. Third, students did not have any learning resources apart from a pen and an exercise book for copying their notes. Given this situation and the restricted time factor, the teacher opted for the banking approach, which goes hand in hand with authoritarian teacher-student relationship. According to Freire (1993) this approach is problematic because students in such a classroom do not get the opportunity to learn from their experiences or to think critically about life in relation to their learning.

Dewey (1938) contended that if education does not give the student an opportunity to learn from his or her personal experience and to gain more appreciation of the things that they consider worthwhile, “then what happens is that the actual preparation for the future is missed or distorted” (p. 49). Considering the situation of the schools where I conducted this study, it is apparent that children did not have such opportunity. Instead, based on what I learned from the participants, particularly children, they are expected to achieve the aims of education and if they do not, it is generally considered to be their fault because it is assumed that they did not work hard enough. Holding such expectations in schools that are severely lacking in what is needed, such as the opportunity for learners to be actively involved in their learning experience, suggests the presence of the taken for granted. Furthermore, to be benign and compliant, teachers in these

schools are expected to fulfill the government's mandate and students are expected to be there and to take what is given to them, a fact which demonstrated the presence of hegemony. In relation to Dewey's comment above, both the curriculum and the teaching approach in these schools are taken for granted, as teachers and students alike do not have the opportunity or power to question what they are teaching and learning, respectively. In one of the schools, for instance, an experienced teacher raised a concern on how the recent school curriculum and books kept changing. In this teacher's view, some of the new books were irrelevant and teachers were never consulted about the changes. They were expected to pick up the new curriculum and teach it as instructed by those in the Ministry of Education.

Evidence from this study indicates that many strategic steps have been made by the Tanzanian government to ensure access to schooling for all Tanzanians, and more particularly with focus on the rural and marginalized areas in the country. Likewise, well-articulated policies have been legislated and have been discussed in the literature. However, the practice of such policies has remained questionable. Legislation such as the URTMEC's (1995) *Education and Training Policy* that emphasizes the provision of quality education for all children seems rather hollow when so many children do not have opportunity to be in schools where they can acquire a meaningful knowledge that can make a positive impact in their lives. As I argued earlier, the Tanzania educational system contributes to the growth of the gap between the rich and the poor, and it also perpetuates Tanzania's colonial legacy. According to Schneider (2006), "the concept of legacy implies that some aspect of an earlier history survives, continues, is passed down, and 'inherited' by some later phase, where it then continues to be efficacious" (p. 102). The former colonial educational system in Tanzania, then known as Tanganyika, was discriminatory in nature and was to some extent used as a tool for maintaining the status quo. It was discriminatory

because at the time schools were founded based on faith that favoured Christianity (Douglas, 2007). Likewise, the colonial government had segregated schools based on race; children of the colonialists, the Whites (i.e., British) went to schools deemed to have the highest rank, Indian children attended second-rank schools, followed by Tanzanians, who were sent to the third and lowest ranking schools where they had to learn just enough literacy to prepare them for effective service to their colonial masters. Although much has been said and done since then to ensure equal access of quality education for all, the current educational system in Tanzania—with its ever-growing school stratification bears much resemblance to the discriminatory colonial systems that sought to maintain the status quo. In short, as long as children from different social groups continue to attend schools of different quality based on how much they are able to afford, schools will always remain a tool for the oppression of the poor or for preparing children for their hegemonic roles as adults in the Tanzanian society.

In the past two decades, Tanzanians have experienced a growing divide between the poor and the rich. According to the World Bank (2012b) report on economic development of the African countries, Tanzania stands out as model of sound economic performance in the African continent (p. v). Yet, as noted in the same report, the economic growth has not spread enough to benefit the majority 80% of the poor people who live in the rural areas. As a matter of fact, only a few people in the country enjoy the fruits of this economy, as most are said to be living “in similar conditions to those of their parents or even their grand-parents in decades past. Most rural households have no electricity, no motor vehicles, no concrete roads” (World Bank, 2012b, p. x)

While the vulnerable children in this study tended to believe that “education is the key to life” (or education is power), the question remains: who exactly holds the key to power? We

can also ask: what is the purpose of education? From my experience and based on the findings from this study, the key to a materially abundant life evidently belongs to wealthier and privileged Tanzanians who are capable of sending their children to schools that are deserving of such a title—that is, institutions in which children are given the opportunity to learn and become critical thinkers. Based on the colonial legacy, education serves the purpose of maintaining the status quo and social reproduction. This view is aligned with Samoff's (1990) analysis of the politics of privatization and its consequences to the Tanzanian people. Samoff aptly argued that “as schools differentiate among students and then label, certify and justify those differentiations they contribute to the reproduction of a particular set of economic, political and social relations”(p. 4). In light of this argument and based on my observation of the conditions of the schools that participated in this study, it is evident that schools contribute to the regeneration of the society. The children from the poor and marginalized communities like those who participated in this study are being relegated to pseudo schools and to a token education. I argue here that this condition is critical, unacceptable, and has a deleterious impact not only on the vulnerable children and their immediate marginalized communities but also on the entire nation and the global community. As noted by Sifuna (2007), “education is essential to economic and social development” (p. 697). This being the case, it is obvious that social and economic development cannot advance at the expected speed when 80% of the Tanzanians living in the rural areas are still facing the same economic conditions as those of their parents 50 years ago (World Bank, 2012b). There is no wonder that “the level of poverty in Tanzania has remained stagnant at around 37-40 percent” (World, Bank, 2012b, p. x) for the past 10 years. In my view, the problem lies in the inequities that exist in the provision of an education that has resulted in social reproduction. Thus, to escape this dilemma, which stagnates the

nation's prosperity, there is the need to understand the kinds of challenges facing the current educational model and to take strategic steps to address them.

A Glance at the Challenges of the Current Educational Model: Whose Responsibility?

A quick look at vulnerable children's inequitable educational experience may indicate that the major challenge originates from Tanzania's poor economic conditions. Surprisingly, as found by this study, many critics blame teachers or students themselves for any shortcomings in the latter's learning process. While each individual may have some responsibility or may need to make some contribution towards the betterment of their education, I maintain that teachers and students do not have the power to materially change the educational system to the point that all Tanzanians would have the opportunity to experience quality learning. The challenges facing vulnerable children in the schools are complex and the responsibility of such challenges transcend the schools and the children themselves. The challenges need to be addressed by looking at the national models of production, social factors, and national policy related to such matters. Aronowitz (2009) cogently discussed the reality of education and the growing division between social classes in North America, noting that "some education analysts favor a curriculum that stresses critical thinking for a small number of students in a restricted number of sites" (p. 107). This argument resonates well with the current situation of schooling in Tanzania, where a few privileged children have the opportunity to go to schools where they are able to experience learning as a process of inquiry, because their classes are small and teachers are qualified and capable of applying a student-centred approach. Qorro (2013) wrote about this situation in regard to the use of English language as a medium of instruction arguing that it was "used to make education inaccessible to the poor and as a gate-keeping device for the children of the elite" (p. 39).

In listening to teachers and students who voiced their concerns about their respective school experiences and what it meant for their future lives, I saw clearly the presence and effects of hegemony and social reproduction in the schools that took part in this study. I noted the accuracy of McLaren's (2009) interpretation of hegemony as an ideology of the dominant culture that denies subordinates the ability to question the prevailing values and attitudes. The hegemonic attitudes became very clear when the teacher-participants shared about their working conditions as one of the major challenges that prevented them from supporting the vulnerable children. Educators felt incapacitated, and certainly not supported or heard by the authority figures. Indeed, teachers themselves expressed their own vulnerability, which clearly demonstrates a serious power struggle and hegemony at play between teachers and employers, which then trickles down to students.

The children complained of not being listened to by their teachers and sometimes they were punished (even corporally) for reasons that were not made clear to them. Again, such experiences are clear evidence of how power and control diminish the hopes of vulnerable children to reap the benefits of education despite the many other challenges. I was both impressed and saddened when one of the children expressed during an individual interview that he wanted educational leaders to listen more and, when possible, to hold meetings with teachers and students so that they could better understand the situation of vulnerable children from each other's perspective. This expression shows that children are resilient and are trying to resist the hegemonic forces that keep them in the cycle of vulnerability.

Mbilinyi (2003) wrote an inspiring and challenging article in which he referred to Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, the first president of Tanzania, and his call for a liberating education. According to Mbilinyi, Nyerere's view of liberating education was based mostly on access,

context, and quality. By this, Nyerere meant that all Tanzanian schools be available to all children, contrary to the colonial educational system that had segregated learners based on religion and race. He also wanted all children to get an education that would prepare them to become critical thinkers to in turn be able to cope with life in their own context (Mbilinyi, 2003). Despite the many strategic steps taken towards achieving Nyerere's educational objectives, including the creation of unified school systems, expansion of enrollment, introduction of universal primary education, and abolition of school fees, the quest for liberating education is far from over.

Galabawa (2007) was right when he argued that even if the Tanzanian educational system takes into account the issues of vulnerable children, achieving the educational goals for quality education for all is unrealistic. At the close of each day when I was collecting data, I was left with many disturbing and challenging questions on the future of education of vulnerable children. Although much has been done to ensure that all children have access to quality education, the outcomes of such education are far from being realized. It can also be added that such efforts will never be realized unless all schools are provided with the basic necessities that they need in order to improve teaching and learning. It is evident that children who are hungry, forced to live with feelings of uncertainty, and lacking security of mind and body will never learn to become critical thinkers able to cope with life in their environment. Based on these situations, I agree with some previous scholars who maintain that the possibility of achieving quality education that will liberate vulnerable children is illusory (such as Galabawa, 2007; Mbilinyi, 2003). By this, I do not suggest that it is impossible to establish a better educational system that will prepare learners to become active, contributing members in building a better world. Instead, I would like to challenge and suggest to Tanzanian leaders that they make

education their first priority through intentional commitment to overcome inequities in the current model of education that leave vulnerable children behind. In addition, Tanzanian leaders need to look beyond their immediate experiences and social circles and put themselves in the place of their vulnerable children. They need to think critically and then revisit and re-evaluate educational policies and how such policies are being pursued to effect educational achievement for all Tanzanian people particularly the vulnerable. Moreover, as argued by Freire and Macedo (2003), educational leaders must “establish unwavering faith in the oppressed” (p. 506), in this case their vulnerable children. In this study, it was disheartening to see so many young resilient children who are full of energy and enthusiasm to achieve education as a means of realizing their full potentials being let down and left behind due to systemic reasons some of which are tools of oppression. For this reason, I strongly argue that there is a need to revolutionize the Tanzanian educational system in order to bring about educational change that will make way for vulnerable children to have access to quality education. Here I am referring to a holistic change that, according to Fullan (2006), “involves changes in conceptions and behavior” (p. 32). This kind of educational change must begin from higher levels in the educational system that are responsible to ensure equity in the provision of resources in the schools.

The issue of educational change in Tanzania is very complex and complicated. That is why, despite the many efforts made, the situation has not seemed to change especially for the vulnerable and marginalized; for this reason, there is a need to ask critical and philosophical questions that have for a long time been left untouched. For example, we need to understand the meaning of equal right to quality education in Tanzania, how such quality can be measured and for what purpose. Although I do not intend to be rhetorical or unrealistic by asking questions that might not have direct and immediate answers, I contend that such questions are necessary for

facilitating change in Tanzanian education. In other words, questions such as these could as suggested by Fullan (2006) become the starting point from where those involved in bringing educational change can begin thinking critically about what needs to be refined and improved upon. Since the challenges facing vulnerable children are complex in nature, steps taken to deal with such challenges must also be complex and they should not be taken in isolation. Involving different categories of educational and school stakeholders must be considered critical. Some stakeholders may include: educational policy makers, regional and district school board, local school board, school leaders, teachers, parents and students. In this regard, it is also important that in taking responsibility for the problems facing vulnerable children in the schools, care must be taken that talking and planning about the problems does not substitute for action. In other words, in order to bring real change in the lives of these children we will need transformative leaders who can walk the talk.

Learner Expectations and Outcomes

Within the responses to the questionnaires, focus group discussions, and interviews, there was clear evidence of ideological tension between what learners expect of education and the actual outcomes of it. This ideological tension was seen in what the participants viewed as the value of education and the schools' insistence that learners strive for success. As noted earlier, educational success from the Tanzanian perspective is achieved when the learners are able to succeed in their examinations such that they advance in education to the level that would guarantee them a kind of a job that will allow them to "earn a living." But the participants clearly indicated that the kind of learning they are receiving is giving them few chances to advance to the next level. The paradox of education in Tanzania—that is, the dichotomy between the promises versus actual outcomes of education—challenged me to think critically on the Tanzanian

education policies that emphasize education for all as a means of human emancipation. In my view, education as it is being offered in Tanzania today is more a source of alienation and exclusion than it is of unification and emancipation for all. In other words, we can summarize the educational paradox in Tanzania as being the discrepancy between the current system's input and output. In sum, it is clear that despite the well-articulated educational policies in Tanzania and the URTMEC's strategic efforts, it is unlikely that the education model currently used in Tanzania adequately prepares all learners, and particularly the vulnerable children, for a better life. For this reason, there is need to ask critical questions on the meaning of education in Tanzania and not only how that meaning is being achieved, but also by and for whom such education policies are being developed.

Conclusion and the Way Forward

Conducting this research has been a life-changing experience for me, and it is my hope that it stimulates further thinking and asking of critical questions that can forge change. As a native Tanzanian who was raised at the foot of Mount Kilimanjaro where historically the first schools were established by the German missionaries in the 19th century (Semali & Stambach, 1997), I had never noticed or thought critically about the disparities of the Tanzanian educational system. Through my observations of and dialogue with the research participants, this study taught me about the reality of school experiences of vulnerable children in Tanzania, which of course were markedly different than my educational experiences in North America. My research therefore challenged me to begin thinking more deeply and critically about my preconceived beliefs regarding education in Tanzania and its beneficiaries. Starting from the very first day when I set foot on the school grounds, I realized that schools were desperately underfunded and lacking the most essential material resources. I was so taken aback by the schools' and

population's impoverishment that I was initially at a loss for words when asking teachers to identify strategies that might support vulnerable children.

Despite (or more accurately, because of) such conditions, I was amazed by the interview responses of some of the children identified as vulnerable due to their living conditions. The children demonstrated resilience and much faith in the power of education as a channel to liberation. During this study, I came to the realization that vulnerable children, like their wealthier peers, have been made to believe the popular slogan "Education is the key of life" (students in one of the five schools participating in this research wore white shirts with a sticker on their chests using the very same slogan). Still, I questioned the truthfulness of the message; how could children studying in the current conditions achieve the kind of education promised by the slogan? Evidently, this slogan demonstrates precisely the power of ideology that in many cases is used as a means of fulfilling the hidden curriculum, maintaining hegemony and social reproduction. Likewise, the children as well as their educators expressed desire for schools that are socially, economically, and demographically conducive to learning. Both educators and students alike view their schools as being less exiting, less fulfilling than they might hope, and certainly not a good place to be, let alone the key to a better life.

Hence, based on these findings, there is evidence that the issue of vulnerable children has reached a critical stage that requires immediate strategic intervention. As warned by Sifuna (2007), if no action is taken to address the issue of vulnerable children, the country's economic growth and social stability may be jeopardized. It is indeed alarming to imagine what might happen 10 years from now to a small region like Singida that already has more than 30,000 children identified as vulnerable, with most of them living on the streets (Nkungu, 2011). Today's teen-aged children who are forced to eke out a living—or more exactly, to struggle for

their very survival—may cause serious problems in their immediate communities and the nation at large by the time they turn 20. It is for this reason alone that I emphatically argue that the issue of vulnerable children requires immediate intervention as a means of safeguarding the nation from the consequences of having too many vulnerable children becoming vulnerable adults who cannot contribute to Tanzanian society.

As a former school teacher, I am convinced that teachers should be allies who are responsive to the needs of all students, most notably the vulnerable ones. McEntire (2011) argues affirmatively that “vulnerability is largely determined by human attitudes and activities in the physical and social environments; we are able to reduce it if we make that a priority” (p. 303). Based on this perception, as well on my experience and the findings of this research, I maintain that even though there are no quick answers to the educational challenges facing schools, the schools’ responsibility towards these children will not disappear. Instead, I wish to remind educators that despite their struggles, they should not compromise by adopting a neutral stance towards children because doing so would be unethical and unacceptable to the vulnerable children and marginalized communities that are unfortunately the most neglected by government.

Given their situation, I call upon teachers to be more cognizant of the dangers of remaining neutral or blindfolding themselves to the problem of vulnerable children and what it means for the future of the society. McLaren (2008) argues, “It is through our own activities that we develop our capacities and capabilities. We change society by changing ourselves and we change ourselves in our struggle to change society” (p. 479). Based on the latter statement, I recommend that educators intentionally make efforts to meet the needs of vulnerable children by starting from where they are now, rather than putting too much hope on external help. Utilizing available resources that include their human resources and involving other stakeholders such as

parents and the surrounding communities can serve to enrich the learning environment. By this argument, I don't suggest that external help is unnecessary or should not be sought. While school leaders must continue to appeal to the policy makers and government leaders to play their role in supporting vulnerable children, individual educators must remember that their responsibility towards educating vulnerable children is the most crucial. Hoadley (2007a) states, "while other agencies can offer children material, psychological and social care and support, no other persons can provide children with the crucial access to learning that a school offers" (p. 258). Amidst the challenges facing schools, educators must always bear in mind that vulnerable children's education depends largely on schools' effort to support them.

The American educational theorist John Dewey (1916) believed and emphasized that schools were social institutions and that education was a social process. According to his terms, education should be organized in a way that

natural active tendencies shall be fully enlisted in doing something, while seeing to it that the doing requires observation, the acquisition of information, and the use of a constructive imagination, is what most needs to be done to improve social conditions (p. 143).

Dewey's philosophy is still quite relevant today and I found much relevance between his philosophical views and my research findings. The children who participated in this study had a deep desire for education that would liberate them from the cycle of their vulnerable conditions. In its broadest sense, vulnerability is a social problem because it involves many people, systems, and institutions that are unable to mitigate the poverty that, in the context of this study, allows vulnerability to persist.

Therefore, there is no question that schools as social institutions should acknowledge that they have the mandate and the responsibility to make sure that the children they teach acquire an education that emancipates them from this social problem. Freire and Macedo (2003) contend that, “the task of a critical educator is to approach the real world of these public spheres and social agencies to make a contribution” (p. 364). By this statement, Freire and Macedo underscore the role of educators as allies of their students who might be oppressed by social systems. As I mentioned earlier, the issue of vulnerable children in the Tanzanian schools is a complex problem due to a number of visible factors at play, which include social and economic stratification that goes beyond the power of educators. While, it remains a major challenge to suggest how educators in such circumstances can be allies of the vulnerable children as suggested by Freire, it is important to remember that any change begins with critical thinking which must be followed with a plan of action and the action itself (Fullan, 2006).

As leaders, we must invest in being heartfelt supporters who listen to and create opportunities for each person to shine. As educators of vulnerable children, we can be true mentors by taking initiatives to identify the strengths of these children rather than stereotyping them as so-called bad kids. During my 10-year teaching career, I learned through experience that when a teacher points to the strengths of a student, particularly the one who has always been told how bad he or she was, the child immediately lights up. When teachers shared their experiences and encouraged each other to support such a child with more inspiring words, the sparks that the first teacher ignited then turn into flames that burn brightly in the child’s eyes—as bright as the child’s now hopeful future. By this I am talking about the power of the words from a teacher alone, words that can change the school experience of vulnerable children without government leadership approval.

How Can Schools Help?

There are many ways in which schools can meet the learning needs of vulnerable children. First of all, schools need to recognize and acknowledge that the issue of vulnerable children is societal and not a personal problem. In other words, it is not the problem of the individual children, their families, or the communities in which they live; no one has the choice of where they are born or the material conditions into which they were born. Vulnerable children, their families, and the marginalized communities are victims both of natural calamities as well as inequitable social systems. Based on this standpoint, governments and social institutions like schools have the mandate and responsibility to help such victims of misfortune.

Second, Tanzanian teachers and educational leaders need to remember that traditionally education has sought to help learners to cope with life some way or another in their own environment. This was very evident in traditional education whereby learners were taught to develop self-reliance through the experiences and in relationship with adults, as was initiated under the leadership of J. K. Nyerere. I appeal for an education that is contextualized, one that helps the learners now so that they can have a better future. This is indeed the type of education that many critical thinkers from both this and the previous century emphasized. For example, Dewey (1916) argued that

to oscillate between drill exercises that strive to attain efficiency in outward doing without the use of intelligence, and an accumulation of knowledge that is supposed to be an ultimate end in itself, means that education accepts the present social conditions as final, and thereby takes upon itself the responsibility for perpetuating them (p. 143).

As noted earlier in this study's discussion of challenges educators face when teaching children who come from vulnerable conditions, teachers highlighted the vulnerable children's lack of

motivation to learn. Learning motivation is an acquired skill and therefore teachers have the responsibility of ensuring that their learners are motivated. First, however, teachers themselves must be motivated, enthusiastic, and passionate about what they are teaching. In this research, the teachers who identified lack of motivation in the students as one of their challenges also acknowledged that they themselves were not motivated due to their harsh working environments. But the same teachers may not realize that their own lack of motivation may in fact affect students' motivation. Lumpkin (2008) noted this situation in her argument:

Students evaluate the character of their teachers based on how they are treated and taught. Students know when their teachers are committed to their psychomotor, cognitive, and affective learning, and they can tell when their teachers genuinely care about them and are trustworthy, honest, and respectful. (p. 47)

Teachers are expected to be role models for their learners. Lumpkin (2008) suggests that students learn much from their teachers' unspoken as well as spoken language. In other words, if teachers fail to inspire their students by the example of maintaining high morale, self-motivation, and self-efficacy as well as being passionate about teaching and learning, the possibility is that students' morale will diminish. Teachers need to develop stronger personal relationships with their vulnerable students and treat them with dignity. Teachers need to listen more to their students and be careful not to profile, victimize and/or pathologize their vulnerable children. The study revealed that there is mistrust between students and teachers that interferes with students' learning, more particularly the vulnerable children in the school. The study also found that teachers felt isolated and demoralized and this affected their working morale and relationship with their students. There is a need for the educational system in Tanzania to listen more to teachers and to support them so that they can in turn be more supportive to their students

especially those who are vulnerable and need special accommodation. In addition, there is a need to improve teacher education and teacher professional development programs to help teachers recognize the uniqueness of each child/student and to diversify their teaching methods. Teachers must also strive to find alternative ways for inspiring and maintaining motivation in all their learners. Henson (2003) contends that, “learners have unique differences, including emotional states of mind, learning rates, learning styles, stages of development, abilities, talents, feelings of efficacy, and other needs. These must be taken into account if all learners are to learn more effectively and efficiently” (p. 1). Hence, I not only contend that teachers are capable of supporting their vulnerable children, but indeed as suggested by Knowlton (2006), teachers and the schools themselves may be the only “source of stability for vulnerable children and that educators have the power to change their lives” (p. 19). In addition, educators must always bear in mind that “providing successful education can break the cycle for children who may never have the chance without them” (Knowlton, 2006, p. 19).

Ensuring a positive educator- student relationship is another significant way through which educators can become more supportive to their vulnerable children in the school. Current educational scholars have emphasized the significance of a positive educator-student relationship. Based on the findings of this study, like Corso et al. (2013) who insisted on the need for modern educators to strive to cultivate a positive relationship with their learners as a means of nurturing and promoting learning, I too suggest that Tanzanian schools aim for the same initiatives. In my view, this kind of relationship which must exist between teachers and/or educators with their learners is indispensable. As Sadowski (2013) delineates, children like any human beings, generally have an inner desire to relate with an adult who can listen to them and give them hope for their future life. It is also true that a positive teacher-student relationship is

key aspect of effective learning. According to Warshof and Rappaport (2013) the teacher-student relationship is critical to teaching especially for students who might be going through traumatic stress and need someone to listen to and understand them. To conclude, I would like to suggest here that teacher and /or educator-student relationships must be cultivated as a means of maintaining student learning motivation and to nurture students' curiosity which can lead them to become critical thinkers and innovators. If school is to be for students, a home away from home or what Henderson (2013) saw "as heaven, a place of solace, and the alternative universe where [they step] into most days with relief" (p. 23), then teachers must work hard in ensuring a good relationship with their learners. In these ways, learners can find peace, joy and fulfillment in going to school as a place where they learn and acquire skills through which they can become critical thinkers and innovators for their own good and the good of their communities.

Despite the obvious lack of resources, I suggest that there be programs that can help teachers to be more creative and resourceful themselves. Based on my observation, teachers taught by either standing in front of the classroom or writing on the blackboard; teachers could be introduced to using different teaching methods and different teaching approaches. Teachers could be shown how to focus on student engagement rather than just delivering the curriculum.

Learning requires comfortable conditions for both body and mind. A child who is hungry or experiencing poor living conditions, abject poverty, ill parents, neglect, hostile family conditions, intimidating adults, and the like, will find it difficult to synthesize information they learn, or think critically in order to become productive learners. For these reasons, vulnerable children require encouragement and intentional support from their schools. Contenta (1997) stated that, "a child's home environment can make school success easier or more difficult" (p. 60). Vulnerable children who participated in this research came from environments which were

mind and heartbreaking. The children however, demonstrated impetus to learn and to liberate themselves from the cycle of vulnerability. They also expressed how they met with frustrations due to the lack of support which they expected from their educators as a means of effective learning. Based on this situation, I suggest that for these children to succeed, teachers must make an extra effort to validate the self-efficacy of their vulnerable learners as a means of compensating for the students' other tribulations in order to boost their learning experience.

Alleviating hunger in schools such as those who participated in this study is very complex because it requires funds and government support. However, the schools need to be more creative in order to be self-sufficient. Therefore, it is worthy recommending that in terms of food security in schools it is important that educators together with their immediate communities think critically and strategically about the possibility of initiating self-sustenance projects. Examples of such projects could be: gardening, poultry, and animal keeping—all of which can be a source of income and food security.

Implications from the Study

The main purpose of this study was to examine school experiences of vulnerable children, as well as to identify the kinds of challenges that educators and vulnerable children alike encounter and the strategies implemented in support of these children's learning process. I also investigated the kinds of intervention strategies educators might need in the future in order to improve education of vulnerable children.

The findings of this study indicate that school experiences of vulnerable children were generally negative and disheartening. The children saw themselves as victims of negative perception, maltreatment and further marginalization. They saw schools as not being supportive of them due to lack of human and material resources and physical conditions of their schools.

The study also found out that other factors such as poor teacher morale, difficult working conditions, and traumatized and starving learners—all factors which have a deleterious impact on teaching and learning-- are systemic in nature. Therefore, this study has implications for each aspect of the educational system that influences school experiences of vulnerable children. The implications are consequential primarily to government leaders, educational policy makers, and educators who include school principals and teachers as well as parents and guardians. This section briefly discusses the implications for each of the aforementioned groups and what they ought to do in order to make a difference in the education of vulnerable children.

Implications for the Government

As in many other nations, the government of Tanzania must play a key role in facilitating and ensuring that all its citizens have access to quality education through which they can realize their potentials and become contributing members in their society. Based on this argument, and in relation to the challenges which schools and vulnerable children face, this study challenges government leaders to evaluate their roles in the education of vulnerable children and examine whether such roles are implemented or not. Although the government of Tanzania has accomplished a lot in making schools accessible in the rural and marginalized communities, much still needs to be done.

As testified by the children who participated in this research, vulnerable children are far from achieving the kind of education expected. For this reason, the government must take immediate action in ensuring quality education for them. They must do this by making more effort to ensure good working conditions for teachers and also subsidize the needs of the schools so that they can in turn support their students. It is evident that a hungry child cannot learn, and for this reason, this study appeals to the government leaders to make every effort to ensure that

vulnerable children receive adequate nutrition before and/or during each school day. Failure to do so is tantamount to denying these children the quality of education that can help them to cope with life both now and in the future, which will eventually cost more in the long run.

The students who participated in this study pointed to the culture of failure in the schools as one of the most demoralizing aspects of their school experiences. Many of them expressed their doubts about the possibility of escaping the cycle of poverty and vulnerability if they do not succeed in their secondary education. This outcry implies that there is the need for government leaders to consider the need to invest in the education of vulnerable children as something worthwhile and economically profitable to the nation. In order to end the culture of failure the government must intervene by making education their number one priority. They must take urgent and strategic actions which can support and motivate educators so that they can in turn strive to meet the learning needs of their students. In order to build an outstanding democratic nation with a sustainable economy the government must invest more in the education of vulnerable children so that they too can in the long run have better chances for employment and life enhancement. Eradicating a culture of failure in the schools is beneficial not only to individual learners but also to the stability and wellbeing of the entire nation. For this reason, this study appeals to government leaders to invest more in providing schools with the financial, moral and social support which educators require in order to be more productive in supporting all their learners equitably.

Educational policy makers in Tanzania have prepared and presented well-articulated policies about what is expected in relation to formal education. I believe that if such policies had been implemented, there would be no need for this study. For example, the URTMEC's (1995) *Education and Training Policy* states that education ought to be viewed as

a process of initiating and preparing man through training, in his environment, to play an active role in society. It provides desirable and worthwhile broad and in-depth models of thought, skills, attitudes and understanding needed for the full development of human thinking and actions. Education makes man aware of his own potentials and that of his society (p. viii).

This statement, albeit gender biased, brings to mind a very important message about education which in my view needs to be reconsidered by policy makers if education is to bring to reality what the statement says. Based on the findings of this study, vulnerable children do not experience school and schooling as proposed by this policy. For this reason, this study has great implications for the policy makers.

Implications for Policy Makers

First, policy makers need to follow up with the government and the schools to make sure that the educational policies are being implemented by all. Second, there is a need for policy makers to establish new policies that will safeguard the education of vulnerable children in the schools. This study found that because there were no policies in the schools, many educators did not know what to do with vulnerable children; in fact, many saw them as a burden or claimed that they treat all children equally. It is evident that vulnerable children have many experiences that differentiate them from those from wealthier families. Surprisingly, as found in the five schools, educators strive to treat all students as equals thereby neglecting those that may have greater needs than others. This is to say that the concept of equality and its practicality in the schools is totally misleading. Lack of policies that protect the well-being of these children contributes to their negative experience of schooling. Hence, in order to overcome the challenges facing schools and the children, I strongly recommend that there be policies both at school level

and at the national educational level that state clearly how vulnerable children could be treated differently as a way of ensuring their success.

Although the aspect of the medium of instruction in the Tanzanian schools is well outlined by the educational policy, it is still a major problem that contributes significantly to the negative school experience of vulnerable children. Many children from poor and marginalized communities find the shift of the language of instruction from Kiswahili to English to be very problematic and depressing. The problem of language has received a lot of attention by many researchers who have also made their suggestions to the government and policy makers. Surprisingly, little has been done to resolve the problem of language; instead, we witness the increase of English medium school, which is only affordable to wealthy Tanzanians. The children who get chances to join these schools overcome the language barrier and as a result are able to learn in a more meaningful way.

This barrier contributes to what I see as a disconnection between the real world of the children and what they learn in the classroom. Therefore, I strongly suggest that the children be given the opportunity to experience learning as a process, which involves dialogue. This suggestion entails that children must be given an opportunity to gain fluency in a language before they can use it as a medium of instruction. For this to happen, policy makers need to make some regulations regarding the issue of the language of instruction. In my view, the policy that requires children to learn in the Kiswahili language at primary school level before shifting into English at Secondary level should be changed. I suggest that all children be given the opportunity to develop a proficiency in both languages from the primary school level, onward.

Implications for Educators

Like the government and policy makers, this study has implications for educators, including school principals and their teachers. In Tanzania, educators historically are among the most highly regarded people in the local communities, especially among the marginalized communities in the rural areas. As a result, community members look to teachers for positive responses to their many unanswered questions. The issue of the education of vulnerable children is therefore one of the questions which community members expect educators to address. In other words, educators have the power and the responsibility of ensuring a positive and holistic impact on their vulnerable students despite the situations in which they may find themselves. Lipman (2009) argues,

the schools embody reforms that build up democratic participation, re-conceptualize school knowledge around the perspectives and experiences of the oppressed and create conditions for poor and marginalized people to see themselves as people with capacity to run society and gain experience in doing so. (p. 376)

In the current context where education has been liberalized, educators need to think more strategically about possible ways to initiate educational change in a manner that does not continue the oppression of the marginalized communities and the vulnerable. There are multiple ways by which this can be done. Lipman (2009) suggests that educators develop pedagogies that inspire vulnerable children and their marginalized communities to grapple with issues of inequality and poverty. Another strategy is to counteract current hegemonic practices such as lack of dialogue between teachers and higher educational administrators, or getting teachers involved in the decisions about curriculum changes. There is also a need for open dialogue between teachers and their learners and also with other school stakeholders. In fact, this was one

of the requests that was made by some children who complained that their voices were not heard in the schools, which they felt contributed to the persistence of the challenges they face. In addition, Tanzanian parents are barely involved in the education of their children; as such, this research challenges educators to make a greater effort to involve parents.

Another hegemonic practice that educators need to change is related to teaching approaches. Teachers have the power to change how they teach and how children learn. Based on my assessment of the teaching approach used in the five schools participating in this study, learners had a very minor role to play in their own learning. This situation can be translated as an oppressive way of teaching as it objectifies learners. Children need to be given more opportunity to take ownership of their learning. When students are not given a chance to own their learning, they become objects of their educational system rather than subjects. To overcome the danger of turning learners into receptive objects, educators should learn more how to involve and to keep their students more engaged. For this reason, there is a need for teachers to be more creative and mindful of child-centred approaches to teaching to help children learn and become critical thinkers. It is also true that, in this study, many teachers admitted that they had lost their motivation and teaching morale, which affected how they approached teaching and also how they related with their learners. No wonder many of the teachers knew very little of the conditions from which vulnerable children came. Freire and Macedo (2003) challenge such educators when they state that, “it is impossible to teach without educators knowing what took place in the lives of their students’ world” (p. 506). It means that educators need to overcome their own challenges and put the needs of their learners first.

Some educators in this study argued that they did not have time to think of their learners because they themselves were working in difficult conditions and considered themselves

vulnerable and preoccupied with their own challenges. I acknowledge that as a means of encouraging and supporting educators to meet the needs of their learners, their working conditions as well as their teaching and learning resources need an urgent and significant improvement. Nonetheless, educators on their part must view teaching as a special profession that must be fulfilled creatively and with passion, dedication and adherence to their professional work ethics. They must also realize that teaching is a very unique and significant profession because it encompasses emulating and modeling students who are complex human beings. As Lipman (2009) suggests, educators must always keep in mind that learners especially those from vulnerable conditions have an inner longing for an education that can provide them with a sense of hope and possibility to realize their potentials and to make a difference in their lives and in their immediate communities. Likewise, it is imperative that educators strive to transcend their own challenges and give priority to their students. By this I am suggesting that educators nurture in themselves a critical and moral leadership through which they can inspire their learners to become critical thinkers capable of transforming themselves and their world. I believe that, if educators consider their teaching career as a profession that requires passion and dedication, they will somehow find creative ways to support their vulnerable children.

Paulo Freire (1968/2004) recommends that educators develop a profound commitment to humanity so that the education rendered can liberate the learner. As found in this research, vulnerable children require a liberating education, one that can lead them to become critical thinkers so that they can in turn deal with the challenges in their lives. However, in order to implement all (or any of) the points aforementioned regarding educators' responsibility and accountability in meeting the needs of vulnerable children, educators will need to have more frequent professional teacher development sessions and they will also need to be given time to

reflect on and evaluate their teaching and assessment procedures. In order to improve teacher's ability to provide a more student-centered teaching and learning approach, it is imperative that class size be reduced. Educators must also strive to recruit and retain more qualified teachers who are passionate and committed to teaching and to the academic success and improvement of the livelihood of their students.

Implications for Parents/Guardians

Finally, as Fullan (2006) argues, educators alone cannot facilitate change in the school; in order for change to occur, “[p]arents and other community members are crucial and largely untapped resources who have or who can be helped to have assets and expertise that are essential to the partnership” (p. 190). Based on this suggestion, it is crucial that parents and community members be involved more actively in the education of their children. While educators must strive to reach out to community members and parents in order to give them opportunity to play active roles in education, community members and parents too must be positive in responding to educators and sharing their views and experiences that can contribute to the improvement of the education of vulnerable children.

Suggestions for Future Research

This research contributes to raising awareness about the issue of vulnerable children in Tanzanian schools, as well as the challenges and strategies implemented so far and those that have been suggested by this research for further implementation. Although I believe that the study's results and recommendations may contribute to the literature in the field of education corresponding to vulnerable children, I think this is only a starting point. Additional research must be undertaken to accumulate more knowledge that can be used as a means to support efforts for improving the education of all vulnerable children. Hence, because this study was limited to

only five public schools located in the same area, I recommend that future studies on this topic could possibly replicate the study using a wider variety of schools, located in different geographical areas. In addition, since this study involved children who were already identified as vulnerable, it would be interesting to conduct a similar study in which participating children would be chosen using random selection rather than purposeful sampling as was done in this study. Using this kind of random sample would enable the researcher to compare the findings between vulnerable and non-vulnerable children and thereby get a broader picture of how children who are not vulnerable think of their vulnerable schoolmates, and the extent to which vulnerability affects learning processes.

In Tanzania, there are some schools dedicated to educating vulnerable children; for this reason, it would be beneficial to conduct additional research that examines the experiences of vulnerable children in these schools and strategies the schools employ that have enabled children to be successful. Vulnerable children, who participated in this study, highlighted the issue of profiling and stigmatization as one of the heartbreaking challenges which they face mostly in the school. Both profiling and stigmatization are critical issues which have a deleterious impact on their social, moral and academic wellbeing. Therefore, based on the findings in this study, I suggest that future researchers examine the issue of profiling and stigmatization of vulnerable children in the schools. Another issue that arose in this study as one of the aspects of school that demoralizes vulnerable children is the culture of failure. This too needs to be studied as a means of learning more about its effects. Finally, I recommend that future researchers consider conducting a review of past studies that have investigated the issue of vulnerable children and underline their findings and suggestions so that they can be used as a way of establishing criteria to further prepare teachers to deal with the issue of vulnerable children in their schools.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1A

Letter of Request to Conduct Research in Schools

School Principal
P. O. Box- Singida
Tanzania- East, Africa.
March 20th, 2013



Re: Request for Permission to Conduct Research in the School

Dear Mr/Mrs. _____

I write to follow up on our conversation regarding the field research project in your school and to supply you with more detailed information about my proposal. The purpose of this research is to examine school experiences of vulnerable children, the challenges and strategies that teachers implement in catering to the social and learning needs of vulnerable children. The study aims to answer the following questions.

1. What are the school experiences and challenges of vulnerable children in Tanzanian public school system, particularly those in Singida region?
2. What are the main challenges facing teachers and school leaders in educating vulnerable children? In other words, what kinds of gaps exist in the ability and capacity of public schools to provide quality education for vulnerable children?
3. What strategies do educators implement to support the learning processes for vulnerable children?
4. What kinds of interventions are needed for vulnerable children and schools to build capacity in this area?

To answer the four questions, the researcher will use multiple approaches as a means of gaining qualitative data. The methods will include, (a) participant observation: in this method the researcher will work hand in hand with the participants in order to learn from their daily experiences; (b) focus group discussion: for this method your teachers will be asked to volunteer for a group discussion made up of 6-12 people, the meeting will take about 45 minutes; (c) document analysis: this approach will involve scanning through written documents from where the researcher hopes to learn more about the school and possible efforts made in support of vulnerable children; (d) Individual interview is another approach used in this research and it will involve school principals and those teachers will want to have a personal discussion with the researcher. For clarity, I have attached sample questions for the focus group and individual interviews.

Information obtained from this research can be used to evaluate existing practices and plan for future development. There are no foreseeable discomforts or risks involved with this study. Participation is voluntary. All participants are free to withdraw their consent and to discontinue participation in this study at any time. All data provided will be kept confidentially.

Only this investigator will be involved in the analysis of the data. No names or official identification will be required. Respondents will be identified by a code understandable only to this investigator. The final report will not identify the names of the respondents or of the participating school.

At the end of the research your office will be provided with a copy of the analysis and description of the results. Included in the enclosures is a sample of the interview protocol. Because of the methodological nature of this study, if granted I plan to involve myself in the different activities of the school, including working with teachers and students in the classrooms, preparation for the lessons and other general activities in the school. The research period will be between February 18th and March 10th, 2012. If there are any questions, concerns or objections please contact me at x-xxx-xxx-xxxx or by e-mail lekule@uwindsor.ca

Thank you for your time and consideration regarding participation in the investigation of school experiences of vulnerable children.

Sincerely

Chrispina Lekule

Appendix 1B

School Principal
Dr. Salimin Secondary School
P. O. Box- Singida
Tanzania- East -Africa.
Sept 20, 2012



Yah: Ombi la Kufanya Utafiti Katika Shule Yako

Mheshimiwa Mkuu wa Shule, Bw / Bi. _____

Nakuandikia barua hii kufuatilia mazungumzo yetu kuhusu ombi langu la kufanya utafiti katika shule yako. Pia napenda kukupa maelezo zaidi kuhusu utafiti huo. Madhumuni ya utafiti huu ni kuchunguza kuhusu maisha ya shule ya watoto wanaoishi katika mazingira magumu. Sababu nyinigine ni kutaka kuelewa changamoto zao na za waalimu wao katika jitihada za kuwafundisha watoto hawa na pia mikakati wanayochukua katika juhudi za kukidhi mahitaji ya kijamii na kielimu kwa watoto hawa. Utafiti huu utalenga kujibu maswali yafuatayo.

1. Je maisha ya shule ya watoto wanaoishi katika mazingira magumu yakoje na ni changamoto gani huwakumba watoto waishio katika mazingira magumu hasa wakati wanapohudhuria shule hapa mkoani Singida?
2. Je, ni changamoto zipi zinazowakabili walimu na viongozi wa shule katika kutoa elimu kwa watoto wanaoishi katika mazingira magumu? Kwa maneno mengine, ni aina gani ya mapengo yapo katika uwezo wa shule za umma kwa kutoa elimu bora kwa watoto wanaoishi katika mazingira magumu?
3. Ni mbinu gani waelimishaji hutekeleza ili kusaidia wanafunzi hawa kijamii na kielimu kama njia ya kuwakomboa watoto hawa katika mazingira magumu waliyo nayo?
4. Je ni hatua gani zinahiutajika kuchukuliwa kama njia mwafaka ya kusaidia watoto waishio katika mazingira magumu kujenga uwezo wa kufanikisha ndoto au malengo yao ya kielemu na kijamii?

Ili kujibu maswali hayo manne, mtafiti itatumia mbinu mbalimbali kama njia ya kupata data bora. Mbinu hizo ni pamoja na, (a) Kujifunza kwa kushirikiana na washiriki katika shughuli zao za kila siku. (b) Majadiliano ya Vikundi: kwa njia hii walimu wako Watatakiwa kujitolea kwa majadiliano ya kundi litakaloundwa na watu 6 hadi 12, mkutano huo utachukua muda wa dakika 45; (c) Uchamubzi wa dokumenti/hati za shule: kwa njia hii mtafiti atapitia maandiko mbalimbali ikiwemo sheria za shule na kadhalika; (d) mahojiano binafsi ni njia nyingine itakayotumika katika utafiti huu na yatahusisha wakuu wa shule na wale walimu watakaotaka kuwa na mjadala wa kibinafsi na mtafiti. Kwa ufafanuzi zaidi angalia maswali ya sampuli yaliyoambatanishwa na barua hii yakiwemo yale ya vikundi na mahojiano ya mtu binafsi.

Taarifa zitazopatikana kutokana na utafiti huu zitaweza kutumika kutathmini namna ya kuboresha elimu kwa watoto waishio katika mazingira magumu, mkoani Singida na kwingineko Tanzania au kwa ajili ya maendeleo ya baadaye. Utafiti huu hautegemewi kusababisha washiriki

kujisikia vibaya kwa namna yoyote. Washiriki wote watakuwa na uhuru wa kutoa ridhaa yao na kusitisha kushiriki katika utafiti huu wakati wowote. Data zote zitakazokusanywa zitatumizwa kwa usalama wa hali ya juu na zitabakia kuwa siri ya mtafiti. Kwa maana hiyo, ni mtafiti tu atahusika katika uchambuzi wa data hizo. Hakuna majina au kitambulisho rasmi cha washiriki kitakachotumika. Wahojiwa watapewa majina ya code ambayo yatatambulika na mtafiti tu. Katika ripoti ya mwisho itakuwa haitakuwa na majina wala vitambulisho vya washiriki au majina ya shule zao.

Baada ya kukamilisha utafiti huu ofisi yako itapewa nakala ya uchambuzi na maelezo ya matokeo ya utafiti. Kutokana na njia zitakazotumiwa katika utafiti huu kama zilivyotajwa hapo juu, iwapo nitaruhusiwa ningependa kujiunga na waalimu wenzangu katika kufanya shughuli za kila siku za shule ikiwemo kufundisha madarasni, maandalizi kwa ajili ya masomo na shughuli nyingine mbalimbali za shule. Kipindi cha utafiti itakuwa kati ya Aprili 18, 2013 hadi Aprili 20, 2014. Kama kuna maswali, dukuduku au pingamizi tafadhali wasiliana nami kwa kupiga simu nambari: x-xxx-xxx-xxxx au kwa barua pepe lekule@uwindsor.ca

Asante kwa muda wako na na majitoleo yako ya kuonyesha mashirikiano nami katika zoezi hili la kufanya uchunguzi kwa nia ya kuboresha elimu kwa watoto wetu waishio katika mazingira magumu.

Shukrani zangu za dharti

Chispina Lekule

Appendix 2A

Letter of Request to Conduct Research at the Centre for Orphaned and Vulnerable Children

To The Matron
Centre for Orphaned and Vulnerable
Children
P.O. Box Singida-Tanzania.



Dear Matron,

Re: Request for Permission to Conduct Research at Kititimo Centre.

Further to our conversation about your permission for children ages 15 and above to participate in my research, I am writing this follow-up letter to provide you with more detailed information about the research and how the children might be involved. Participation is voluntary and children will have the freedom to withdraw at any time during the research. The children will be asked to give their consent of participation in this research by signing the consent form attached to this letter. All children who qualify to participate in this research based on their age and have volunteered will be asked to complete written questionnaires anonymously. Answering the questionnaire will take about a maximum of 30 minutes. The children will also be asked to participate in a one on one interview with the researcher. For these individual interviews, the researcher will ask for 2 children from each of their five schools to participate, preferably a boy and a girl if applicable. The interviews will take a maximum of 45 minutes and will be audiotaped with the consent of the participants. Please see audio tape consent form attached. The participating children will have the freedom to answer only the questions they feel comfortable. . The researcher will ensure maximum confidentiality by not including the names of the participants to the information that might reveal who the participant might be. Data resulting from this research will be stored in locked cabinets. The information the children will provide will be synthesized with the views of others in the final report. Based on the purpose of this research as stated above, the interview with the participating children will revolve around the following points:

- Children's perception of school and schooling.
- The rewarding experience they might have had in the school.
- The challenges they experience
- What they find helpful or less helpful.
- How they think school is different for them than it is for other children not living at the centre.
- What they wish their schools to do for them.
- How they foresee their life after school.

I would like to note that the above points are only a framework for discussion. I would also like to emphasize that the participation of these children is important because this will be a great

chance for them to contribute to the efforts of supporting schools as they endeavor to improve learning for all children. It is indeed an opportunity for them to have their voices heard and to know that someone cares about how they experience school and schooling. Based on the significance of this study, I am determined to provide the broadest scope possible to discuss the subject under research. In this research, there is no right or wrong answers to the questions. If there are any questions, concerns or objections please contact me at x-xxx-xxx-xxxx or by e-mail lekule@uwindsor.ca

Thank you for your time and consideration.
Sincerely,

Chrispina Lekule

Please find attached:

- 1. Consent form**
- 2. Consent form for Audio Recording**

Appendix 2B

To The Matron
Centre for Orphaned and
Vulnerable Children
P.O. Box Singida-Tanzania.



Ndugu Matron:.....

**Yah: Kuruhusiwa kwa Watoto Waishio katika Kituo cha Malezi Kititimo
Kushiriki katika Utafiti**

Tafadhali husika na Mada ilioko hapo juu kuhusu utafiti juu ya watoto wanaoishi katika mazingira magumu, uwepo wao mashuleni, changamoto na namna shule zinavyoweza kuwasaidia ili kuboresha elimu yao mashuleni sasa na wakati ujao.

Kwa barua hii unaombwa kuruhusu baadhi ya watoto wa Kituo cha Kititimo kushiriki katika utafiti, utakaofanywa Chrispina Lekule Mwanafunzi wa Shahada ya Uzamivu (PhD) kutoka kitengo cha elimu, Chuo Kikuu cha Windsor. Matokeo ya utafiti huu yatachangia dissertation yake ya udaktari.

Kama una maswali au hoja kuhusu utafiti huu, tafadhali jisikie huru kuwasiliana Chrispina Lekule kwa njia ya simu: xxx-xxx-xxxx (Nambari ya Canada) au xxx-xxx-xxxx (Nambari ya Kitanzania) Unaweza pia kuwasilina naye kwa njia ya barua pepe lekule@uwindsor.ca email. Njia nyingine ya mawasiliano ni kupitia kwa msimamizi wake wa Kitaaluma Dr Andrew Allen kwa njia ya simu: (519) 253-3000 Ext. xxxx au kwa barua pepe: aallen@uwindsor.ca

Kusudi la Uchunguzi/Utafiti

Madhumuni ya utafiti huu ni kuchunguza kuhusu kuelimisha watoto waishio katika mazingira magumu, changamoto wanazozipata na jinsi shule/ waalimu na uongozi mzima unavyojitahidi kuwasaidia watoto hawa katika kupata elimu bora kama njia ya kujikomboa katika dimbwi la mazingira magumu ya kimaisha na katika kukidhi mahitaji yao ya kijamii na kielimu. Aidha, mtafiti anataka kuchunguza mitazamo ya watoto kuhusu namna shule zingeweza kuwasaidia zaidi kwa wakati huu na pia kwa baadaye kwa manufaa ya watoto wengine kijamii na kitaaluma.

Taratibu

Iwapo utatoa ridhaa yako na kuruhusu watoto kujitolea kwa uhuru wao kushiriki katika utafiti huu, mtafiti atakuja kituoni hapo kwa malengo haya ya kukusanya data kupitia njia

mbili. Njia ya kwanza itakuwa kujibu maswali yalkiyoandikwa kwa njia binafsi. Watakaoshiriki ni watoto wenye umri usiopungua maiaka 14 na ambao wako tayari kwa hiari yao wenyewe kushiriki katika utafiti huu. Mbinu ya pili itakuwa kukusanya data kwa njia ya mtu binafsi mahojiano/moja kwa mmoja na mtafiti. Kwa ajili ya mahojiano ya mtu binafsi, watakoshiriki ni wanafunzi wawili wa kujitolea kutoka katika kila shule wanazohudhuria yaani, wanafunzi wawili kutoka Kititimo, Somoko, Mungumaji, Muhanga na Dk Salimin. Ikiwezekana, matafiti ataomba kuwe na mwakilishi mvulana na msichana kutoka katika kila shule pale inapowezekana. Siku ya utafiti, watoto wote ambao walijitolea kushiriki pamoja na matron watakusanyika katika chumba kimoja na mtafiti wa kujadili zaidi juu ya umuhimu wa utafiti huu na wajibu wao katika hilo. Tarifa zaidi kuhusu itifaki ya utafiti, masuala ya usiri kama vile haki ya kujondoa bila adhabu. Watoto watakaoshiriki watapewa fursa ya kuuliza maswali kuhusu utafiti na ushiriki wao. Kabla ya kuanza ukusanyaji wa data, watoto wote watakaoshiriki watapewa fomu ridhaa, ambayo ambayo watatakiwa kutia saina na mara kuziwasilisha kwa mtafiti. Aidha, wale ambao watajitolea kushiriki katika mahojiano ya mtu binafsi, watapewa fomu za ridhaa kwa ajili ya kurekodi sauti. Baada ya mchakato huu, watoto watakaoshiriki wataelekea kukamilisha fomu za kidemografia. Katika fomu hizi za kidemografia hakutakuwa na kuandika majina yao wala vitambulisho vyovyote. Lengo ni kuhakikisha kuwa utafiti huu unafanyika kwa siri upeo. Naomba iwe wazi kuwa mtafiti haikusudii kuchunguza maisha ya binafsi ya washiriki.

MASHARTI YA USHIRIKI WATOTO

Kushiriki katika utafiti huu ni hiari. Watoto wanaotaka kujitolea lazima kukidhi masharti yafuatayo; ni lazima wawe na umri usiopungua miaka 15. Pia ni lazima wawe watoto wanaotambuliwa kama watoto waishio au waliokwisha ishi katika mazingira magumu na wakati wa utafiti ni wanafunzi wa shule ya msingi au sekondary mkoani Singida. Ni jambo la mkazo kuwa watoto watakaoshiriki ni lazima wawewamejitolea kwa hiari yao wenyewe.

UWEZEKANO WARISKI/HATARI AU KUTOJISIKIA VIZURI/DISCOMFORTS

Kutokana na hali halisi ya utafiti huu, uwezekano wa kusababisha hatari kwa mtoto au kutojisikia vizuri/discomfort haupo au kama upo ni kidogo sana. Hata hivyo, iwapo mtoto atajihisi vibaya wakati wa utafiti, nitajitahidi kwa hali na mali na kutokana na uzoefu wangu kama mwalimu wa Kitanzania mwenye uzoefu wa siku nyingi, nitatoa huduma ya haraka ya kumsaidia mtoto mhusika. Naamini kuwa kwa uzoefu wangu wa siku nyingi kama mwalimu na mkuu wa shule na pia katika uzoefu wangu wa kufanya kazi na watoto waishio katika mazingira magumu nitaweza kuwasaidia watoto hawa. Vinginevyo, kama matron, pale ikihitajika, utakuwa fursa ya kumuondoa mtoto katika utafiti na kwa mashirikiano nami kumpa msaada atakao hitaji. Hakuna sehemu ya matokeo ya utafiti zitatumika kwa njia yoyote ambayo inawezakuathiri mtoto/watoto watakaoshiriki.

FAIDA YA WASHIRIKI NA / Jamii

Kushiriki katika utafiti huu kutawapa watoto wa kituo cha Kititimo nafasi ya

kubadilishana mawazo na mapendekezo yao yatakayochangia katika harakati za uboreshwaji wa mfumo wa shule. Watapata pia nafasi ya kuchangia mawazo yao juu ya changamoto wanazokumbana nazo na jinsi wanavyofikiri juu ya njia mwafaka za kuepukana na matatizo kama hayo yanayowakumba. Kutokana na uzoefu wangu, napenda kusesitiza kwamba watoto watakaoshiriki watafaidika pia kwa kupata ujasiri zaidi wa kusema au kutoa maoni yao kuhusu uhalisia wa maisha yao kielimu na pia kutoa matarajio yao kwa watu husika. Nafasi hii itaimarisha ujasiri na mwamko katika watoto kama njia ya kuandaa viongozi wa kesho. Aidha, mchango wao unaweza kuhamasisha mchakato wa kutunga sera mpya ya elimu na kanuni za shule. Mchango utakaotolewa na watoto ni muhimu katika juhudi za kuboresha mbinu ya kufundishia na katika kutunga mbinu mpya zitakazoweza kutumika siku zijazo kama njia ya kujenga uwezo wa shule katika kutoa elimu bora kwa watoto wote.

FIDIA KWA WASHIRIKI

Hakutakuwa fidia ya kifedha kwa ajili ya watakaoshiriki katika utafiti huu. Hata hivyo, mtafiti atatoa vinywaji na vitafunio kwa ajili ya watoto wote watakaoshiriki na wengine wote waishio kituoni.

USIRI/CONFIDENTIALITY

Kila aina ya taarifa zitakazopatikana kwa njia ya mahojiano ya mtu binafsi au maswali yatahifadhiwa kwa hali ya uangalifu na siri dhabiti wakati wote wa utafiti na hata baada ya utafiti. Katika kutoa riporiti ya matokeo ya utafiti huu, majina ya washiriki na taarifa zote yatahifadhiwa kwa siri, yaani hayatatumiwa kwa namna yoyote ile. Data zote zitahifadhiwa kuhifadhiwa katika mahali salama na mtafiti na mtafiti tu ndiye atakayekuwa na data hizo. Nyaraka zote na ripoti zitahifadhiwa mahali salama kwa kipindi cha miaka miwili. Baada ya muda huo, dodoso zote zilizopo katika maandishi zitaharibiwa na kanda kufutwa.

UWEZO WA KUMSITISHA MTOTO KAMA MSHIRIKI KATIKA UTAFITI

Kama mlezi wa watoto katika kituo cha Kititimo, unauwezo wa kuamua kumsitisha mtoto asiendele kuwa katika utafiti iwapo itaonekana kuwa na tatizo kubwa. Kumsitisha mtoto katika kuendelea na utafiti huu hakutakuwa na madhara yoyote yaani kuadhibiwa. Hali kadhalika, watoto pia wanao uhuru wa kujibu au kutokuji maswali iwapohawajisikii kuyajibu. Pia wanao uwezo wa kujitoa kwenye utafiti huu wakati wowote na kutaka mada zinazowahusu ziondolewe. Kwa sababu maalumu kama vile kuvunjiana heshima au mtoto kuonyesha dalili za kuumizwa na utafiti huu, mtafiti, atamsitisha mtoto katika kuendelea katika zoezi la utafiti.

USHIRIKISHWaji WA MATOKEO YA STADI KWA WASHIRIKI

Matokeo ya utafiti huu yatashirikishwa kwa washiriki wote baada ya zoezi zima kukamilika na mtafiti kurejea nchini. Ripoti itatolewa kwa ufupi katika maandishi. Inakadiriwa kuwa zoezi hili litafanyika Septemba 2014. Nakala kamili ya dissertation itakayotokana na utafiti huu, itatolewa kwa kituo na kuhifadhiwa katika maktaba ya kituo kwa manufaa ya washiriki wote na wanakituo wote. Baada ya kukamilisha dissertation, nitarejea Kituoni kwa nia ya kutoa taarifa kamili kuhusu utafiti huu, mapendekezo na pia kutoa shukrani kwa mashirikiano na kuwapa moyo washiriki waendeleo kujitahidi

katika kujikomboa kielimu.

MATUMIZI YA DATA

Data zitakazopatikana kutokana na utafiti huu zitaweza kutumika katika masomo baadae katika machapisho na katika mawasilisho.

HAKI YA WASHIRIKI UTAFITI

Unaweza kuondoa idhini yako wakati wowote na kusimamisha ushiriki bila hatia. Kama una maswali kuhusu haki zako kama mshiriki katika utafiti huu, wasiliana Utafiti wa Maadili Mratibu, Chuo Kikuu cha Windsor, Windsor, Ontario, N9B 3P4; Simu: 519-253-3000, ext. xxxx; barua pepe: ethics@uwindsor.ca

SAINI YA UTAFITI WASHIRIKI / MWAKILISHI KISHERIA

Mimi nadhibitisha kuwa nimeelewa vema taarifa zilizotolewa kwa ajili ya utafiti huu unaohusu "Uchunguzi kuhusu kuelimisha watoto waishio katikamazingira magumu mikoani Singida, Tanzania: Changamoto, Mikakati, mipya ya kuborsha elimu kwa watoto hao" kama ilivyoelezwa humu. Maswali na dukuku zangu zimejibiwa na na nakubali kushiriki katika utafiti huu. Nimepewa nakala ya fomu hii.

Jina la Mshiriki

Sahihi ya Tarehe Mshiriki

SAINI YA MTAFITI

Haya ni makubaliano ambayo mimi nimefanya na Mtafiti.

Sahihi ya Tarehe UTAFITI

Appendix 3A

To The Matron
Centre for Orphaned and
Vulnerable Children
P.O. Box Singida-Tanzania.



Letter of Information for Consent to Participate in the Research

Title of Study: Investigating School Experience of Vulnerable Children in Singida
Tanzania: Challenges, Strategies and Possible Interventions

You are requested to participate in a research study conducted by Chrispina Lekule PhD Candidate from the Faculty of Education at the University of Windsor. Results of this study contribute to her dissertation. If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel to contact my academic supervisor, Dr. Andrew Allen Phone: (519) 253-3000 Ext. xxxx Email: aallen@uwindsor.ca or contact me by: phone: x-xxx-xxx-xxxx or by e-mail lekule@uwindsor.ca

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to examine school experiences of vulnerable children, the challenges they encounter and the kind of support they require in meeting their social and academic needs. In addition, the researcher wants to understand the kind of strategies, which educators implement, in supporting the learning process of vulnerable children and the kind of challenges they face in implementing those strategies. Likewise, the researcher wants to intervention strategies needed to cater to the needs of vulnerable children in the schools.

PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to: Complete the demographic forms whose information will be used for the purpose of this research. The information to be entered in the demographic forms will include: Gender, age and work experience. Your name or any identifying information such as title or position will not be included in this form. You will also be asked to participate in a one on one interview with the researcher, which will take a maximum of 45 minutes.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

There are no clear risks or discomforts anticipated to happen to participants. The researcher will make every effort possible to safeguard participants and the data retrieved from them. Participants will also be asked to respect each other and to maintain

confidentiality at all times. A potential risk during this research could arise from focus groups where all participants will hear the information shared and the researcher cannot guarantee confidentiality in this situation. For this reason, participants will have the option of withholding information, which they think will require strict confidentiality and share it later in private with the researcher.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

The study has the following potential benefits for the participants and their participating schools. First, participants will gain useful knowledge about themselves and their schools. The study will highlight school experiences of vulnerable children, the challenges educators encounter and the strategies they implement in catering to the learning needs of vulnerable children. The study will develop possible intervention strategies that will help schools to re-think their social, psychological and pedagogical approaches necessary for improving the learning process for vulnerable children. Your participation will contribute to improving teaching pedagogies and in formulating possible intervention approaches that can be taken in the future as a means to build school capacities in providing quality education to vulnerable children.

COMPENSATION FOR PARTICIPATION

There will be no monetary compensations for participating in this research.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All information obtained from this study is strictly confidential. To ensure maximum confidentiality of the participant's information, the research will use pseudonyms for all participants and the participating sites. With respect to data storage, privacy and confidentiality, the researcher will store all data materials securely in the locked file cabinets in her own office room. A personal computer with a password known to the researcher alone will also be used for storing transcribed information gathered from the participants, this information will be coded. That is, there will be no mention of the names of the participants or any of the identifying information in them.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

If you volunteer to participate in this research, you will also have the right to withdraw at any time without any negative consequences. You will also have the right to ask the researcher to remove your data information from the notes taken. The researcher may also withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so. The circumstances could be show signs that your participation might have negative impacts on you.

FEEDBACK OF THE RESULTS OF THIS STUDY TO THE PARTICIPANTS

The researcher will share the research findings with all interested participants before its publication. Dissemination will be provided differently to the various groups that participated in the research. For the schools, the findings can be shared through seminars, conferences and teacher development workshops. A copy of dissertation will also be made available to each participating site. The results of this study are expected to be made available by September 2014.

SUBSEQUENT USE OF DATA

These data may be used in subsequent studies in publications and in presentations.

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, contact: Research Ethics Coordinator, University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario N9B 3P4; Telephone: 519-253-3000, ext. xxxx; e-mail: ethics@uwindsor.ca

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

These are the terms under which I will conduct research.

Signature of Investigator

Date

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT/LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

I understand the information provided for the study, “Investigating School Experience of Vulnerable Children in Singida, Tanzania: Challenges, Strategies, and Possible Interventions” as described herein. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

Name of Participant

Signature of Participant

Appendix 3B



To The Matron
Centre for Orphaned and
Vulnerable Children
P.O. Box Singida-Tanzania.

Barua ya Kuomba Idhini ya Kushiriki Katika Utafiti

Kichwa cha habari ya Utafiti: Kuchunguza juu ya Experience za Shule Kuhusiana na Watoto Waishio katika Mazingira Hatarishi mkoani Singida Tanzania: Changamoto, Mikakati na Masuluhisho.

Kwa barua hii unaombwa kushiriki katika utafiti utakaofanywa na Chrispina Lekule Mwanafunzi wa Shahada ya Uzamivu (PhD) kutoka Kitengo cha elimu, Chuo Kikuu cha Windsor. Matokeo ya utafiti huu yatachangia dissertation yake ya udaktari. Kama una maswali yoyote au hoja kuhusu utafiti huu, tafadhali jisikie huru kuwasiliana Chrispina Lekule kwa njia ya simu: x-xxx-xxx-xxxx (Nambari ya Canada) au xxx-xxx-xxxx (Nambari ya Kitanzania). Unaweza pia kuwasilina naye kwa njia ya barua pepe lekule@uwindsor.ca email. Njia nyingine ya mawasiliano ni kupitia kwa msimamizi wake wa kitaaluma Dr Andrew Allen kwa njia ya simu: (519) 253-3000 Ext. xxxx au kwa barua pepe: aallen@uwindsor.ca

Madhumuni ya Stadi/Utafiti

Madhumuni ya utafiti huu ni kuchunguza kuhusu kuelimisha watoto waishio katika mazingira magumu, changamoto wanazozipata na jinsi shule/ waalimu na uongozi mzima unavyojitahidi kuwasaidia watoto hawa katika kupata elimu bora kama njia ya kujikomboa katika dimbwi la mazingira magumu ya kimaisha na katika kukidhi mahitaji yao ya kijamii na kielimu. Aidha, mtafiti anataka kuelewa aina ya mikakati, ambayo waelimishaji hutekeleza, katika kuunga mkono mchakato wa kutoa elimu bora kwa watoto wote na hasa kwa wale wanaoishi katika mazingira magumu. Mtafiti anapenda pia kujifunza kuhusu changamoto zinazowakabili waelimishaji katika juhudi zao za kuelimisha kundi hili la watoto. Kadhalika, mtafiti anataka kujifunza kutoka kwako ukiwa kama kiongozi wa shule au mkufunzi kuhusu maoni yako, juu ya namna ya kuboresha elimu kwa watoto hawa na aina ya vitu au mikakati tunayopaswa kuchukua katika jitihada hizo

TARATIBU

Ukijitolea kushiriki katika utafiti huu, utaombwa kukamilisha fomu kidemografia. Taarifa utakazojaza katika fomu hizo zitatumika kwa madhumuni ya utafiti huu tu. Taarifa utakazoombwa kujaza kwenye fomu hizo ni pamoja na: Jinsia ya mshiriki, umri, profesheni ya mshiriki na muda ambao umakuwa katika profesheni hiyo. Ifahamike kuwa, jina la mshiriki au vielekezo vyovyote vile viwezavyo kumatambulisha mshiriki

havitaingizwa katika fomu hii ya demografia. Kwa wale watakaojitolea kushiriki katika makundi, watakuwa pia na uwezo wa kuomba kushiriki katika mahojiano na mtafiti badala ya kwenye vikundi. Mahajiono ya binafsi na mtafiti, yatachukua muda wa dakika 45.

UWEZAKANO HATARI/ RISKI AU KUTOJISIKIA VEMA

Kulingana na taratibu zitakazotumika kwa kufanya utafiti huu, hakuna hatari/riski yoyote ay dalili za mshiriki kutokujisikia vizuri kutokana na yale yatakayojadiliwa. Mtafiti atafanya kila juhudi iwezekanavyo kulinda washiriki na data zitakazopatikana kutokana na utafiti huu. Washiriki wahimizwa kuhusu umuhimu wa kuheshimiana na kudumisha usiri wakati wote na baada ya utafiti. Mtafiti, hanauwezo wa kuhakikisha kuwa kila mshiriki anaheshimu na kutunza usiri hasa kwenye makundi. Kwa sababu hii, washiriki wataombwa kusema tu yale wanayoona kuwa jambo la kawaida kushirikisha katika makundi. Mambo mengine ambayo wataona kuwa ni muhimu kwa utafiti huu wanaweza kuyashirikisha kwa mtafiti kwa muda utakaotolewa kwa watu binafsi.

FAIDA ZA UTAFITI KWA WASHIRIKI NA JAMII

Utafiti ina faida zifuatazo kwa ajili ya washiriki na shule zao/jamii kwaujumla. Kwanza, washiriki watapata maarifa muhimu kuhusu wao wenyewe na shule zao. Utafiti itaonyesha experiensi za shule kuhusiana na watoto wanaoishi katika mazingira magumu, changamoto zinazowakumba waelimishaji na njia au mikakati wanayotumia katika kupambana na changamoto hizo. Washiriki wakishirikiana na mtafiti wataweza kubuni mikakakati/mbinu mbadala kwa ajili ya kuingilia kati kwenye juhudi zinazofanyika katika kuboresha elimu inayotolewa kwa watoto wote. Ikiwemo namna za kumsaidia mtoto katika mahitaji yake ya kijamii, kielimu, kisaikolojia. Utafiti huu unaweza pia kuwasaidia Waelimishaji kuboresha pedagogi, yaani mbinu za kumwelimisha mtoto kwa manufaa ya maisha yake kwa ujumla. Jamii itafaidi kwani iwapo watoto wote watapata elimu bora, itachangia katika kuboresha maisha ya jamii kwa ujumla. Matokeo ya utafiti huu yanaweza pia kuchangia katika kuboresha sheria na taratibu za elimu kitaifa hasa kwa watoto waishio katika mazingira magumu. Mafundisho yatakayotokana na utafiti huu yanaweza kutumiaka pia baadaye kama njia ya kuelimisha wengine wanaokumbana na changamoto kama zinazowakumba washiriki wa utafiti huu.

FIDIA KWA USHIRIKI

Hakutakuwa fidia/compensations ya kifedha kwa ajili ya kushiriki katika utafiti huu.

USIRI/CONFIDENTIALITY

Data zote zitakazopatikana kutokana na utafiti hii zitahifadhiwa kwa uangalifu na usiri mkubwa. Ujulikane wazi kuwa ni mtafiti pekee atakuwa na data hizo na atazihifadhi kwa usalama katika makabati yaliyofungwa ofisini mwake. Kompyuta binafsi yenye password inayojulikana kwa mtafiti peke yake pia itatumika kwa ajili ya kuhifadhi habari iliyonakiliwa. Data zote zitaandikwa kwa kutumia code badala ya majina ya kweli ya washiriki. Kwa maana hii majina ya washiriki au viashirio vyovyote viwezavyo kumtambusha mshiriki havitatumika katika maandisho yote ya utafiti huu. Baaada ya kutimiza zoezi hili la utafiti na kutoa riporiti, dodoso zote zilizopo katika maandishi zitaharibiwa na kanda kufutwa baada ya kipindi cha miaka miwili.

UWEZO WA USHIRIKI AU KUJITOA KATIKA UTAFITI

Kushiriki katika utafiti huu ni hiari ya mtu binafsi. Hivyo mshiriki atakuwa na uhuru wa kujitoa au kusitisha kuendelea kwake katika utafiti huu. Kwa kujiondoa katika utafiti, hakutakusababishia madhara yoyote pia utakuwa na haki ya kutaka kuondolewa kwa mada zote utakazokuwa umechangia. Hali kadhalika, mtafiti anaweza kukuomba kujiondoa katika utafiti huu iwapo kutajitokeza hali ambayo inaashiria kuwa wewe unaadhirika kwa kukushiriki kwako au labda kushiriki kwako kunaadhiri wengine au mwendelezo wa utafiti huu.

KUSHIRIKISHWA MATOKEO YA UTAFITI

Matokeo ya utafiti huu yatashirikishwa kwa washiriki wote baada ya zoezi zima kukamilika na mtafiti kurejea nchini. Ripoti itatolewa kwa ufupi. Pia ni mategemeo ya mtafiti kuwa baada ya kuhitimu masomo na kurejea nyumbani Tanzania, atafika tena Singida kwa madhumuni ya kutoa semina au warsha kwa wakufunzi wote kama njia mojawapo ya kushirikisha matokeo ya utafiti huu. Nakala ya dissertation itatolewa kwa shule kwa ajili ya kumbukumbu na pia kutumika kama kitendea kazi katika juhudi za kuboresha elimu katika shule husika. Matokeo ya utafiti huu yanatarajiwa kupatikana Septemba 2014.

MATUMIZI YA DATA

Data hizi zinaweza kutumika katika machapisho ya baadaye na pia katika kutoa elimu kwa watu wengine.

HAKI YA WASHIRIKI UTAFITI

Kama una maswali kuhusu haki zako kama mshiriki unaweza kuwasiliana ofisi ya utafiti,: Utafiti wa Maadili Mratibu, Chuo Kikuu cha Windsor, Windsor, Ontario N9B 3P4; Simu: 519-253-3000, ext. xxxx; barua pepe: ethics@uwindsor.ca

SAINI YA Mtafiti

Haya ni makubaliano ambayo mimi nitafanya katika utafiti huu.

Sahihi ya mtafiti na Tarehe

SAINI YA WASHIRIKI KATIKA UTAFITI/ MWAKILISHI KISHERIA

Mimi nadhibitisha kuwa nimeelewa vema taarifa zilizotolewa kwa ajili ya utafiti huu unaohusu "Uchunguzi kuhusu kuelimisha watoto waishio katikamazingira magumu mikoani Singida, Tanzania: Changamoto, Mikakati, mipya ya kuborsha elimu kwa watoto hao" kama ilivyoelezwa humu. Maswali na dukuku zangu zimejibiwa na na nakubali kushiriki katika utafiti huu. Nimepewa nakala ya fomu hii.

Jina la Mshiriki

Sahihi ya Mshiriki

Tarehe



Appendix 4A

Consent for Audiotaping/Recording

Name of the Participant: _____

Title of the Study: Investigating School Experience of Vulnerable Children in Singida-Tanzania: Challenges, Strategies and Possible Interventions

This study involves audio recording of interviews with the researcher. I understand that neither my name nor any other identifying information will be associated with the audio recording or the transcript resulting from the interviews. After the tapping is complete the tapes will be stored in locked cabinets. The recorded information will be listened to by the researcher who will also be responsible for transcriptions and writing the results of this study. I am aware that the researcher will keep the tapes for a period two years after which she will erase them. I am aware and I understand that participating in this research is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time by requesting that the taping be stopped. I understand that confidentiality will be respected and that the audio tape will be for professional use only.

By signing this form, I consent to the audio tapping as part of my voluntary participation in this research.

(Signature of the participant)

(Date)



Appendix 4B

Fomu ya Ridhaa ya Kurekodiwa (Consent for Audio Tapping)

Jina la Mshiriki: _____

Kichwa cha Studi: Stadi ya Kuchunguza maisha ya shule kwa watoto waishio katika Mazingira Magumu Singida- Tanzania: Changamoto, Mikakati Itumikayo Sasa na ya Baadaye.

Utafiti huu unahusisha kurekodiwa kwa mahojiano binafsi na mtafiti. Ninaelewa vema kwamba, jina langu na lile la shule yangu au habari zozote ziwezazo kunitambulisha kama mhusika katika majadiliano haya hazitatumika. Yatakayo rekodiwa yatahifadhiwa kwa uangalifu mkubwa, rekodi hizo zitasikilizwa na mtafiti tu na mara tu baada kutiwa katika maandishi, kanda zote zitafutwa. Ninatambua na kuelewa kwamba kushiriki katika utafiti huu ni hiari na kwamba mimi nina uhuru wa kujiondoa katika zoezi hili wakati wowote na itakuwa hiari yangu kutaka yale niliyokwisha sema yatumike au la. Vilevile naelewa fika kuwa utafiti huu utafanyika kwa usiri mkubwa na habari zitakazotokana na utafiti huu zitakuwa kwa ajili ya kutimiza malengo ya stadi hii ikiwemo kuboresha elimu. Kwa kutia saina fomu hii, mimi kukubali kurekodiwa kama sehemu ya ushiriki wangu katika utafiti huu wa hiari.

(Sahihi ya Mshiriki)

(Tarehe)

Appendix 5

Demographic Questionnaires for Children

Date of interview: dd/mm/yy/ __/__/_____

(Maswali yatakayojibiwa na Watoto watakaoshiki katika utafiti huu)

Date of interview (Tarehe) dd/mm/yy/ __/__/_____

Instruction: Please take a few moments to check the appropriate areas for demographic information only. This information is for research purposes. Complete confidentiality of the information provided is assured. *(Tafadhali jibu maswali ya fuatayo, bila jina lako au la shule unayosoma. Taarifa utakayojaza hapa ni kwa ajili ya stadi hii tu. Taarifa zote zitatuzwa na zitakuwa siri ya mchunguzi tu).*

1. Gender (*Jinsia*): Male (*Mwanaume*)_____ Female
(*Mwanamke*)_____
2. Age (*Umri*): _____
3. Grade level (*Darasa*): Primary school (*Shule ya Msingi*) _____ Secondary
School (*Shule ya sekondari*)_____
4. Where did you live before coming to Kititimo Centr? (*Mahali ulipoishi kabla ya
kuja kituoni*)

-
5. With whom did you live? (*Uliishi na nani?*)

6. How old where you when you came to live at Kititimo centr? (*Ulikuwa na miaka
mingapi kabla ya kuja kituoni?*)

Name of the Interviewer: Chrispina Lekule

Appendix 6

Demographic Questionnaires for School Principals and Teachers

Date of interview: dd/mm/yy/ __/__/____

Instruction: Please take a few moments to check the appropriate areas for demographic information only. This information is for research purposes only. Complete confidentiality of the information provided is assured.

1. Gender: Male _____ Female _____
2. Age range: 21 - 30 years _____ 31 – 40 years _____
41- 50 years _____ 51 – 60 years _____ 61 and above _____
3. Status: School Principals _____ Teacher _____
4. Employment Status: Full time _____ Part Time _____
5. Number of years of experience _____
6. Number of years in the current school _____
7. Anything else you would like to share that can enrich this study.

Name of the Interviewer: Chrispina Lekule

Appendix 7

Sample Questions for Individual Interviews with School Principals

Experiences

1. How would you define a vulnerable child in your school? (*Ni Jinsi gani unaweza kufafanua kuhusu mtoto watoto wanaoishi katika mazingira magumu ambao wamo katika shule yako?*)
2. From your experience what do you view as the major cause of children vulnerability in your school and the surrounding area? (*Kutokana na uzoefu wako nini mtazamo wako kuhusu sababu kubwa za kuongezeka kwa watoto waishio katika mazingira magumu kwenye shule yako na eneo la jirani?*)
3. What do you know about the experiences of these children? (*Unajua nini kuhusu wa watoto hawa?*)

Challenges (*Changamoto*)

4. How does what you know affect you, your teachers and students? (*Jinsi gani unajua nini kuathiri wewe, walimu wako na wanafunzi?*)

Strategies (*Mikakati*)

5. What kind of strategies do you or your teachers employ to overcome the challenges you might be facing in relation to the issue of vulnerable children in your school? (*Ni mikakati gani wewe kama mkuu wa shule au walimu wako huchukua katika kupambana na changamoto mnazokumbana nazo katika katika maswala ya kutoa elimu kwa watoto waishio katika mazingira magumu walioko shuleni hapa?*)
6. What kind of policies/school rules or regulations might your school have that helped you in safeguarding and in trying to cater to the needs of these children? (*Ni aina gani ya sera / sheria au kanuni za shule zinazowaongoza katika jitihada zenu za kukidhi mahitaji ya watoto hawa?*)

Future Intervention (*Njia mbadala ya utatuzi*)

7. What kind of strategic steps do you think your school might need to take as a means of mitigating the challenges your school is currently experiencing in relation to vulnerable children? (*Ni hatua gani unafikiri ungeweza kuchukua kama*

njia mojawapo ya kukabiliana na changamoto zinazowakumba katika kutoa elimu na kuwasaidia watoto wanaoishi katika mazingira magumu, kijamii na kielimu?)

8. What might you need in order to make a difference and to be able to provide more support for vulnerable children? (Unafikiri ni kitu *Nini kinaweza unahitaji ili kufanya tofauti na kuwa na uwezo wa kutoa msaada zaidi kwa watoto wanaoishi katika mazingira magumu?*)

Appendix 8

Sample Questions for Interview with Individual Children/Students

School Experiences and Challenges

1. Tell me about yourself, how has school been for you? (*Vipi Habari za shule?*)
2. As a child that lives at Kititimo Centre, how might your school experience be different from those students who live in their homes down town Singida? (*Ukiwa kama mtoto aishie katika kituo cha Kititimo unafikir expiriensi yako ya shuleni unaweza kutofautiana na yao?*)
3. How do you get along with your teachers and fellow students? (*Je mahusiano yako na wanafunzi wengine yakoje?*)
4. What do you like most about your school? (*Ni kitu gani unachokufurahia unapokuwa shuleni?*)
5. What do you like least about your school? (*Ni kitu gani hukifurahii unapokuwa shuleni?*)
6. If you have a problem at school whom do you talk to? (*Unapokuwa na tatizo kule shule unamwambia nani?*)
7. What kind of challenges have you experienced in school? (*Ni changamoto gani uliwahi kukumbana nazo shuleni?*)

Strategies for Support

1. How do your school principal, teachers and fellow students help you? (*Ni kwa jinsi gani mkuu wako wa shule, waalimu na wanafunzi wenzio wamewahi kukusaidia?*)

Intervention Strategies for Future

1. What would you like your school principal, teachers and fellow students to do for you? (*Ni kitu gani ungependa mkuu wako wa shule, waalimu na wanafunzi wenzio wakufanyie?*)
2. What changes would you like to see in your school? (*Ni mabadiliko gani ungependa kuona katika shule yako?*)

3. What can your school principal, teachers and fellow students do in order to bring about the changes you would like to see? (Ili kuleta mabadiliko uliyoyataja, ni kitu gani wangeweza kufanya?)

How can you contribute to bringing about the changes you would like to see? (Ni kwa namna gani ungeweza kuchangia katika kuleta mabadiliko hayo)

Appendix 9

Questionnaires to be answered by children

Please complete the questions listed below following instruction given in each section.
(Tafadhali jibu maswali yafuatayo kwa kufuata maelekezo yaliyopewa katika kila kipengele)

Section A (Kipengele A): Complete the following question by writing a brief answer on the space provided. (Malizia maswali yafuatayo kwa kuandika jibu fupi katika nafasi uliyopewa)

1. Briefly describe your personal school experience? (*Eleza kwa ufupi jinsi unavyoiona shule yako*)

2. How might your school experiences be different from those of other students especially those who do not live at Kititimo centre? (*Eleza maoni yako kuhusu namna maisha yako ya shule kama mtoto aishie katika kituo cha Malezi yanavyoweza kutofautiana na yale ya wanfunzi wengine*).

3. What kind of fears or anxieties might you be experiencing at the thought of going to school? (*Je unapofikiri kuhusu kwenda shuleni unapatwa na hofu au wasiwasi gani?*)

4. What do you see as your particular personal, social and academic needs? (*Ni mahataji gani uliyo nayo wewe binafsi, kijamii na kitaaluma ambayo unahisi shule ingeweza kukusaidia?*)

-
-
-
5. What are some of the things that your school principals and teachers are already doing that help you in meeting your needs? *(Ni kwa namna gani mkuu/wakuu wako wa shule na waalimu wanajitahidi kukusaidia ili kukidhi mahitaji uliyo nayo?)*
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
6. How can your school principal and teachers help you more at school? *(Je kulingana na mawazo yako ni kwa namna gani unahisi wakuu wako wa shule na waalimu wako wangeliveza kukusaidia zaidi?)*
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
7. What would you like to see changed in your school? *(Ni kitu gani au taratibu zipi ungependa zibadilishwe katika shule yako ili kuboresha maisha yako kule shuleni?)*
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
8. List three to six things which you think can help you in improving your ability to be more successful in school. *(Orodhesha vitu vitatu ambavyo vingeweza kukusaidia katika kuboresha uwezo wako wa kufaulu kimasomo shuleni)*
1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
9. What would you wish to see put in place in your schools as a means of alleviating the obstacles/challenges you are facing at school? *(Ni mabadiliko gani ungependa yafanyike shule kama njia mojawapo ya kupunguza vikwazo/changamoto zinazokukabili shuleni?)*
-
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10. Please add any comment or suggestion which you might have and was not included in the questions. (*Tafadhali ongeza mawazo au maoni yako ambayo hayakuwa katika maswali uliyojibu*)

Thank you for choosing to participate in this research.

Appendix 10A

Letter of Consent for Children to Participate in Research

To The Matron
Centre for Orphaned and Vulnerable Children
P.O. Box Singida- Tanzania



Title of Study: Investigating School Experience of Vulnerable Children in Singida
Tanzania: Challenges, Strategies, and Possible Interventions

Dear Matron, _____

You are asked to allow some of the children at Kititimo Centre for Orphaned and Vulnerable Children to volunteer for participation in a research, which will be conducted by Chrispina Lekule a PhD Candidate from the Faculty of education, University of Windsor. The results of this study will contribute to her Doctoral dissertation.

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact Chrispina Lekule by phone: x-xxx-xxx-xxxx (In Canada) or xxx-xxx-xxxx or by email lekule@uwindsor.ca . You can also contact her academic supervisor Dr. Andrew Allen by phone: (519) 253-3000 Ext. xxxx or by email: xxxxxxx

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to examine school experiences of these children, the challenges they encounter, and the kind of support they most need from their educators in order to meet their social and academic needs. In addition, the researcher wants explore children's perspectives about what schools are currently doing and what they can do best in the near future in catering to their social and academic needs.

PROCEDURES

If you allow the qualifying children to volunteer for participation in this research, the researcher will come to your centre to collect data via two approaches. The first approach will be answering written questionnaires individually, the participants will include children who qualify according to the prescribed criteria and are willing to participate in the research voluntarily. The second approach will be collecting data through individual/one-on-one interview with the researcher. For individual interviews, the researcher will ask two students to volunteer as representatives of the five schools they attend that is, two students from Kititimo, Somoko, Mungumaji, Muhanga and Dr.

Salimin respectively. When applicable there should be a boy and a girl from each school. On the day of the research, all children who volunteered to participate together with the matron will gather in one room with the researcher to discuss further about the significance of this research and their role in it. Detail information about research protocols, issues of confidentiality as well as the right to withdraw without any penalty. The children will also have the opportunity to ask questions regarding the research and their participation. Prior to starting data collection, all participating children will receive a consent form, which they will sign and submit to the researcher. Likewise, those who will volunteer to participate in the individual interviews do the same with an addition of signing a consent form for audio recording. After this process, the participating children will proceed to complete demographic forms. Demographic forms will contain names or any kind of identifying information. The purpose is to ensure maximum confidentiality. Note that the researcher does not intend to scrutinize the personal life of the participants.

CONDITIONS FOR CHILDREN PARTICIPATION

Participation in this research is voluntary. The children wishing to volunteer must meet the following conditions; they must be 15 years old or above and be either in the upper primary school or secondary school at the time of this research. The children must volunteer freely and not be required to participate.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

There are no major known risks or discomforts associated with this research. If for any reason the child feels uncomfortable during the research process, I will provide immediate support to the child. I promise to do this given my long time experience as a classroom teacher, school principal and long-time experience in working with children with similar conditions of life. Alternatively, as the matron of this child, you will have the option of withdrawing the child from the study at any point and every help and support will be given to the child. No part of the research findings will be used in any way that will affect the participating child. If you have any concerns or questions please feel free to contact me or my supervisor by the contact information provided above.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

Participating in this research will give the children at Kititimo centre the opportunity to share their experiences and suggestions with the potential to contribute to the improvement of the learning conditions and teaching approaches that may affect them and other children with similar experiences in the Tanzanian schools. From my experience, I would like to emphasize that the participating children will also benefit by gaining more confidence to speak about their experiences, wishes and what they see as the way forward for schools to be of more help to them and to other children. This opportunity will strengthen their resilience and leadership skills. In addition, their contribution may inspire the process of formulating new educational policies and school regulations. The contribution which these children will make will have the potential of contributing to the efforts made in improving teaching approaches and in formulating possible intervention approaches that can be taken in the future as a means to build school capacities in providing quality education for all children.

COMPENSATION FOR PARTICIPATION

There will be no monetary compensations for participating in this research. However, the researcher will provide beverages and snacks, which all the children at the centre will share.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All kinds of information obtained through individual interviews or questionnaires will remain confidential throughout the research and after the research. When reporting research results, the participants' names and all identifying information will not be included. All data will be stored in a secure place by the researcher and only this researcher will have access to the data. All documents and reports will be stored in a secure place for a maximum period of two years after which all questionnaire papers will be shredded and audio tapes erased.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

As a guardian of the children at Kititimo Centre, you can choose whether the children under your care can participate in this study or not. If with your permission they volunteer to participate in this study, you will also be able to withdraw them from continuing at any time without consequences of any kind. The children will also have the freedom not to answer any questions they do not want to answer and remain in the study. The researcher may also withdraw the participating child from this research if circumstances arise that warrant doing so. Possible reason for which the research may withdraw the participant may include the participating child showing unexpected signs of serious emotional reaction to the research questions asked during individual interviews. Given the kind of questionnaires, the researcher does not anticipate this kind of reaction among the children.

FEEDBACK OF THE RESULTS OF THIS STUDY TO THE PARTICIPANTS

The findings of this research will be made available to the research participants upon the completion of the study. A brief reader friendly version of the findings will be made available to the Kititimo Centre. The completion date and provision of feedback is scheduled to be September 2014. A complete copy of my dissertation will be made available to the bookshelves at the Kititimo Centre and in their participating schools. After completing my dissertation, I will revisit the Kititimo Centre to offer suggestions, support, and to encourage the children in their studies.

SUBSEQUENT USE OF DATA

These data may be used in subsequent studies in publications and in presentations.

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, contact Research Ethics Coordinator, University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario, N9B 3P4; Telephone: 519-253-3000, ext. xxxx; e-mail: ethics@uwindsor.ca

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT/LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

I understand the information provided for the study, “Investigating School Experience of Vulnerable Children in Singida, Tanzania: Challenges, Strategies, and Possible Interventions” as described herein. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

Name of Participant

Signature of the Matron

Date

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

These are the terms under which I will conduct research.

Signature of Investigator

Date

Appendix 10B

Matroni,
Kituo cha Malezi,
P.O. Box Singida- Tanzania



Ndugu Matroni:.....

Yah: Kuruhusiwa kwa Watoto Waishio katika Kituo cha Malezi Kushiriki katika Utafiti Utakaohusisha Watoto Waishio katika Mazingira Hatarishi

Tafadhali husika na Mada ilioko hapo juu kuhusu utafiti juu ya watoto wanaoishi katika mazingira magumu, uwepo wao mashuleni, changamoto na namna shule zinavyoweza kuwasaidia ili kuboresha elimu yao mashuleni sasa na wakati ujuo. Kwa barua hii unaombwa kuruhusu baadhi ya watoto wa Kituo cha Kititimo kushiriki katika utafiti, utakaofanywa Chrispina Lekule Mwanafunzi wa Shahada ya Uzamivu (PhD) kutoka kitengo cha elimu, Chuo Kikuu cha Windsor. Matokeo ya utafiti huu yatachangia dissertation yake ya udaktari. Kama una maswali au hoja kuhusu utafiti huu, tafadhali jisikie huru kuwasiliana Chrispina Lekule kwa njia ya simu: xxx-xxx-xxxx (Nambari ya Canada) au xxxxxxxxxxxx (Nambari ya Kitanzania) Unaweza pia kuwasilina naye kwa njia ya barua pepe lekule@uwindsor.ca email. Njia nyingine ya mawasiliano ni kupitia kwa msimamizi wake wa Kitaaluma Dr Andrew Allen kwa njia ya simu: (519) 253-3000 Ext. xxxx au kwa barua pepe: aallen@uwindsor.ca

Kusudi la Uchunguzi/Utafiti

Madhumuni ya utafiti huu ni kuchunguza kuhusu kuelimisha watoto waishio katika mazingira magumu, changamoto wanazozipata na jinsi shule/ waalimu na uongozi mzima unavyojitahidi kuwasaidia watoto hawa katika kupata elimu bora kama njia ya kujikomboa katika dimbwi la mazingira magumu ya kimaisha na katika kukidhi mahitaji yao ya kijamii na kielimu. Aidha, mtafiti anataka kuchunguza mitazamo ya watoto kuhusu namna shule zingeweza kuwasaidia zaidi kwa wakati huu na pia kwa baadaye kwa manufaa ya watoto wengine kijamii na kitaaluma.

Taratibu

Iwapo utatoa ridhaa yako na kuruhusu watoto kujitolea kwa uhuru wao kushiriki katika utafiti huu, mtafiti atakuja kituoni hapo kwa malengo haya ya kukusanya data kupitia njia mbili. Njia ya kwanza itakuwa kujibu maswali yalkiyoandikwa kwa njia binafsi. Watakaoshiriki ni watoto wenye umri usiopungua maiaka 14 na ambao wako tayari kwa hiari yao wenyewe kushiriki katika utafiti huu. Mbinu ya pili itakuwa kukusanya data kwa njia ya mtu binafsi mahojiano/moja kwa mmoja na mtafiti. Kwa ajili ya mahojiano ya mtu binafsi, watakoshiriki ni wanafunzi wawili wa kujitolea kutoka katika kila shule wanazohudhuria yaani, wanafunzi wawili kutoka Kititimo, Somoko, Mungumaji, Muhanga na Dk Salimin. Ikiwezekana, matafiti ataomba kuwe na mwakilishi mvulana na msichana kutoka katika kila shule pale inapowezekana. Siku ya

utafiti, watoto wote ambao walijitolea kushiriki pamoja na matron watakusanyika katika chumba kimoja na mtafiti wa kujadili zaidi juu ya umuhimu wa utafiti huu na wajibu wao katika hilo. Tarifa zaidi kuhusu itifaki ya utafiti, masuala ya usiri kama vile haki ya kujondoa bila adhabu. Watoto watakaoshiriki watapewa fursa ya kuuliza maswali kuhusu utafiti na ushiriki wao. Kabla ya kuanza ukusanyaji wa data, watoto wote watakaoshiriki watapewa fomu ridhaa, ambayo ambayo watatakiwa kutia saini na mara kuziwasilisha kwa mtafiti. Aidha, wale ambao watajitolea kushiriki katika mahojiano ya mtu binafsi, watapewa fomu za ridhaa kwa ajili ya kurekodi sauti. Baada ya mchakato huu, watoto watakaoshiriki wataelekea kukamilisha fomu za kidemografia. Katika fomu hizi za kidemografia hakutakuwa na kuandika majina yao wala vitambulisho vyovyote. Lengo ni kuhakikisha kuwa utafiti huu unafanyika kwa siri upeo. Naomba iwe wazi kuwa mtafiti haikusudii kuchunguza maisha ya binafsi ya washiriki.

MASHARTI YA USHIRIKI WATOTO

Kushiriki katika utafiti huu ni hiari. Watoto wanaotaka kujitolea lazima kukidhi masharti yafuatayo; ni lazima wawe na umri usiopungua miaka 15. Pia ni lazima wawe watoto wanaotambuliwa kama watoto waishio au waliokwisha ishi katika mazingira magumu na wakati wa utafiti ni wanafunzi wa shule ya msingi au sekondary mkoani Singida. Ni jambo la mkazo kuwa watoto watakaoshiriki ni lazima wawewamejitolea kwa hiari yao wenyewe.

UWEZEKANO WARISKI/HATARI AU KUTOJISIKIA VIZURI/DISCOMFORTS

Kutokana na hali halisi ya utafiti huu, uwezekano wa kusababisha hatari kwa mtoto au kutojisikia vizuri/discomfort haupo au kama upo ni kidogo sana. Hata hivyo, iwapo mtoto atajihisi vibaya wakati wa utafiti, nitajitahidi kwa hali na mali na kutokana na uzoefu wangu kama mwalimu wa Kitanzania mwenye uzoefu wa siku nyingi, nitatoa huduma ya haraka ya kumsaidia mtoto mhusika. Naamini kuwa kwa uzoefu wangu wa siku nyingi kama mwalimu na mkuu wa shule na pia katika uzoefu wangu wa kufanya kazi na watoto waishio katika mazingira magumu nitaweza kuwasaidia watoto hawa. Vinginevyo, kama matron, pale ikihitajika, utakuwa fursa ya kumuondoa mtoto katika utafiti na kwa mashirikiano nami kumpa msaada atakao hitaji. Hakuna sehemu ya matokeo ya utafiti zitatumika kwa njia yoyote ambayo inawezakuathiri mtoto/watoto watakaoshiriki.

FAIDA YA WASHIRIKI NA / JAMII

Kushiriki katika utafiti huu kutawapa watoto wa kituo cha Kititimo nafasi ya kubadilishana mawazo na mapendekezo yao yatakayochangia katika harakati za uboreshwaji wa mfumo wa shule. Watapata pia nafasi ya kuchangia mawazo yao juu ya changamoto wanazokumbana nazo na jinsi wanavyofikiri juu ya njia mwafaka za kuepukana na matatizo kama hayo yanayowakumba. Kutokana na uzoefu wangu, napenda kusesitiza kwamba watoto watakaoshiriki watafaidika pia kwa kupata ujasiri zaidi wa kusema au kutoa maoni yao kuhusu uhalisia wa maisha yao kielimu na pia kutoa matarajio yao kwa watu husika. Nafasi hii itaimarisha ujasiri na mwamko katika watoto kama njia ya kuandaa viongozi wa kesho. Aidha, mchango wao unaweza kuhamasisha mchakato wa kutunga sera mpya ya elimu na kanuni za shule. Mchango utakaotolewa na watoto ni muhimu katika juhudi za kuboresha mbinu ya kufundishia na katika kutunga mbinu mpya zitakazoweza kutumika siku zijazo kama njia ya kujenga uwezo wa shule katika kutoa elimu bora kwa watoto wote.

FIDIA KWA WASHIRIKI

Hakutakuwa fidia ya kifedha kwa ajili ya watakaoshiriki katika utafiti huu. Hata hivyo, mtafiti atatoa vinywaji na vitafunio kwa ajili ya watoto wote watakaoshiriki na wengine wote waishio kituoni.

USIRI/CONFIDENTIALITY

Kila aina ya taarifa zitakazopatikana kwa njia ya mahojiano ya mtu binafsi au maswali yatahifadhiwa kwa hali ya uangalifu na siri dhabiti wakati wote wa utafiti na hata baada ya utafiti. Katika kutoa riporiti ya matokeo ya utafiti huu, majina ya washiriki na taarifa zote yatahifadhiwa kwa siri, yaani hayatatumika kwa namna yoyote ile. Data zote zitahifadhiwa kuhifadhiwa katika mahali salama na mtafiti na mtafiti tu ndiye atakayekuwa na data hizo. Nyaraka zote na ripoti zitahifadhiwa mahali salama kwa kipindi cha miaka miwili. Baada ya muda huo, dodoso zote zilizopo katika maandishi zitaharibiwa na kanda kufutwa.

UWEZO WA KUMSITISHA MTOTO KAMA MSHIRIKI KATIKA UTAFITI

Kama mlezi wa watoto katika kituo cha Kititimo, unauwezo wa kuamua kumsitisha mtoto asiendelee kuwa katika utafiti iwapo itaonekana kuwa na tatizo kubwa. Kumsitisha mtoto katika kuendelea na utafiti huu hakutakuwa na madhara yoyote yaani kuadhibiwa. Hali kadhalika, watoto pia wanao uhuru wa kujibu au kutokuji maswali iwapohawajisikii kuyajibu. Pia wanao uwezo wa kujitua kwenye utafiti huu wakati wowote na kutaka mada zinazowahusu ziondolewe. Kwa sababu maalumu kama kama vile kuvunjiana heshima au mtoto kuonyesha dalili za kuumizwa na utafiti huu, mtafiti, atamsitisha mtoto katika kuendelea katika zoezi la utafiti.

USHIRIKISHWAJI WA MATOKEO YA STADI KWA WASHIRIKI

Matokeo ya utafiti huu yatashirikishwa kwa washiriki wote baada ya zoezi zima kukamilika na mtafiti kurejea nchini. Ripoti itatolewa kwa ufupi katika maandishi. Inakadiriwa kuwa zoezi hili litafanyika Septemba 2014. Nakala kamili ya dissertation itakayotokana na utafiti huu, itatolewa kwa kituo na kuhifadhiwa katika maktaba ya kituo kwa manufaa ya washiriki wote na wanakituo wote. Baada ya kukamilisha dissertation, nitarejea Kituoni kwa nia ya kutoa taarifa kamili kuhusu utafiti huu, mapendekezo na pia kutoa shukrani kwa mashirikiano na kuwapa moyo washiriki waendeleo kujitahidi katika kujikomboa kielimu.

MATUMIZI YA DATA

Data zitakazopatikana kutokana na utafiti huu zitaweza kutumika katika masomo baadae katika machapisho na katika mawasilisho.

HAKI YA WASHIRIKI UTAFITI

Unaweza kuondoa idhini yako wakati wowote na kusimamisha ushiriki bila hatia. Kama una maswali kuhusu haki zako kama mshiriki katika utafiti huu, wasiliana Utafiti wa Maadili Mratibu, Chuo Kikuu cha Windsor, Windsor, Ontario, N9B 3P4; Simu: 519-253-3000, ext. xxxx; barua pepe: ethics@uwindsor.ca

SAINI YA UTAFITI WASHIRIKI / MWAKILISHI KISHERIA

Mimi nadhibitisha kuwa nimeelewa vema taarifa zilizotolewa kwa ajili ya utafiti huu unaohusu "Uchunguzi kuhusu kuelimisha watoto waishio katikamazingira magumu mikoani Singida, Tanzania: Chagamoto, Mikakati, mipya ya kuborsha elimu kwa watoto hao" kama ilivyoelezwa humu. Maswali na dukuku zangu zimejibiwa na na nakubali kushiriki katika utafiti huu.

Nimepewa nakala ya fomu hii.

Jina la Mshiriki

Sahihi ya Matroni/Mwakilishi

SAINI YA MTAFFITI

Haya ni makubaliano ambayo mimi nimefanya na Mtafiti.

Sahihi ya Tarehe UTAFITI

Appendix 11A

Consent to Participate in the Focus Group Discussion

Title of Study: Investigating School Experience of Vulnerable Children in Singida Tanzania:

Challenges, Strategies and Possible Interventions

You are being invited to participate in a research study to be conducted by Chrispina Lekule PhD Candidate from the Faculty of Education, University of Windsor. The study will investigate school experiences of vulnerable children in Singida Tanzania with a focus on challenges, strategies and possible interventions in the effort to cater to the social and academic needs of these children. Results of this study will contribute to the dissertation of the researcher.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

In the study, the researcher wants to examine school experiences of vulnerable children, the challenges they encounter and the kind of support they require in meeting their social and academic needs. In addition, the researcher wants to understand the kind of strategies, which educators implement, in supporting the learning process of vulnerable children and the kind of challenges they face in implementing those strategies. Likewise, the researcher wants to identify strategies needed to cater to the needs of vulnerable children in the schools.

Voluntary Participation, Confidentiality and Withdrawal

Your participation in this study is voluntary. The study will involve focus group discussion involving 6-12 participants at a time. Since it is impossible to guarantee confidentiality of the information shared, you are required maintain strict respect for the information shared by each participant. In her part, the researcher will try to maintain maximum confidentiality by storing all data derived from the group discussion securely in locked cabinets. After data has been transcribed, it will be saved in a computer with a strong password known to the researcher alone. Note, in transcribing the information, no names or identifying information will be included. As participant, you will have the right to view the notes taken from the group discussion, transcripts and other data resulting from this study. All transcripts will be kept securely for two years after the research is completed and then destroyed. Anytime during the focus group discussion, you will have fully right to withdraw from the study and you can ask the researcher to remove/delete your shared information from the findings. There will be no penalty for withdrawal.

PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in the focus group discussion as a method of collecting data in this study, you will first be request to complete the consent form declaring that you have understood your role in this research and that you will abide with the research procedures and regulation. You will also be asked to complete demographic forms, which will include basic information such as Gender, age and work experience. Your name or any identifying information such as title or position will be excluded. The focus group discussion will take a maximum of one hour. The group will have a secretary and a chair leader who will act as a moderator of the group together

with the researcher. Both the researcher and the group secretary will take notes. To ensure confidentiality, the researcher will provide a pen and a notebook to the person nominated as secretary. No other person will be allowed to take notes during group discussion, except the secretary and the researcher. The notes will not contain any names of the participants or associated titles. After group discussion, the researcher will immediately hold a meeting with the secretary and the chairperson. The purpose of the meeting is to verify the notes. After verification, the researcher will take away the notebook from the group secretary and store it securely for later data analysis and synthesis of the findings.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

The researcher does not anticipate any major risks for the focus group participants. However, because focus group is a group event, the researcher can by no means guarantee maximum confidentiality. It means that however much I may try to protect the information, which I will retrieve from your discussion, it is also evident that each participant heard the same information and therefore it is impossible for the researcher to ensure strict confidentiality. For this reason, you are all asked to strive for confidentiality. If for any reason, you feel that the issue you want to share requires strict confidentiality, you can reserve the point and ask for personal sharing with the researcher later before the researcher leaves the site.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

The study has the following potential benefits for the participants and their participating schools. First, participants will gain useful knowledge about themselves and their school. The study will highlight school experiences of vulnerable children, the challenges educators encounter and the strategies they implement in catering to the learning needs of vulnerable children. The study will develop possible intervention strategies that will help schools to re-think their social, psychological and pedagogical approaches necessary for improving the learning process for vulnerable children. Participants will benefit from this research by understanding how colleagues and what they view as a solution or the way forward in dealing with the problem. From this experience, participants may also benefit from the suggestions for pedagogical approaches in meeting the social and academic needs of the children. Through focus group discussion, participating teachers may benefit by creating strong bond of supporting each other in the effort to implement their roles as educators towards their learners inclusively.

COMPENSATION FOR PARTICIPATION

There will be no monetary compensations for participating in this research. Researcher will offer beverages and snacks to be shared during group discussion.

FEEDBACK OF THE RESULTS OF THIS STUDY TO THE PARTICIPANTS

The researcher will share the research findings with all interested participants before its publication. Dissemination will be provided differently to the various groups that participated in the research. For the schools, the findings can be shared through seminars, conferences and teacher development workshops. A copy of dissertation will also be made available to each participating site. The results of this study are expected to be made available by September 2014.

SUBSEQUENT USE OF DATA

These data may be used in subsequent studies in publications and in presentations.

QUESTIONS AND RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel to contact my academic supervisor, Dr. Andrew Allen Phone: (519) 253-3000 Ext. xxxx Email: aallen@uwindsor.ca or contact me by: phone: x-xxx-xxx-xxxx or by e-mail lekule@uwindsor.ca

If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, contact Research Ethics Coordinator, University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario N9B 3P4; Telephone: 519-253-3000, ext. xxxx; e-mail: ethics@uwindsor.ca

What I have described above are the terms under which I will conduct research. A copy of this paper will be given to you for your records. Thank you for choosing to contribute to the research by your participation.

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

Signature of Investigator

Date

PARTICIPANT CONSENT

By signing this form, I declare that I have read and understood the above information. I freely volunteer to participate in the focus group discussion as a method of collecting data for this research. I will abide with the procedures and conditions for participation at outline in this form.

Name of the participants (Print): _____

Signature of the participant: _____

Appendix 11B

Idhini ya Kushiriki katika Majadiliano ya Vikundi

Kichwa cha Studi: Maisha ya Shule kwa Watoto Watokao/waishio katika Mazingira Hatarishi katika Mikoa ya Singida Tanzania:Changamoto, Mikakati na Njia za Uboreshaji.

Unaalikwa kushiriki katika utafiti utakaohusisha washiriki kujadili katika makundi madogo. Utafiti huu unakusudiwa kufanywa na Chrispina Lekule Mwanafunzi wa Shahada ya Uzamivu (PhD) kutoka Kitengo cha elimu, Chuo Kikuu cha Windsor. Utafiti utahusu kuchunguza juu ya expiriensi za watoto waishio katika mazingira magumu na kuhudhuria shule mikoani Singida Tanzania.

Madhumuni ya Stadi/Utafiti

Madhumuni ya utafiti huu ni kuchunguza kuhusu kuelimisha watoto waishio katika mazingira magumu, changamoto wanazozipata na jinsi shule/ waalimu na uongozi mzima unavyojitahidi kuwasaidia watoto hawa katika kupata elimu bora kama njia ya kujikomboa katika dimbwi la mazingira magumu ya kimaisha na katika kukidhi mahitaji yao ya kijamii na kielimu. Aidha, mtafiti anataka kuelewa aina ya mikakati, ambayo waelimishaji hutekeleza, katika kuunga mkono mchakato wa kutoa elimu bora kwa watoto wote na hasa kwa wale wanaoishi katika mazingira magumu. Mtafiti anapenda pia kujifunza kuhusu changamoto zinazowakabili waelimishaji katika juhudi zao za kuelimisha kundi hili la watoto. Kadhalika, mtafiti anataka kujifunza kutoka kwako ukiwa kama kiongozi wa shule au mkufunzi kuhusu maoni yako, juu ya namna ya kuboresha elimu kwa watoto hawa na aina ya vitu au mikakati tunayopaswa kuchukua katika jitihada hizo

Hiari ya kushiriki au kutokushiriki

Kushiriki kwako katika utafiti huu ni hiari. Utafiti huu utahusisha majadiliano katika kundi au vikundi vyenye washiriki kati ya 6-12. Kwa vile ni vigumu kwa mtafiti kutoa guarantee ya usiri katika kundi la watu wengi, iwapo utajitolea kushiriki katika majadiliano hayo utaombwa pia kutoa mashirikiano yako kwa njia ya kuheshimu washiriki wengine na yale yote watakayoshirikisha katika majadiliano. Hata hivyo, kwa upande wake mtafiti atajitahidi kwa hali na mali kudumisha usiri wa hali ya juu hasa kwa njia ya kuhifadhi data au nyaraka zote zitakazotokana na utafiti huu kwa kuziweka kwenye makabati yaliyofungwa. Baada ya kumaliza zoezi la kukusanya data, mtafiti atanakili data zote kwenye computer yenye usalama wa kutosha kwa kufunguliwa kwa pasiwadi. Ni mtafiti tu atakuwa na data hizo. Wakati wa kunukuu data, hakuna majina au habari kutambua watakaohusishwa. Kama mshiriki, utakuwa na haki ya kuona maelezo kuchukuliwa kutoka majadiliano ya vikundi, nakala na data nyingine kusababisha kutoka utafiti huu. Nakala zote zitatumzwa salama kwa miaka miwili baada ya utafiti kukamilika na kisha kuharibiwa. Kwakuwa ushiriki wako ni kwa hiari yako mwenyewe, utakuwa huru kuamua kutokuendelea katika utafiti na pia unaweza kumwambia mtafiti aondo mada zote utakazokuwa umechangia wakatik wa kushiriki kwako kwenye majadiliano ya

vikundi. Ijulikane wazi kuwa kutokushiriki au kuamua kujitoa hakutakuadhiri kwa namna yoyote ile.

TARATIBU

Kama wewe kujitolea kushiriki katika majadiliano lengo kundi kama njia ya kukusanya data katika utafiti huu, utakuwa wa kwanza kuwa ombi kukamilisha fomu ridhaa kutangaza kwamba umeelewa jukumu lako katika utafiti huu na kwamba mtakaa na taratibu za utafiti na kanuni. Unaweza pia kuulizwa kukamilisha fomu za idadi ya watu, ambayo ni pamoja na taarifa za msingi kama vile umri Jinsia, na uzoefu wa kazi. Jina yako au taarifa yoyote kutambua kama vile jina au cheo itakuwa kutengwa. kundi majadiliano itachukua upeo wa saa moja. kikundi kutakuwa na katibu na kiongozi mwenyekiti ambaye itachukua hatua kama msimamizi wa kundi pamoja na mtafiti. Wote mtafiti na katibu kundi kuchukua maelezo. Ili kuhakikisha siri, mtafiti itatoa kalamu na daftari kwa mtu kuteuliwa kama katibu. Hakuna mtu mwingine wataruhusiwa kuchukua maelezo wakati wa majadiliano ya kikundi, isipokuwa katibu na mtafiti. maelezo si vyenye majina yoyote ya washiriki au vyeo kuhusishwa. Baada ya majadiliano ya vikundi, mtafiti mara moja kufanya mkutano na katibu na mwenyekiti. Madhumuni ya mkutano ni kuthibitisha maelezo. Baada ya ukaguzi, mtafiti nitayaondoa daftari kutoka katibu kundi na kuhifadhi salama kwa ajili ya uchambuzi baadaye data na tathmini ya matokeo.

UWEZAKANO HATARI/ RISKI AU KUTOJISIKIA VEMA

Kulingana na taratibu zitakazotumika kwa kufanya utafiti huu, hakuna hatari/riski yoyote ay dalili za mshiriki kutokujisikia vizuri kutokana na yale yatakayojadiliwa. Mtafiti atafanya kila juhudi iwezekanavyo kulinda washiriki na data zitakazopatikana kutoka kwenye mjadala wa vikundi. Ni dhahiri kwa vile kila mshiriki atasikia lisemwalo katika kundi, mtafiti hatakuwa na uwezo wa kuwadhhibitishia washiriki usiri. Kwa sababu hii wewe kama mshiriki unaombwa kwa dhati, kushirikiana katika kudumisha usiri wa hali ya juu. Hata hivyo, washiriki wataombwa kusema tu yale wanayoona kuwa jambo la kawaida kushirikisha katika makundi. Mambo mengine ambayo wataona kuwa ni muhimu kwa utafiti huu wanaweza kuyashirikisha kwa mtafiti kwa muda utakaotolewa kwa watu binafsi.

FAIDA ZA UTAFITI KWA WASHIRIKI NA JAMII

Utafiti huu unaofaida kadhaa kwa washiriki wake na kwa jamii kwa ujumla hasa jamii kwa maana ya shule. Kwanza, washiriki watapata maarifa muhimu kuhusu wao wenyewe na shule zao. Utafiti itaonyesha uhalisia wa maisha ya watoto watokao katika mazingira magumu mashuleni. Washiriki watajifunza jambo muhimu kuhusu changamoto mbalimbali katika jitihada za kuelimisha watoto hawa na mikakati mipya ya kupambana na changamoto hizo na nyinginezo. Washiriki watapata nafasi ya kutoa maoni yao kuhusu swala zima la kumwelimisha mtoto atokaye katika mazingira magumu na kwa pamoja kujaribu kubuni mbinu mpya za kumsadia mtoto kijamii, kisaikolojia na na pia mbinu za ufundishaji ambazo zote ni muhimu katika kuboresha mchakato wa kuelimisha na komboa watoto wanaoishi katika mazingira magumu. Washiriki wataweza pia kufaidika kwa kujifunzakutoka kwa washiriki wengine juu ya mitazamo yao kuhusu swala zima la kuboresha elimu kwa watoto hawa. Halikadhalika, washiriki wanaweza pia

kufaidika kwa kubadilishana mawazo ambayo yatawasaidia katika kuboresha njia za ufundishaji na pia namna ya kuwezakuwasaidia watoto katika mahitaji ya kijamii na kielimu. Kwa majadiliano haya, washiriki wajenga mbinu mpya za kufundisha kwa namna ambayo kila mtoto atanufaika kwa namana yake.

FIDIA KWA USHIRIKI

Hakutakuwa compensations za kifedha kwa ajili ya kushiriki katika utafiti huu. Hata hivyo mtafiti atatoa viburudisho kama vile vinywaji na vitafunio kwawashiriki wote.

KUSHIRIKISHWA MATOKEO YA UTAFITI

Matokeo ya utafiti huu yatashirikishwa kwa washiriki wote baada ya zoezi zima kukamilika na mtafiti kurejea nchini. Ripoti itatolewa kwa ufupi. Pia ni mategemeo ya mtafiti kuwa baada ya kuhitimu masomo na kurejea nyumbani Tanzania, atafika tena Singida kwa madhumuni ya kutoa semina au warsha kwa wakufunzi wote kama njia mojawapo ya kushirikisha matokeo ya utafiti huu. Nakala ya dissertation itatolewa kwa shule kwa ajili ya kumbukumbu na pia kutumika kama kitendea kazi katika juhudi za kuboresha elimu katika shule husika. Matokeo ya utafiti huu yanatarajiwa kupatikana Septemba 2014.

MATUMIZI YA DATA

Data hizi zinaweza kutumika katika machapisho ya baadaye na pia katika kutoa elimu kwa watu wengine.

HAKI YA WASHIRIKI UTAFITI

Kama una maswali yoyote au hoja kuhusu utafiti huu, unaweza kuwasiliana na msimamizi wangu wa kitaaluma, Dr Andrew Allen Simu: (519) 253-3000 Ext. xxxx
Email: aallen@uwindsor.ca au wasiliana nami kwa njia ya simu nambari x-xxx-xxx-xxxx au kwa barua pepe lekule@uwindsor.ca

Kama una maswali kuhusu haki zako kama mshiriki wa utafiti, wasiliana Utafiti wa Maadili Mratibu, Chuo Kikuu cha Windsor, Windsor, Ontario N9B 3P4; Simu: 519-253-3000, ext. xxxx; barua pepe: ethics@uwindsor.ca

Niliyoandika kwa ufafanuzi hapo juu ndiyo nitakayotekeleza kama taratiby za kuendesha utafiti huu. Nakala ya karatasi hii itabaki nawe kwa ajili ya kumbukumbu yako. Asante kwa kukubali kuchangia katika utafiti huu muhimu wenye lengo la kubuni mbinu mwafaka za kupambana na changamoto za kutoa elimu bora kwa wote.

SAINI YA Mtafiti

Sahihi ya Tarehe Mpelelezi

WASHIRIKI IDHINI

Kwa kutia saina fomu hii, nadhibitisha kuwa nimesoma na kuelewa maelezo yote yaliyojadiliwa hapo juu. Na kwa hiari yangu mwenyewe najitolea kushiriki katika majadiliano ya vikundi kama njia mojawapo ya kukusanya data kwa ajili ya utafiti huu. Naahidi kufuata utaratibu na masharti yote yakushiriki kama yalivyoelezwa katika fomu hii.

Jina la washiriki (Print): _____

Sahihi ya Mshiriki: _____

Appendix 12

Focus Group Guiding Questionnaire/Maswali Elekezi kwa Vikundi

1. How do you describe a vulnerable child? (*Unaweza kuelezeaje kuhusu mtoto anayeishi katika mazingira magumu?*)
2. What kind of example do we have at our school? (*Tolea mifano ya Watoto waishio katika mazingira magumu waliopo katika shule hii yetu*)
3. What do we know about our children who could be living in vulnerable conditions and come to attend our school? (*Tunajua nini kuhusu Watoto waishio katika mazingira magumu na wanahudhuria shule yetu?*).
4. What type of strategic steps do we take in meeting the learning needs of these children? (*Ni mikakati gani tumewahi kuchukua katika kusaidia Watoto hawa hapa shuleni kwetu?*)
5. How does what we know affect us and them? (*Je ni kwa jinsi gani hali ya Watoto waishio katika mazingira magumu inawadhiri wao na sisi katika kutekeleza wajibu wetu kama wakufunzi?*)
6. What do we do in relation to what we know? (*Kutokana nay ale tuyajuayo kuhusu Watoto waishio katika mazingira magumu na wapo shuleni mwetu ni hatua gani tumekwisha chukua ili kukabiliana nay ale tuyajuwayo?*)
7. How can we use what we know to plan for a better school experience for these children? (*Ni kwa jinsi gani tunaweza kutumia yale tunayoyajua ili kuboresha zaidi hali ya Watoto hawa hapa shuleni?*)
8. What kind of resources do we need? (*Ni vitendeakazi gani tunahitaji?*)
9. How do we allocate the resources? (*Tutapataje vitendea kazi hivyo?*)
10. How can we handle them successfully? (*Tutatumiaje vitendea kazi hivyo ili tuweze kuwa na mafanikio zaidi?*)

Appendix 13: Letter of Approval from the Office of Ethics and Research Board University of Windsor



Office of Research Ethics Board

Today's Date: February 13, 2013

Principal Investigator: Ms. Chrispina Lekule

REB Number: 30600

Research Project Title: REB# 13-001: Investigating School Experiences of Vulnerable Children in Singida, Tanzania: Challenges, Strategies and Possible Interventions

Clearance Date: February 13, 2013

Project End Date: October 22, 2014

Milestones:

Renewal Due-2014/01/15(Pending)

Renewal Due-2014/10/22(Pending)

This is to inform you that the University of Windsor Research Ethics Board (REB), which is organized and operated according to the Tri-Council Policy Statement and the University of Windsor Guidelines for Research Involving Human Subjects, has granted approval to your research project on the date noted above. This approval is valid only until the Project End Date.

A Progress Report or Final Report is due by the date noted above. The REB may ask for monitoring information at some time during the project's approval period.

During the course of the research, no deviations from, or changes to, the protocol or consent form may be initiated without prior written approval from the REB. Minor change(s) in ongoing studies will be considered when submitted on the Request to Revise form.

Investigators must also report promptly to the REB:

- a) changes increasing the risk to the participant(s) and/or affecting significantly the conduct of the study;
- b) all adverse and unexpected experiences or events that are both serious and unexpected;
- c) new information that may adversely affect the safety of the subjects or the conduct of the study. Forms for submissions, notifications, or changes are available on the REB website: www.uwindsor.ca/reb. If your data is going to be used for another project, it is necessary to submit another application to the REB. We wish you every success in your research.

Pierre Boulos, Ph.D.
 Chair, Research Ethics Board
 301 Assumption University
 University of Windsor
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APPENDIX 14: A Note of Research Permits from Tanzania

Along with the research approval from the University of Windsor Research Ethics Board, this study observed the protocols of conducting a research involving human beings by obtaining all permits as required by law in the United Republic of Tanzania.

The permits were obtained from the following:

1. Tanzania Commission for Science and Technology (COSTECH). Reference number 2013-39-NA-2013-15 on February 7, 2013
2. Regional Administration and Local Government. Reference number BA.381/391/01/171 on April 8, 2013
3. Singida Municipal Council. Reference number: HM/SI/K.20/30/VOL.I/174 on April 9, 2013

VITA AUCTORIS

Chispina Lekule earned her undergraduate degree in Education with Religious Studies from Marist International College in Nairobi, Kenya. After her graduation, Chispina worked as a secondary school teacher and school principal for 7 years on the Islands of Zanzibar, Tanzania.

She later earned a master's degree in Sociology of Social Responsibility from St. Cloud State University in Minnesota, United States. After her graduation, Chispina went on in the same university to pursue further studies in Educational Leadership and Administration. During her Master's programs, Chispina worked as; Graduate Teaching Assistant, Research Assistant, and was involved in different community outreach programs which aimed at improving the livelihood of the people; especially among minority groups.

In June 2010, Chispina left St. Cloud State University to pursue a PhD degree in Educational Studies at the University of Windsor in Ontario Canada. Chispina completed her Doctoral studies at the University of Windsor in February 2014. Chispina plans to return to Tanzania soon after her Graduation in June 2014 where she hopes to join the Faculty of Education at the St. Augustine University of Tanzania as a Lecturer/Assistant Professor.