

## ABSTRACT

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Education, and by extension teacher education is a dynamic process. It is usually influenced by changes in society which tend to create new demands. This dissertation sets out to research the challenges, implications and the way forward for the teaching profession in Kenya. This is a qualitative multiple case study of teacher education and the teaching profession and how people perceive it in Kenya. The brightest students shun teaching in Kenya. According to degree choices among high school leavers, the best students do not even consider teaching as a career. Yet, most parents want their children to have the best education, but they do not want them to be teachers. In the Kenyan situation, many students who take teaching do so as last resort, having failed to make it to other perceived lucrative careers.

This study aims at illuminating how high school students make career choices and how this influences their future professions in Kenya. By exploring different socio-cultural, and economic factors that influence different stages of students' career choice process, this study hopes to contribute to identifying the most appropriate

policies and practices in teacher education in Kenya. The study also illuminates students' and community's general perceptions of the teaching career and why teachers decide to stay or leave the profession. The research also looks at the free primary and secondary education programs and how they impact on the education sector, especially in regard to the freezing of employment of teachers in the public schools and the new (2010) controversial issue of contract teachers being recruited by the government of Kenya. Finally, this study gives recommendations on what might be done to improve teacher education in the country.

PERSPECTIVES ON THE TEACHING PROFESSION IN KENYA

By

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## Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	ii
Table of Contents .....	iii
List of Tables.....	viii
List of Figures .....	ix
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	1
Significance of the Study.....	10
Scope of the Problem.....	11
Purpose of the Study and Research Questions .....	13
Limitations of the Study.....	14
Chapter 2: Literature Review .....	16
Introduction.....	16
Training of Primary/Elementary School Teachers .....	17
Training of Secondary School Teachers .....	17
Training of Tutors for Teacher's Training Colleges .....	18
Conceptual Framework of Career Choice.....	19
Teaching as a Profession.....	28
Teaching and as a Last Resort.....	38
Teaching and Socio-Economic Status .....	41
Teacher Education and Training .....	45
Teacher Education and ICT .....	48
Economic Issues in the Teaching Profession .....	50
Supply and Demand.....	50
Deployment and Recruitment of Teachers.....	52
Teachers Retention and Attrition.....	55
Social Issues and Teaching .....	60
Teacher Education and Corruption.....	60
Teacher Education and Ethnicity.....	63
Unprofessional Behavior.....	64
Gender and Teacher Education.....	67
Governance.....	69
Demoralized Teachers.....	70
Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT) .....	72
Conclusion.....	73

Chapter 3: Research Design .....	75
Introduction .....	75
Qualitative Research Study .....	76
Case Study .....	78
Choosing Sample and Research Site .....	81
Methods of Data Collection .....	84
Researcher as an Instrument .....	85
Document Review .....	88
Qualitative Interviewing .....	89
Gaining Permission .....	91
Accessing the Field .....	92
Field Notes .....	93
Data Analysis and Interpretation Techniques .....	94
Credibility .....	98
Transferability .....	100
Ethical Considerations .....	102
Chapter 4: Career Choices among High School Students: Making or ‘Unmaking’ Future Generations? .....	104
Introduction .....	104
High school Profiles .....	105
Kaaga Boys’ High School .....	105
Kaaga Girls' High school .....	107
Participants Profile .....	109
Kelvin Mugambi .....	109
John Kioko .....	110
Patricia Mutwiri .....	112
Vivienne Wafula .....	112
Prof Kilemi Mwiria .....	114
The family and roles models .....	116
Family Socio-Economic Status (SES) and career choices .....	120
Peer Group Socialization .....	122
Male Circumcision, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and Education .....	124
The School as a Socializing Agent .....	130
Why High School Students do not want to be Teachers .....	133
Ways through which Information about Careers is Disseminated .....	136

Notice Boards .....	136
Guest Speakers .....	136
Career Conferences.....	137
Visits .....	137
Media .....	138
Career Information Booklet.....	138
Career Forms .....	138
Conclusion.....	140
Chapter 5: Teacher Education in Teachers' Training Colleges: Teaching as a Last Resort? .....	142
Introduction .....	142
Meru Teachers' College .....	143
Meru Teachers' College Profile .....	143
Deputy Principal .....	143
Meru Teachers' College Students .....	144
Steve Mash .....	145
Princilla Jep .....	145
Shadrack Muriuki. ....	146
Harriet Atieno .....	147
Current Status of Teacher Education .....	148
Why Teacher Trainees chose to be Teachers .....	149
Family, Community and Teacher Training.....	151
Peer Influence and Role Models in choosing Careers .....	154
Teachers' College Faculty Qualifications.....	156
Corruption and Teacher Education .....	158
Gender and Teacher Education .....	159
Teaching Practice .....	162
Conclusion.....	171
Chapter 6: University Education in Kenya: Dream or Reality?.....	173
Introduction .....	173
Kenya Methodist University Profile .....	173
Kenya Methodist University Participants .....	178
Dr. Jim Baariu .....	178
Hazel Oyanga .....	179
Lily Wambui.....	180

Antony Wangi.....	181
John Otieno.....	182
Status of University Education In Kenya.....	183
Joint Admission Board.....	187
Higher Education Loan Board.....	188
Commission for Higher Education .....	190
Parrallel Degree Programs .....	193
Mushrooming of Campuses .....	196
Why Students Chose to Train as Teachers at the University .....	198
How Students Choose Courses at the University .....	200
Conclusion.....	208
Chapter 7: Current Teachers: Teachers by Choice or Chance? .....	209
Introduction .....	209
Kaaga Primary School .....	209
Current Teachers Profile .....	210
Mr. Victor Mutuma.....	211
Ms. Sarah Kinya .....	211
Mr. Ben Kinyua .....	212
Ms. Monica Kubai .....	216
Mr. Ken Kanya .....	218
Mr. Maria Marete.....	220
How Teaching as a Profession is Perceived.....	223
How Current Teachers Chose their Careers.....	226
Gender and the Teaching Profession .....	230
Role of Teachers.....	235
Job (Dis)Satisfaction and Why Teachers would leave Teaching .....	238
Conclusion.....	245
Chapter 8: Former Teachers: Greener Pastures or Just ‘Quitters’?.....	246
Introduction .....	246
Former Teachers Profile .....	247
Ms. Lucia Ngai .....	247
Dr. Maci Nira.....	248
Mr. Japhet Kaberia.....	250
Ms. Faith Makena .....	251
Career Choices for Former Teachers .....	252

Family and Role Models .....	254
Why Former Teachers Left the Teaching Profession .....	257
Conclusion.....	262
Chapter 9: Conclusion and Recommendations .....	263
Introduction .....	263
Findings and Summaries.....	264
Policy Implications .....	269
Further Research.....	278
Appendix .....	280
Bibliography.....	297

## List of Tables

Table 1.1: Pre-Primary Enrollment.....	7
Table 1.2: Primary Enrollment.....	7
Table 1.3: Secondary Enrollment .....	8
Table 1.4: Tertiary Enrollment.....	8
Table 1.5: Government Expenditure on Education.....	9
Table 1.6: Distribution of Teachers (2006) .....	9
Table 2.1: Enrolments by Sex and Degree Program in Public Universities-1990-1995.....	24
Table 2.2: Reasons for Teacher Absence.....	58
Table 2.3: Common Forms of Corruption: District, School, and Classroom Level.....	61
Table 3.1: Participants in the Study.....	83
Table 5.1: Enrolment in All Public Teachers' Colleges.....	160
Table 6.1: Number of Public and Private Universities.....	184

## List of Figures

Fig 2.1: Conceptual Framework.....	20
Fig 2.2: Distribution of Kenyan Public University Students by Ethnic Origin.....	25
Fig 2.3: Key Issues in Teacher Supply and Demand.....	51

## Chapter 1: Introduction

Kenya is in the sub-Saharan region of Africa. According to the official 2009 population census figures released by the government in August 2010, there are 38,610,097 people in Kenya (Government of Kenya, 2010). The gross domestic product per capita is \$1,240, according to the World Bank (2008). Kenya was colonized by Britain and attained her independence in 1963. The official languages are Kiswahili and English. English is the medium of instruction in the institutions of learning, while Swahili is the national language spoken by all 42 tribes in the country. According to UNICEF (2007) Kenya has literacy rates of 80% for males and 81% for females, one of the highest literacy rates in the region.

Education is widely recognized as a key to national development in Kenya. Since independence, the government of Kenya has placed emphasis on the role of education in socio-economic development. As a result, the government has expanded access through opening more schools from the initial 6,058 primary and 151 secondary schools with enrollment of 891,553 and 30,121 pupils respectively in 1963. By 2004 there were 17,804 public and 1839 private primary schools with a total enrollment of 7,394,763 pupils (3,818,836 boys and 3,575,927 girls) and 3,621 public and 490 private secondary schools with a total enrollment of 923,134 students (489,006 boys and 434,128 girls). Kenya has 18 public teachers' training colleges (Government of Kenya, 2009)<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> There are 8 private teachers' colleges and it is difficult to give the exact number as they keep on increasing. The public teachers' colleges have been reducing because the government has been turning some of them into constituent colleges of the public universities such as Bondo and Narok in 2010. East African Standard-Retrieved on 03/26/10 from <http://www.standardmedia.co.ke/InsidePage.php?id=1144018793&cid=159&>

Kenya had one university in 1963 when the country attained independence. Today (2010) there are 7 public universities, 12 constituent colleges and campuses of the public universities, 11 Chartered private universities, 8 private universities with letter of interim authority and 4 private universities with certificates of registration, making a total of 42 public and private universities. One of the major challenges to this expansion has been equity and unrest in schools. The national education system has been characterized by ethnic tension; hence, one of the National Goals of Education is unity and peace (World Bank, 2008).

Education, traditional or modern shapes the destiny of society. Today, education is considered the critical software for development, but for it to play this role effectively there must be a cadre of competent teachers. The education program that prepares and supplies teachers to educational institutions in Kenya is called teacher education.

Education, and by extension teacher education, is a dynamic process. It is usually influenced by changes in society which tend to create new demands on it. These demands manifest themselves as emerging issues, problems or new perspectives in education. This research sets out to explore the challenges, implications and the way forward for teaching profession in Kenya. In order to have a good perspective of teaching profession in Kenya, there is need to look at how modern education has evolved over time in the country.

Before European colonialism, Africa and Kenya in particular had indigenous traditional education systems. Most of this education was informal and was based on oral traditions, because the art of writing had not been introduced. Traditional indigenous education in Africa was characterized by the interweaving of social, economic, political, cultural, and educational threads together. Education in this traditional African set up

therefore, cannot be separated from life itself. In this setting, education is a natural process by which children gradually acquire skills, knowledge and attitudes appropriate to life in their community.

In pre-colonial Kenya, education was generally supposed to be highly effective, as Moumuni (1968) notes:

The effectiveness of this education was possible because of its very close relationship with life. It was through social acts (production) and social relationship (family life, group activities) that education of the child or adolescents took place, so that he was instructed and educated simultaneously. To the extent that the child learned everywhere and all the time, instead of learning in circumstances determined in advance as to place and time, outside of the productive and social world, he was truly, in the “ school of life”, in the most concrete and real manner (29).<sup>2</sup>

An important aspect of education conceived of, in this way is that adults in the community become, in essence, teachers for any child with whom they come into contact.

The foundation of modern education in Kenya was laid down by the missionaries, who introduced reading to help spread Christianity. The early educational activities started in the mid 1800s along the coast of Kenya. The early missionaries established the first school in 1846 in Mombasa, marking the beginning of formal education in Kenya (Mukundi, 2004), which was by then a British colony. Education activities later expanded to the interior of the country after the construction of the Kenya-Uganda railway.

The colonial government commissioned the Frazer Report in 1909, which came up with a three-tier education system. The Frazer report recommended separate education systems for the whites, Asians and Africans. Education for the whites and Asians was intended to prepare the students for white-collar jobs, while Africans were equipped with skills for blue-collar jobs to enable them provide unskilled labor to the white dominated

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<sup>2</sup> Abdou, Moumuni, *Education in Africa* (New York: Praeger, 1968) p.29.

economy. After independence in 1963, Kenya inherited the colonial education system that was flawed. There was a shortage of skilled and middle level African workers including teachers. The immediate challenge to the newly independent government was to come up with an education system to redress this imbalance (Government of Kenya, 2004).<sup>3</sup>

The Kenya Education Commission was set up in 1964 to help promote social equality and national unity. The commission recommended that education facilities be located in marginalized areas, while at the same time respecting the religious convictions of the people of Kenya-this was to curb evangelical activities of the Christian missionary schools that the government inherited from the colonial regime. Over time, the education system in Kenya has undergone many reforms and key among them has been to increase access and ensuring quality.

Teacher education system in Kenya today includes early childhood development and education (ECDE), primary education, secondary education, technical and vocational education and training (TVET), middle-level colleges, which include teacher training colleges (TTCs), and university education. ECDE prepares children for primary education, which constitutes eight years. Secondary education comprises of four years,

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<sup>3</sup> After independence, the educational system in Kenya was structured on the British 7-4-2-3 model, with seven years of primary schooling, four years of secondary education and two years of advanced secondary education to be eligible for a 3-year university bachelor's degree program. Since the 1980s, following the Mackay Report (Republic of Kenya, 1981) there was a shift to the 8-4-4 system modeled on the American system with eight years of primary schooling followed by four years of secondary education and a four-year bachelor's degree program. The shift to 8-4-4 was completed in 1992 with the abolition of the 'A' level.

middle level colleges are mostly two or three years and university education is also four years.<sup>4</sup>

At the 1990 Education for All (EFA) meeting in Jomtien, Thailand, the international community committed itself to improving universal primary education (UPE) and achieving gender parity. The targets adopted in Jomtien were later reaffirmed at the World Education Forum held in Dakar, Senegal in 2000. Part of the ambitious plans by the world leaders was poverty reduction; the provision of UPE was adopted by the UN in September 2000 as part of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The MDGs require that countries provide a complete primary education for all children, reduce adult illiteracy and achieve gender parity at all levels of education by 2015 (GOK, 2009).

In January 2003, the newly elected National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) Government of Kenya took steps towards the achievement of the MDGs by eliminating fees in all public primary schools. As a result approximately 1.3 million new children were enrolled in primary schools in January 2003. In 2008, the Kenyan government introduced free secondary education. This expansion increased demand for teachers and other facilities like books and classrooms. Since, the Structural adjustments programs introduced in Kenya by the World Bank in the 1990s and early 2000s, there has been a freeze on recruitment of public servants including teachers. Therefore, the increase in enrollments in both the primary and secondary schools in Kenya have not been matched

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<sup>4</sup> The various levels of classes commonly referred as “Standards, forms or classes” are the equivalent of ‘grade’ in the US. Teachers’ certificate course takes 2 years in two year teachers’ training colleges; a diploma takes three years in a middle level diploma teachers’ college. It takes four years to graduate with a degree in education from a four year university.

with an increase in teacher recruitment, leading to overcrowded classes and lowering of education quality (GOK, 2009).<sup>5</sup>

The following tables summarize education statistics in Kenya by 2007. As shown in the Table 1.1, though the government does not have free pre-primary education for children in Kenya, the enrollment by 2007 was 50% for boys and 48% for girls. As shown in the Table 1.2, 86% of both boys and girls were enrolled in primary schools by 2007. By the same year, 42% of girls and 46% of boys were enrolled in secondary schools (Table 1.3).

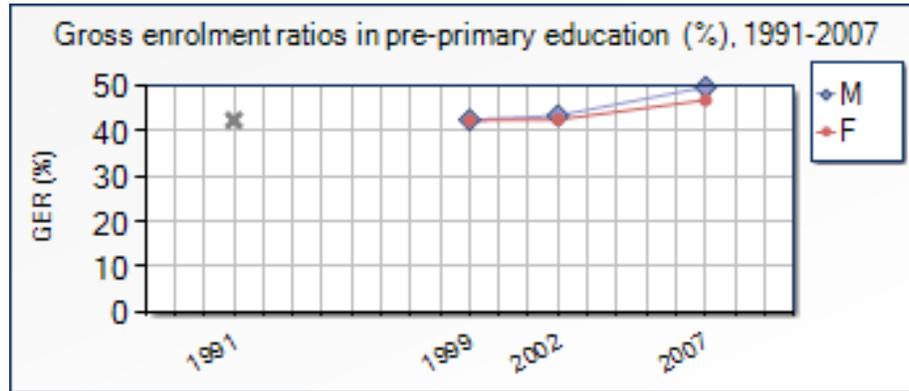
According to the estimate by UIS, only 4% of boys and 2% of girls have access to tertiary/post-secondary institutions (Table 1.4). From Table 1.5, 17.9% of the total government revenue goes to education, secondary and tertiary education receives the least allocation 27% and 16 % respectively. In the same table, the estimates of 46:1 pupil/teacher ratio are on the low side, because the enrollments in Kenya went up after the 2003 Free Primary Education (FPE) and the 2008 Free Secondary Education (FSE)<sup>6</sup>. Table 1.6 shows the number of teacher at every level of education. The primary level has the biggest share of teachers-174, 576.

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<sup>5</sup> Despite the introduction of FPE and FSE, the major constraint to enrollment in schools remains financial barriers. The “free” education is not free completely, because there are other hidden fees, e.g. exam fee, activity fee, boarding fee for high schools. The government only pays teachers’ salaries and allows schools to levy fees of certain amounts. FPE and FSE were election promises prior to 2003 elections and the government wanted to keep the promises, but realized there wasn’t enough money.

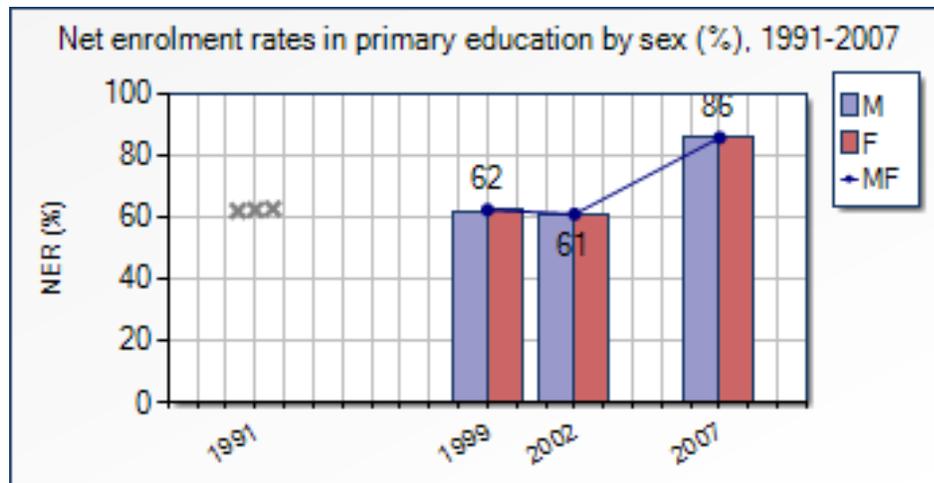
<sup>6</sup> The tables are derived from UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS). Retrieved on 11/11/2009, from <http://stats.uis.unesco.org/unesco/tableviewer/document.aspx?ReportId=143>

**Table 1.1: Pre-Primary Enrollments**



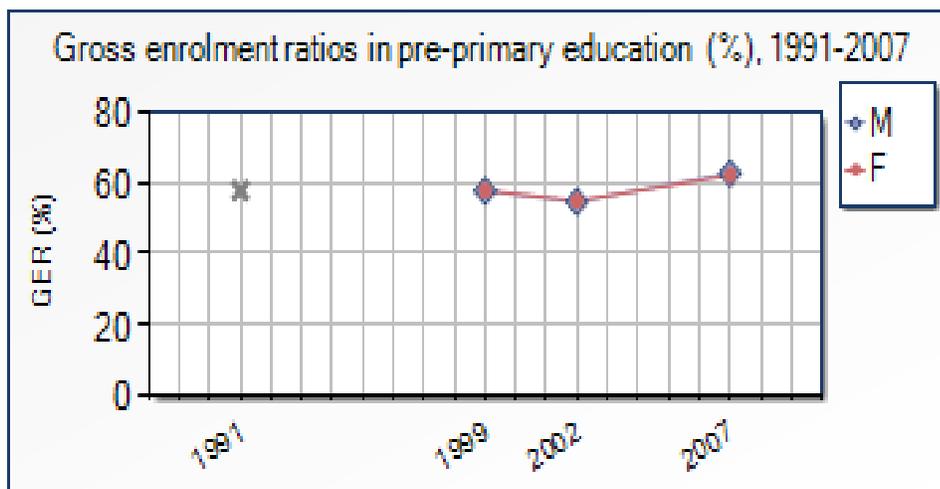
Source: UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS)

**Table 1.2: Primary Enrolments**



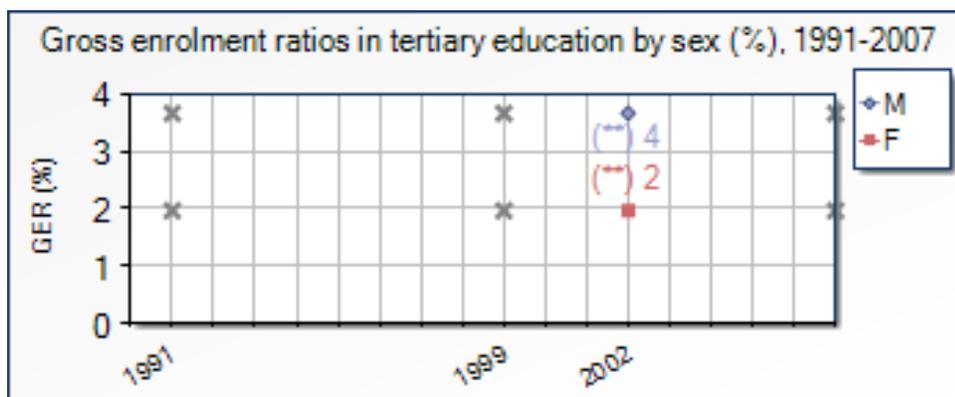
Source: UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS)

**Table 1.3: Secondary Enrolments**



Source: UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS)

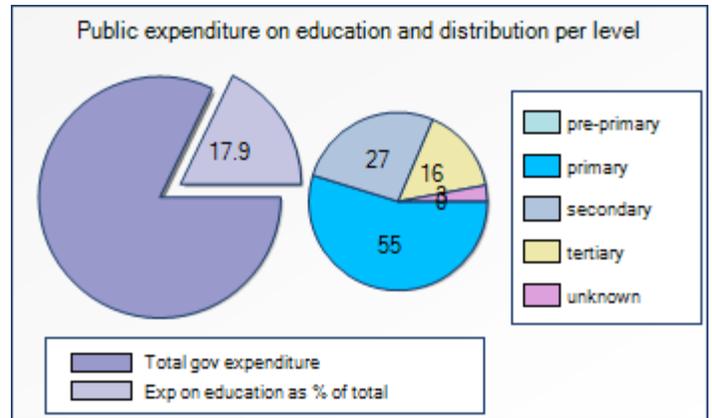
**Table 1.4: Tertiary Enrolments**



Source: UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS)

**Table 1.5: Government spending on the education sector**

Pupil / teacher ratio (primary)	(**)	46
Public expenditure on education :		
as % of GDP	(2006)	7.0
as % of total government expenditure	(2005)	17.9
Distribution of public expenditure per level (%) - 2006 :		
pre-primary		0
primary		55
secondary		27
tertiary		16
other		3



Source: UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS)

**Table 1.6: Distribution of Teachers (2006)**

Category	Number
Teachers on duty (Primary)	174,576
Teachers on duty (Secondary)	48,425
Teachers on duty (Tertiary Institutions)	3313
Teachers on duty (Special Institutions)	4475
Teachers under discipline	1419
Teachers on study leave	2533
Reported death cases	259
<b>Total</b>	<b>235,000</b>

Source: Teachers Service Commission.

The estimates for the literacy rates in Kenya according to UNICEF (2010) for youth (15–24 years) in 2003–2009 was male 80% and female 81%. The girls seem to have overtaken the boys in literacy.

### **The Significance of the Study**

In Kenya, Africa and worldwide, there is a growing concern that schools must change to meet the demands of rapidly changing demographics, the globalization of the economy, as well as the technological and cultural changes. There is much agreement that the teacher is the key figure in any changes that are needed (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005).

There is an increased demand for learning, especially in the developing countries. The challenge is how best to meet this rising demand while ensuring that the nature and types of learning respond to needs in a cost effective manner. There is a recognition that teachers play a central role in efforts aimed at improving the functioning of education systems and raising learning outcomes. But sometimes government policies do not consistently reflect this awareness. This study aims to illuminate issues related to the economic and social aspects of teaching as a profession and come up with possible practical solutions. There has been very little research done in teacher education in Kenya and Africa generally, and the little which has been done is by western scholars and researchers, which might have missed some of the insiders' perspectives of the problems. This problem is further compounded by the fact that most of the research done by the African scholars has not been published or is just shelved in the libraries (most of the literature review in this study is from western scholars). Partly, this could be explained by poor funding in institutions of higher learning in Africa.

In 2007, Kenya developed an economic plan that indicated the nation's goal of being an industrialized country by 2030. Kenya Vision 2030 is the country's new development blueprint covering the period 2008 to 2030. It aims at making Kenya a newly industrializing, middle-income country providing high quality life for all its citizens by the year 2030. The Vision has been developed through an all-inclusive stakeholder consultative process, involving Kenyans from all parts of the country. The vision is based on three pillars namely; the economic pillar, the social pillar and the political pillar. This economic blue print cannot be achieved without implementing measures in the education sector, which falls under the social pillar. This pillar is the base of all the pillars and the foundation of the whole economic plan. Modernization of teacher training is enlisted as one of the measures to be undertaken. Elementary and secondary education has been emphasized at the expense of teacher education and higher education in Kenya (Kenya Vision, 2030).

### **Scope of the Problem**

This study explores how and why people perceive the teaching profession the way they do today in Kenya. It also examines what influences high school students to choose or not choose teaching as a career. Finally, the study also tries to unearth the reasons why some trained teachers leave the profession and provides recommendations on what might be done to improve teacher education in the country.

A study on Anglophone countries in Africa by the World Bank (2010) indicated that entry to teacher training was mostly based on test scores:

The academic performance required to enter teacher training was quite low, and in some cases declining. As a result of the poor perceptions of the teaching career, teacher training tended to absorb the school leavers who had failed to get places in other higher education courses. The teaching courses had particular difficulty in

attracting sufficient students with qualifications in mathematics and science. The poor educational standard of entrants presented quality problems, reflected in high failure rates in some cases (p.4).

The report further points out that the teacher training curriculum in countries where the study was done indicated that it was not always well matched to the needs of student teachers. First, training in pedagogical methods was often theoretical, making it less likely to have an impact on classroom practices. Second, teaching of the content knowledge was often not closely aligned to the school curriculum. Third, the difficulties were often compounded by students' poor proficiency in English.

In Kenya, the teaching profession is perceived negatively by many people. This is because the students who join the profession are mostly those who failed to secure the more prestigious careers like medicine and engineering. This has a big impact on the education system in the country because parents expect their children to be taught by the best teachers, yet they do not want their children to be teachers. Teaching has been associated with low social economic status, since the rich can afford to take their children to good schools and in-turn they get high test scores which enable them enroll in prestigious courses.

With the introduction of the Free Primary Education (FPE) in 2003, there has been expanded enrollment in both primary and secondary schools in Kenya. There has not been a commensurate increase in recruiting teachers, leading to overcrowded classes and overload of teachers.

Teachers who wish to teach in Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs) train for bachelor of education degree (bachelor of education, B. ED-primary option), but many in teachers' training colleges are holders of bachelor of education-secondary option. This is

a big problem, because the secondary schools teachers are ill trained to handle teacher training colleges. The high school teachers are better equipped in teaching secondary schools and not teachers' colleges.

There is another tendency in Kenya of posting teachers (especially principals) who have not been performing well in the secondary schools to the TTCs. This is because some of the principals are demoted and are ashamed to remain in high schools so they request to be transferred to TTCs. TTCs have been viewed as dumping grounds of underperforming high school principals and heads of departments, hence lowering the rigor of teacher training.<sup>7</sup>

Therefore, the scope of the problem will include how teaching is perceived, teachers trained and working conditions of teachers, and how these factors contribute to teachers leaving the profession. This study examines key issues facing teaching profession, trying to design and redefine teacher policies for the development of sustainable quality education. This study was carried out in educational institutions in Kagaa village-Meru North Imenti district in Eastern province of Kenya.

### **Statement of Purpose and Research Questions**

The purpose of this dissertation is to explore how high school students make career choices and how this influences their future professional lives. The study further aims at examining how the teaching profession is perceived, what makes trained teachers leave teaching and how teacher education can be improved in the country. This qualitative study draws on interviews and observations and seeks to illuminate how and why these students choose and reject some careers.

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<sup>7</sup> I discuss the issues of high school principals further in chapter 5.

The study was guided by the following Research Questions:

1. How is the teaching profession perceived?
2. What influences students to choose or not choose teaching as career?
3. What makes teachers stay or leave the profession?

### **Limitations to the Study**

Some of the limitations to this study were the small and select sample of schools, teachers, students and the duration I stayed in the field. I felt that if I had a larger sample and I stayed longer than the three months I was there, I would have gathered more information, which could have given me better perspective of teaching profession in Kenya. I went to Kaaga primary school, where teacher trainees were stationed for one school term (three months) teaching practice or internship, and I thought if I would have observed all the internships (the student teachers' have three internships) followed and interviewed more of the student trainees back in college, I would have gained more in-depth information.

When I was going to the field, I was convinced that being an insider in the teacher education field (I have been a teacher trainee in Kenya for 17 years-I provide more information about this in chapter 3) was an advantage, but realized that this could also be a disadvantage. There are many things I assumed I knew, only to realize that there were many changes which had taken place within those five years I have been here in the US and absent from the scene. For instance, I had a presumption that Kenyan teachers, especially in primary schools were still the conservative type who feared modern

technology i.e. computers in teaching but I was surprised to find out how ignorant I was! Many teachers today are technology savvy and even old teachers have embraced the use of the new technology in their teaching. Another limitation was the fact that sometimes I had to contend with old data because more recent ones were not available. In some schools, the timetable was very rigid and getting scheduled to interview students or teachers was very difficult. I had to schedule interview meetings sometimes after classes and on weekends and evenings. Finally, I felt disadvantaged going to the field without any funding, which meant I minimized my traveling and the sample size.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

### **Introduction**

The literature review focuses on the teaching profession in Kenya and how it is viewed by high school students, teacher trainees and the public in general. It pays particular attention to the how and why of career choices by high school students and the factors that influences their career paths. It reflects on training and employment of teachers. The review also examines the economic issues affecting the teaching profession, namely supply and demand, retention and attrition of teachers in Kenya. Finally, the review explores social issues affecting teacher education in Kenya. These include corruption, unprofessional behavior, gender, governance, ethnicity, demoralizing of teachers, and trade unions.

Education and training play a crucial role in helping individuals and societies to adapt to social, economic and cultural change, and foster the development of the human capital needed for economic growth. The ability of education and training systems to fulfill these roles depends on whether educational institutions themselves respond to change, and on whether teachers develop and deliver educational content in ways that meet the needs of the country.

Policy makers and society at large have high expectations of teachers as professionals, role models and community leaders. Teachers are asked to manage the far-reaching changes that are taking place in and outside schools and to implement the complex reforms of education systems that are under way in Kenya, especially after the

introduction of the Free Primary Education (FPE) in 2003. Training of enough teachers is necessary to expand access to primary and secondary education and ensure that students receive quality education.

**Training of primary/elementary school teachers.** There are eighteen public primary teachers' colleges in Kenya. All students admitted to teacher training colleges must hold the Kenyan Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) grade C Plain and have completed four years of secondary education. The teacher training curriculum is designed by the Kenya Institute of Education (KIE) and the course lasts two years, at the end of which students are awarded a P1 Certificate, depending on their success in centrally set examinations. By 2006 there were 174, 576 teachers on duty in the primary schools (GOK, 2009).<sup>8</sup>

**Training of secondary school teachers.** Training of secondary school teachers is carried out at two levels. In universities, undergraduate teachers are trained for four years and attain the bachelor of education degree (B.ED). Undergraduates holding other bachelors degree in other fields take a one-year post-graduate diploma course in education. Teachers are also trained at diploma colleges. The three-year course leads to a diploma in education. Public and private universities both train secondary teachers. Kenya Technical Teacher Training College (KTTC) is a major institution training technical teachers for secondary and other middle-level technical institutions. By 2006 there were 48,425 secondary school teachers (GOK, 2009).

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<sup>8</sup> P1 refers to primary 1, which is a certificate given to teachers after training for two years. There has been p2 and p3 but these have been phased out, because they were issued to teacher trainees who had been enrolled for training with lesser grade.

**Training of tutors for teachers' training colleges.** There are few teachers who have formal training for teacher training colleges (TTC). Teachers who wish to teach in TTCs train for bachelor of education degree (B.ED-primary option), but many in TTCs are holders of bachelor of education-Secondary option. (GOK, 2004) This is one of the problems facing teacher education, as I explained earlier in the scope of the problem. Such areas of concern will be explored further in the study.

By 2008, there were 169,360 teachers in public primary schools, and according to staffing needs of the ministry of education there was need for 216, 714 teachers for this level. This translates to a shortfall of 47, 534 teachers. In the public secondary schools, there were 56,007 and the required were 72 354 leaving a shortage of 17,348 teachers (GOK, 2009).<sup>9</sup>

Teaching as a profession offers few opportunities for career development, is one of the most poorly paid careers in Kenya, and is therefore not a preferred choice of many high school leavers. Unlike in the past when trained teachers were guaranteed employment by the government upon graduation, most of them today have to compete for the few vacancies in the public schools. Despite the lack of automatic employment by the government upon graduation, the relatively low tuition charged by the public TTCs make them attractive to poor parents to enroll their children (Mukundi, 2004).

There is limited literature on teacher training in Kenya and whatever there is, comes from western scholars. The reason is because research has been given a back seat in Kenya and many African countries due to lack of funding and emphasis on teaching at the expense of research. Funding and lagging behind in information and communication

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<sup>9</sup> There is very little data on private schools staffing and therefore for most of my study I will deal with public schools.

technology has made publishing difficult and most of the research in Africa gathers dust on the shelves of the African universities' libraries. Many studies are not published in reputable journals or the internet. When researching on my topic, this was one of the limitations of the study as I had to rely on the few books that I was able to access in the libraries in the US and over the internet. Due to poor remuneration, most of the qualified scholars and researchers have left for better pay in European and North American universities.

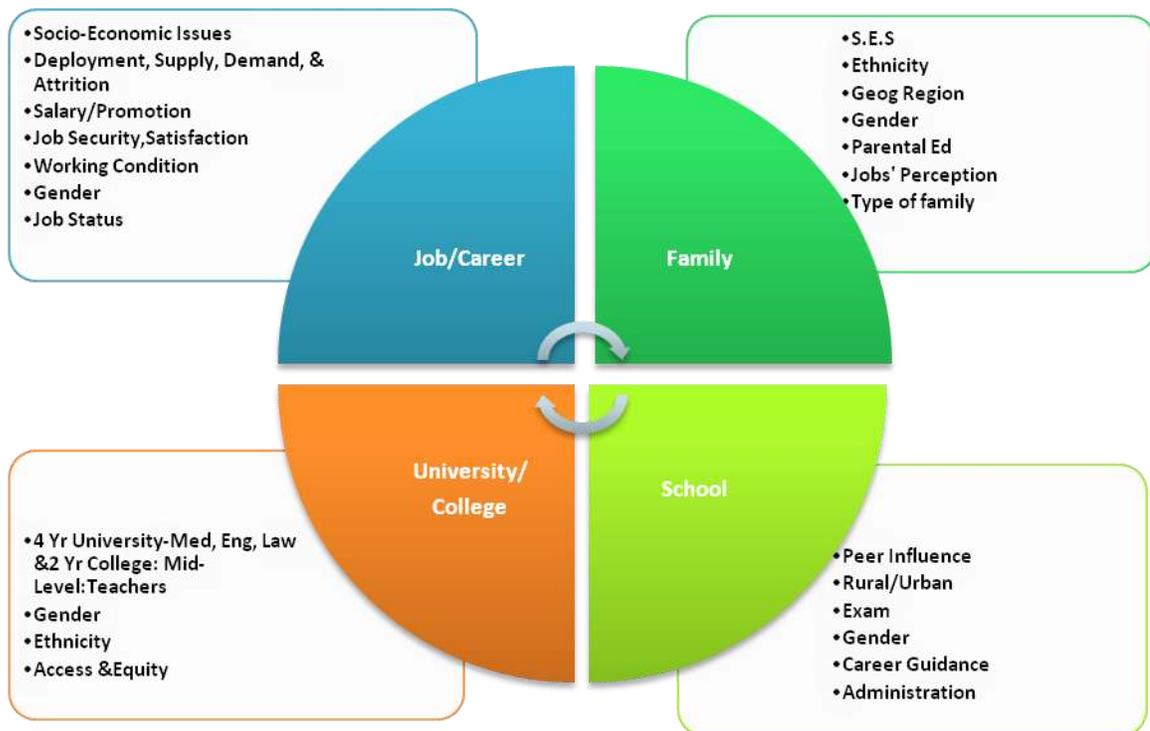
### **Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework has been developed to show the relationship between family, school, university or college training and the job that one takes later in their professional life. This presentation explores a conceptual framework of human resource development in the education sector for supporting the analysis and implementation of teacher policies and systems. This study examines key issues facing teacher education trying to design and redefine teacher policies for the development of sustainable quality education. There are several crosscutting issues which influence the career that one takes in Kenya. These include ethnicity, geographical region where the students come from and where schools are located, and gender. In order to understand teacher education programs and the teaching profession, we have to understand them within the framework of ethnic and the gender discrimination and exploitation suffered by a vast majority of the population in Kenya.

In the conceptual framework, I trace the academic journey of students from their home (family), to school and how they choose subjects and careers, to colleges and universities and later to the job market. This was done by examining perceptions,

attitudes and experiences of students at different times in the training process, after they graduate and become teachers. The emphasis was on those who choose teaching, trying to understand the underlying factors for the choices they make. I also examine why some of those who start in the teaching profession, change jobs later in their professional life. In figure 2:1 below, I explore the crosscutting and interwoven variables determining the factors that influence students, starting from their family backgrounds and moving to school, college or university, and later to the jobs they get.

**Fig 2.1: Conceptual Framework for Career Choice**



**Family.** In the context of education in Kenya, the forms of parental expectations, obligations, and social networks that exist within the family, school, and community are important for student success (especially exam performance). These variations in academic success can be attributed to parents' expectations and obligations for educating

their children; to the network and connections between families whom the school serves; to the disciplinary and academic climate at school; and to the cultural norms and values that promote student efforts (Choti, 2009).

There are disparities in students' educational performance among different groups of people in Kenya. This disparity leads to different career choices, with some students taking high profile careers like medicine and others taking low profile careers like teaching as a last resort.

Children from single-parent families or with larger numbers of siblings are more likely to drop out of high school because of poverty. As new structures of the household in modern society become more prevalent, many traditional African linkages and activities that provided social capital for the next generation are no longer present, and their absence may be detrimental to children's learning and ultimately, their career choices (Coleman, 1989).

Parents have a great influence on the schooling and career choices of their children as Gao (2008) notes:

Parents play an important role in shaping students' attitude toward schooling in general and higher education in specific. Students with parents who had college experiences and strongly encourage the student to attend college are more likely to be planning to go to college. Of course, parental knowledge and expectations can be effective only if the student can take advantage of this (p.46)

Parents' level of education also matters, especially the education of the mother. The educated parents would like their children to go to good schools and have better careers.

**The school environment.** The type of high school, whether rural or urban, boys or girl school, high cost or low cost, private or public-directly influences the exam performance of students. However, there are other intervening variables like parental demands, societal expectations, peer and role model which influence Kenya Certificate of Secondary Exam (K.C.S.E) performance and the type of career students choose to pursue in college or university.

The individual choice of career by high school students will also be influenced by the career guidance the students get in school. Therefore, the career guidance teachers play a vital role in shaping the future careers of the students. At the school level, disciplinary climate and academic norms established by the school community and the mutual trust between home and school highly influence the students. According to Coleman (1989):

In schools ....each individual gets an opportunity to escape from the limitations of the social group in which he was born, and come into contact with a broader environment (p.6).

Administration of the school determines its performance. The head teachers (HTs) in public schools are selected by the government, but this process is not always open. The selection exercise of head-teachers has been criticized, especially by the trade unions due to corruption. Many head teachers are promoted through corruption and ethnic considerations, locking out competent teachers. Corruption, ethnicity and nepotism have a gender dimension, whereby deserving women teachers are left out of the promotions to leadership positions because of a patriarchal system in Kenya. A majority of the head

teachers are male in both primary and secondary schools. Gender is further explored in the literature review and several upcoming chapters.

**University/College prestige.** There are 7 public universities, 12 constituent colleges of public universities, and 23 private universities in Kenya, making a total of 42 universities. Public universities include: Egerton University, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, Kenyatta University, Moi University, Maseno University, Masinde Muliro University, and the University of Nairobi. The high performers at Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) are admitted to do prestigious courses like medicine, engineering and law in public universities (sponsored by the government), while the poor performers will take courses in two-three year middle level colleges or will be admitted in private universities which are not as highly rated as the public ones. Those who fail to make good grades resort to teaching which takes lower grades (Mwiria et al, 2007).

Gender is a major factor when it comes to careers and education, especially in institutions of higher learning in Kenya, as Prof Kilemi Mwiria, Assistant Minister for Higher Education, Science and Technology observes:

In Kenya, as in other African countries, the proportion of female enrolment declines as females move up the educational ladder. As a result, slightly less than one-third of the 6 % of secondary school students who secure admission to public universities on government sponsorship are female. A look at female and male enrolment in the public universities reveals that female students represent only 30 per cent of the students in the public universities (Mwiria et al. 2007, p.34).

Table 2.1 below indicates the sex distribution of enrollment by degree programs from 1990 to 1995.<sup>10</sup>

**Table 2.1: Enrollment by Sex and Degree Programs in Public Universities, 1990–95**

Degree Program	Number Of Students		Percentages	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
<b>Education</b>	37,932	19,320	66.3	33.7
<b>Humanities</b>	37,488	11,405	76.7	23.3
<b>Natural Science</b>	15,037	2,466	85.9	14.1
<b>Agriculture</b>	12,875	1,851	87.4	12.6
<b>Engineering</b>	7,974	1,139	87.5	12.5
<b>Medicine</b>	3,416	837	80.3	19.7
<b>Total</b>	114,722	37,018	75.6	24.4

Source: Generated from Joint Admissions Board records, 2002.

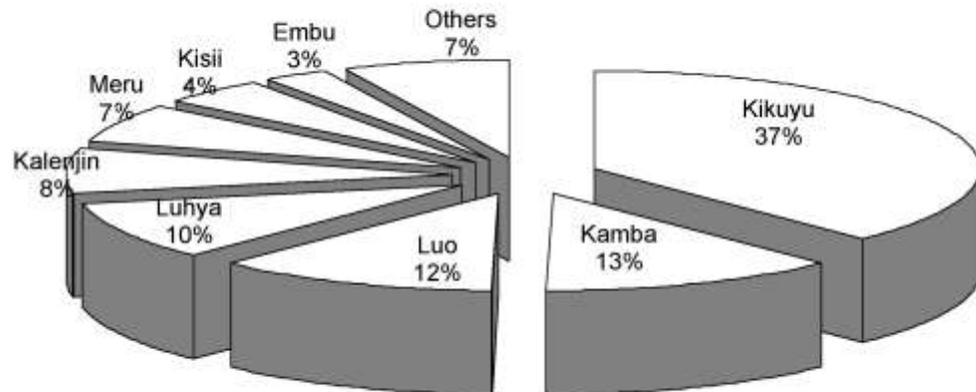
Female students' under-representation is more pronounced in medicine, engineering and agricultural degree programs. The degree programs that attracted most women were: education (33.7 %; but 52.2% of all women were enrolled in education), humanities (23.3 %), natural sciences (14.1 %), agriculture (12.6%), engineering (12.5%) and medicine (19.7%) (Mwiria et al, p.37).

I now turn to ethnicity and how it influences education in Kenya. Figure 2.2, below shows the different ethnic groups in the country and their percentage in enrolments in the public universities.

<sup>10</sup> I have used these old data because they are the most recent that I could access.

**Figure 2.2: Distributions of Kenyan Public University Students by Ethnic**

**Origin**



Source: British Council (1996).

Mwiria et al (2007), note that there is regional and ethnic imbalance on access and admission to public universities in Kenya due to colonialism:

Members of those communities that made the earliest and more stable contacts with the European settlers, missionaries and colonial authorities have tended to enjoy greater access to formal higher educational opportunities than their counterparts in other regions, with students from the arid and semi-arid land (ASAL) zones of the country being the most under-represented in the public universities (p.32).

Apart from their early contacts with Europeans, the large presence of the Kikuyu group in the public university system reflects their numerical strength in the country; they are the largest single ethnic group, at 22% of the population. Kenya has 42 tribes and the rest of the biggest ethnic groups and their proportion include Luhya 14%, Luo 13%,

Kalenjin 12%, Kamba 11%, Kisii 6%, Meru 6%, other African 15%, non-Africans (Asians, Europeans, and Arabs) 1%.<sup>11</sup>

There are geographical, regional and developmental factors that selectively promote higher education among the Kikuyu community, so that they are over-represented in the university system and the “better careers” compared with other large ethnic groups, who are under-represented. For example, the biggest public and private universities-public universities like University of Nairobi, Kenyatta University and Jomo Kenyatta University, private ones like United States International University and Catholic University of East Africa are all situated in the heartland of the Kikuyu community. The community is economically advantaged, hence its big numerical student presence at the universities and dominance in the best (perceived) careers like medicine, engineering and law (Mwiria et al, 2007, p.33). This numerical strength in the universities translates in the Kikuyus and other major tribes dominating the perceived “better” jobs, leading to more marginalization of the already underdeveloped areas. The recent referendum on the Constitution which was overwhelmingly passed on August, 27 2010, with 70% vote was in support of the new order in the running of the government. Those who voted for the new Constitution dispensation had hopes that it will correct this inequality and marginalization, the hall mark of the pre-colonial and post-colonial Kenya.

**Expectations toward jobs and careers.** After a university or college degree, the graduates will look for jobs in their fields; those who trained as teachers but never wanted to be in the profession change jobs or pursue further training to change to different career

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<sup>11</sup> Source; CIA-World Fact Book-can be accessed at <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/2075.html?countryName=&countryCode=ke&regionCode=5?countryCode=ke#ke>

after getting employment. The working conditions slow or lack of promotion, low salaries, and heavy work load are partly reasons why some teachers leave the teaching profession or seek further education to change professions. However, many teachers prefer to stay in the teaching profession because of job security, free time and love for the job.

Teaching was viewed as a noble profession in the 1970s and the 1980s.<sup>12</sup> This started changing in the 1990s with the introduction of the market economy, where careers were seen as an important springboard to earn good money and accumulate wealth. The status of teaching started to be watered down, because the educators were earning low salaries compared to other professionals. During the pre-colonial and immediate post-colonial period in Kenya, teachers were highly regarded and respected, and were given the title of “Mwalimu”.<sup>13</sup> Later, the title changed to “Ka-Mwalimu” especially for primary school teachers who were earning very low salaries. Teachers were seen as lowly paid civil servants who could not afford decent clothes and living and some would sometimes resort to drinking Chang’aa (cheap liquor), since they could not afford the standard more expensive beer.

Many young students did not aspire to be like their teachers because of the picture portrayed by some of them in the 1990s. Hence many students aspired to become lawyers, engineers and doctors, which are perceived as more prestigious careers and better paid. To some extent, this perception of teachers persists even today, although it has slightly improved after the government increased salaries of teachers. In addition,

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<sup>12</sup> I was a high school and college teacher in Kenya and some of my colleagues taught in the 70s and 80s and they told me of their salaries and the respect the teaching profession had then.

<sup>13</sup> Swahili word for teacher. In a derogatory or demeaning form Ka-mwalimu, means that poor teacher.

many of the teachers have enrolled themselves into degree programs and graduating in great numbers, with the possibilities of earning better pay and promotions.

The conceptual framework illuminates the relationship between the various issues at play when it comes to career choices, schooling and employment: namely the family, school, and university/college and job opportunities. Therefore, I theorize that schools are influenced by family, ethnicity and community and the students are in turn influenced by their school in making career choices for the jobs that they take later in their lives. In addition, their careers have impact on their families and community once they leave school. More references of the above issues and conceptual framework are further explored in the literature review.

## **Teaching as a Profession**

**Career choice.** Among high school students in Kenya, the best academic performers are exposed to the expectations of the careers the society expects them to undertake. So, they only pick their majors for the purposes of being in conformity with societal expectations, and not necessarily choosing what they actually want to pursue in college. An important concern, however, is why the students get fixated with certain careers. I would like to examine literature available about career choices in Kenyan secondary schools and what makes students choose certain careers over others. Before providing details on students' career students career choice, I would like to give a brief overview of this relatively new field in Kenya and how it has evolved.

The Koech report (1999) also referred to as the report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Education System of Kenya, recognized the contribution of the guidance and counseling in the Ministry of Education (MOE) which was initiated in 1970s.

Guidance and counseling was providing effective services to secondary schools and teacher training colleges as well as being able to conduct in-service courses for primary school head teachers in various districts. In addition, the unit developed a useful career guidance booklet for use by secondary school students when filling in career application forms (GOK, 1999).

With the establishment of career guidance in schools a student is assisted to discover his/her potentialities and develop them. Students are also enlightened on career opportunities after school and the requirements for each career. The Ministry of Education updates the career information on a yearly basis recognizing the upcoming colleges and universities where students can proceed for appropriate courses after secondary school education (GOK 2004).

Currently, career guidance is offered in all secondary schools in Kenya and it is expected that all students are well versed with their potentials, and requirements of various occupations. This information enables them to make appropriate choices of the courses to pursue after secondary school consequently leading to their future occupations.

**Career guidance in secondary schools.** Career guidance in secondary school is a unit offered by the departments of guidance and counseling, which is headed by the career master-a senior teacher in-charge of careers and counseling in the school, (GOK, 2004). Career guidance is available to almost all the secondary schools in Kenya and enables students understand the world of work toward which they are moving to. Specifically, the available career options, why they should work and the needs of society. The program is designed to make students understand themselves in relation to the world of work in terms of what work they would enjoy.

According to Kinai, (2006), career guidance “assembles information about common occupations to guide high school students in finding information about less familiar jobs and help them recognize those occupations in which they may find satisfaction and develop their fullest potential” (p.65).

The aim of the career guidance program is to educate the student so that she/he can make good career choices. It is geared towards creating awareness amongst the youth about educational and occupational realities, since their limited experiences may not enable them to perceive opportunities which actually exist. Therefore, the program first serve a diagnostic function by providing a clear picture of the occupational needs of the nation and how these needs are reflected in actual educational openings and the present job market. It is necessary to communicate this information effectively; otherwise to do less deter the individual in his/her ability to make a choice and, in a sense, helps to direct him/her into a narrow perception of possible alternatives (Kinai, 2006).

**Functioning of career guidance in schools.** The government policy is to have guidance and counseling services provided in all institutions of learning. The Teachers Service Commission ensures that teacher counselors are posted to all public schools.

The teacher training curriculum has a component of guidance and counseling and every trained teacher is expected to give guidance and counseling services to learners. Career counselors are also trained at diploma, degree, and postgraduate levels in both public universities and private universities. Secondary school students make partial career decision by the beginning of form three (11<sup>th</sup> grade). They are streamed according to “Arts” or “Science” preference. Often, before the student is fifteen or sixteen he/she has decided upon an area of specialization. By the end of the third or fourth year in

secondary school a student limits further studies to two or three related subject areas (Kinai, 2006).

For effective functioning of the school guidance program, teamwork among stakeholders is essential. The Ministry of Education officials e.g. inspectors of schools, the Kenyan Institute of Education (KIE-deals with developing school curriculum), the Kenya National Examinations Council (KNEC-examines the students at national level), the parents, teachers and pupils have to work together for the benefit of the learners and the society at large (GOK, 2009).

Leadership and support of the school administrators are essential to the success of guidance and counseling service. While some staff members are assigned the responsibility for leadership and coordination of counseling activities, the individual designated to head the service should assume responsibility for leadership and support that belongs inherently to the administrator. The functions of school principals is to encourage teachers to contribute to the guidance program, arrange for and give personal support to in-service preparation for staff members, getting contacts with community agencies and resources, ensure the development of proper pupil attitudes toward counseling, and exercise administrative authority in the interest of developing and implementing the counseling service (TSC, 2007).

The principal, by virtue of his/her position, is responsible for the guidance and counseling program in the school. His/her encouragement and leadership is essential to the success of the program. The principal is immediately confronted with a vital decision of carrying the responsibility for the administration and the coordination of the program. He/she can choose to delegate this responsibility to the deputy head or any other teacher.

In some schools the school head calls for a staff meeting at which the teachers will explore together the need for guidance program, what they would hope to accomplish through it, and the best approach to its successful operation. During such a discussion, those teachers who are truly interested in keeping the students' needs foremost in their planning will be indentified. The selection of a committed and competent teacher counselor to coordinate the program is one of the most important decisions the school head will make. In other schools, teacher counselors are posted by the Teachers Service Commission (TSC, 2007). In the next section, I explore the role of the career counselor in the schools.

**Role of a career counselor in a career decision making.** In Kenya, the teaching profession is managed by the Teachers Service Commission. For administrative purposes, students' affairs in high schools are structured into separate departments, comprising academic counseling, career counseling, and guidance and counseling. Academic counseling office deals with students' academic performance and the national examinations; career counseling guides students in making decisions about their future careers; and the guidance and counseling deals with student behaviors and students' family related issues.

However, in most schools, academic counseling and career counseling are in the academic affairs department and teachers play the role of advising students in both areas. Since part of this study is interested on how students make career choices in high school, the academic affairs office will be the focus.

According to Choti (2009):

In most Kenyan secondary schools, the department of guidance and counseling is run by specially trained teachers, commonly referred to as teacher counselors.

These teacher counselors are appointed by the Teachers Service Commission or locally appointed by the school principal, usually after gaining some teaching experience. Secondary school teacher counselors carry a lower teaching load compared to their colleagues, in order to create time for them to guide students in academic and career choices (p.154).

According to Njoroge (2001), the role of the career counselor is to facilitate the career decision making process through provision of career information enhancing clarity of personal, values, interests, skills, abilities and confidence in decision making-all which boosts self-confidence and ability by the students to make sound career decision.

The career counselor helps students to examine their interests and their abilities to find and enter professions that best suit them. The career counselor also assists students in learning new skills and abilities relating to managing and directing their careers and work life. The counselors try to dispel the mystery of career decision-making and assist students in career discovery (Kinai, 2006).

Career counselors help clients identify potential role models with whom they might establish supportive high quality relationships. Career counselors may also serve as role models themselves through the use of self-disclosure or by demonstrating appropriate career exploration and decision making behaviors. Since the same-gender parent is often an important role model, counselors may focus on parent-child relationships as well. The career counselor can submit the students to a personality test to establish the category of careers they are good at (Njoroge, 2001).

**Factors that determine the career one chooses.** A wide variety of factors determine the career one chooses. Some of these factors exert a positive influence while others are negative, but all are determined by one's environment, parents' level of education, career counselors' influence and peer influence (GOK, 2004).

The more relevant and exciting the information available on a given career the more likely students are to choose that career. This is because the students are impressed and even inspired by what they are familiar with, because they will have the comfort and certainty of an informed decision.

Many people choose a career because they do not know any better. A student growing in a cloistered environment with few role models and limited information is likely to have only very limited knowledge about various careers. Such a student is likely to end up in a career not because that is what is ideal, but because s/he is not aware of any other options including those which they may have been better suited for. Some students are attracted to careers with high sounding titles.

Peer pressure is probably the single biggest determinant of a career choice in any group of young people with a shared sub-culture. Every generation of students in a school, and probably even several generations will adopt certain careers as the ideal or ultimate choice.

Many people will be subtly pressured into a given career by parents and guardians and other persons in positions of moral authority over them. For parents, they may wish their children to follow in their footsteps or attain a career they themselves aspired to but did not achieve. The young people may therefore find themselves pushed into re-living their parents' life, or attempting to live a life that their parents may have unsullied for but never had (GOK, 2004).

A young person will only aspire to careers that they view as available and attainable and gifted and talented individuals will often display unique and exceptional talent that is particularly suitable to a certain career.

Individuals within socially and economically disadvantaged groups tend to have humble aspirations. Gender, race, ethnicity, social status or wealth may determine such groups. Monetary and material rewards are important determinants of career choice especially in Kenya where individuals and families are still struggling with the fundamental issues of survival such as food, shelter, education and healthcare. Most young people will aspire to a career that will bring a handsome salary and perquisites (GOK, 2004).

Performance in national exams determines what kind of career one takes after school. The examination system in Kenya does not necessarily bring out the best in terms of learners' cognitive capacities. There are reports about the increasing practice of cramming to pass exams and not necessarily to facilitate learning. Cramming for an exam can lead to confusion of facts the student has already learnt. It also leads to the inability to connect new facts to prior learning. Cramming does not allow time for the brain to process the information and make critical connections in concepts (GOK, 2004).

Generally speaking, every one of us has the potential to undertake certain tasks. People then feel satisfied in careers that allow them the opportunity to exploit the inherent and learned capacities since this leads to a consensus between their capacities and the opportunities. Picking an analogy from the motoring industry, manufacturers design vehicles as luxury cars while others are designed to carry heavy weights (Daily Nation, 2009. p.5).

It is helpful to note that some of the "A" students might be predestined for careers that are art-based and hence should be provided with the opportunity, appreciation and

encouragement to become the best they can be in their areas of interest. I keep asking myself-why should we not have “A” students training as musicians, artists, footballers, teachers, and community health workers? There is the general assumption that such careers should be left for those who score below a certain mark. We then end up as a society that has relegated people who don't score so highly in the national examinations while pursuing the “high scorers” with the aim of developing them in the “high flying” careers. The irony is that most of those who eventually succeed in life are those who went to careers that fit their internal capacities and not necessarily those we force to certain careers.

Parents and society assume that it would be a waste of the best brains if we let the “A” students be teachers and study art courses. With this, I wonder; don't we need intelligent “A” teachers, musicians, footballer, and actors?

Many students in Kenya are forced into careers by their parents and teachers for selfish reasons. They all want to brag about the careers their children or former students are pursuing with little regard to the capacities and interests of the younger ones (Daily Nation 2009, Oct 31 2009).

There is a popular story we were told by our career teacher in high school:

Although Tim, a form four leaver, wanted to be a journalist, his father insisted he pursue medicine. "There is no money or reputation in journalism," his father said. Reluctantly, the young man did what his father wanted, until he completed his studies. He then confronted his father: "Here is your certificate, now I can pursue what I always wanted" he said. Despite protests from family and friends, the young man followed his dream.

This story illustrates career stereotypes and the untold damage they do to young minds. Some elite parents often insist that their children take up courses in which they do not measure up to. Many parents think of the money their children can make as lawyers, doctors, architects and engineers. Some other parents want to compensate through the children what they were not able to accomplish in their school days. They could have wanted to be lawyers or engineers and since they failed they would consciously or unconsciously want they children to achieve that dream for them.

For comparison purposes, I look at what literature has to say about the teaching profession in the US. The National Commission on Excellence in Education in *A Nation at Risk*, found "not enough of the academically able students being attracted to teaching" (as cited in Murnane et al, 1991, p. 35).

Despite the alleged negative reputation of teacher preparation programs, *A Call for Change in Teacher Education* (National Commission for Excellence in Teacher Education, 1985) stated:

A national recruitment effort should be targeted toward the most able candidates. Arts and sciences faculty, who generally have a low opinion of teacher education, often actively discourage their best students from teaching careers. We challenge each college and university president to develop and maintain an academic and cultural climate wherein students enrolled in pre-service and in-service teacher education are accorded dignity and status comparable to that of students enrolled in other professional programs (p. 9).

During the 1980s the Holmes Report, the Carnegie Report, and the National Center for Engineering and Technology Education called for the recruitment of "outstanding and academically able students into teaching" (Guarino et al., 2004, p. 243) and also emphasized that in addition to subject-matter knowledge teachers must be good

communicators. The Carnegie report indicated that to attract and retain talented teachers in the 21st century, there was a need for financial incentives, more rigorous teacher education, national standards, and a reduction in educational innovation (Berry, 1986). However, studies have shown that higher salaries and more training requirements have the reverse affect on academically talented graduates and deter them from entering teaching. In the US, career expectations of non-education college seniors (primarily in high demand fields) reveals that present policies, such as career ladders, merit pay, and traditional college loan programs, may have little positive impact on their consideration of teaching as a career alternative.

Among the best students in the US, the most significant reasons why they won't teach relate *not* to the lack of financial reward in teaching, but to frustrating working conditions, bureaucratic requirements, the lack of professional control, and few opportunities for intellectual growth, as well as their intolerance for diversity in the workplace and their perception of teaching as a "boring job." In most cases, these negative "lessons" about teaching were learned while they were public school students. The recent movement to professionalize teaching would appear to be an important step in luring these bright students into teaching. However, professionalism alone will not ensure a school district's ability to attract and retain bright college students as teachers (Murnane et al., 1991).

### **Teaching as a Last Resort**

It is very difficult to make sure teaching remains a lucrative and attractive career and gets enough number of the best high school students. This is true in Kenya, in case of those

who did not succeed in gaining access to university education, yet aspire to white-collar employment.

There is evidence that people may choose to teach because of the lack of other employment options. Financial constraints in many countries mean that teaching is one of the few areas of white-collar work in the state sector available to non-graduates. In a study of student teachers in Tanzania, only 10 percent of males and 15 percent of females said that teaching was their first career choice, and 37 percent had been unable to follow their first choice because their grades were too low (Towse et al, 2002, p.652).

Teaching tends to attract less qualified candidates. In the same study in Tanzania, over a third of those initially not wanting to become teachers admitted that their grades were too low to follow their chosen career, either because they were below the required minimum. One of the teacher trainee interviewed in the study explained:

I scored below the qualification level at which the government sponsored most of the applicants. There was no chance (of getting into the police) because my grades were so low. Other teacher trainee stated that having failed to pursue their first choice of career most had faced the need for an alternative. Thus, while only some students initially wanted to teach, others had accepted their academic or financial limitations and opted for teaching as the only feasible alternative. In fact I don't want to be a teacher. I am here because I missed other chances. Because of the national economy, I prefer to join the teacher training college rather than become jobless or with no other qualifications (p.2).

However, teaching and teachers are not always viewed negatively. A study carried by Choti, (2009) in Kenya, underscores the time spent by teachers talking about higher education goals with their students.

The teachers call their students for assistance, for uplifting in the areas they think they are weak and need more effort. The teachers coach them privately, they give them books and other materials to read and they also encourage them to work harder. Teachers recognized students' hard work and rewarded them accordingly. Such rewards provoke competition among other students to achieve good grades. Doing well in class was important in the students' university going process. At least in each term, the top 3 students from each class have a luncheon with their principal and discuss a lot about academics and life after school (p.156).

According to Choti (2009) during the luncheons, teachers speak about strategies for success.

They challenge students to think big and aspire for great things. They motivate them to work harder each term. Teachers want to push students to a better grade; teachers strive to position students in a manner that could help them succeed in the national examinations. School teachers never miss lessons and are always ready to assist any student in need of academic assistance (p.156).

This notion is very common in many schools and both the parents and high school students value the teachers so much and confess if it were not for the teachers' efforts many would not have made it in their careers.

This is how some of the students interviewed by Choti (2009) perceived their teachers;

High school principals, class teachers, and subject teachers took a keen interest in student's academic achievement. In most cases, teachers let their expectations known to students whenever they came into contact with them. Apart from constant encouragement and setting higher standard for students, teachers took an active role in students' university going process. The teacher in charge of guidance and counseling meets them regularly as do other teachers in various subjects. It is a concerted effort and they are persistently focused. They stay in the school compound, so students go to them for help. They prepare them to pass examinations, through holiday tuition, teachers made their expectations known to students during class and out of class interactions (p.157).

However, the holiday tuition has been criticized by many parents and the government because it does not give students enough time to rest and the students are only drilled for the purposes of passing exams. Parents are also forced to pay the holiday tuition, which is not covered by the government free secondary education, thus overburdening them financially.

## **Teaching and social economic status (SES)**

The teaching profession in Kenya has been taken as a career for the poor. The rich can afford to take their children to expensive schools where they score good grades and enroll in more lucrative careers like medicine and engineering. I have followed media clips on the best performers in the national exams in Kenya and most of the students, when asked about the careers they would want to pursue, their options seem stuck at medicine, engineering, piloting or more recently actuarial science.

In Kenya and Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) the teaching profession is viewed as a low profession and a preserve for women (women in many African countries are poor, compared to men). This view is found among other countries as well.

According to a research carried out by the Australian Government in 2006:

While people who have chosen teaching as a career are chiefly motivated by intrinsic rewards such as wanting to make a difference, enjoyment of children, etc, extrinsic factors such as remuneration, workload, employment conditions and status are the most significant factors influencing people not to choose teaching, and to leave the profession (DEST, 2003, p.3).

According to same study, students who were not considering teaching as a career said that they saw teaching as “a low status job, negatively perceived in the community, and semi-professional. Parents in the study also commented that low university entrance requirements have lowered the status of teaching and resulted in a lower quality teaching workforce, that teaching is low-paid, low status work, and that there is negative publicity about the teaching profession and teachers” (p.4).

A University of Melbourne (2005) study found that “teachers underestimate the respect the community has for them; 70% of randomly-surveyed members of the public thought teachers were doing a good job, although neither teachers nor the public believed

that this was the general opinion. In the examination of efficiency, student: teacher ratios, and contact hours, it is easy to lose sight of the teacher as an individual professional. Yet, it is clear that the quality of educational outcomes depends heavily on the quality of the individual teacher” (DEST, 2003. p.3).

Secondary students (not considering teaching as a career) in Australia, said that teaching offers poor career progression and promotion opportunities (DEST, 2003). Parents in the same study said that successful mathematics and science students are more likely to be attracted to other careers, teachers are not rewarded for performance, and that teaching provides poor promotional pathways. Secondary students in Australia who did not want to become teachers said that teaching is highly demanding, draining work with long hours, badly behaved children, and low pay. Parents agreed that students behave badly, are undisciplined and show lack of respect for teachers, and teaching is “too much hard work for too little return” (DEST 2003, p.4).

In the same study, teaching was seen as less attractive to high academic achievers and to males. High academic achievers especially said that the salary, promotional pathways and status of teaching as too low. Teaching was seen as a problematic choice for males, partly because of heightened community consciousness of pedophilia and partly because of their perceived role as primary breadwinners. However, males are more likely than females to be attracted by salary and employment conditions. For instance, the same report notes that males are less attracted by their desire to work with children, and more by strong employment opportunities, than females. Women teachers appear to derive more satisfaction from the intrinsic satisfactions gained from student response to their teaching, while men have extrinsic concerns around salary, poor facilities and government policies (p.4).

Teaching is associated with poor people in African countries and also in developed countries like Australia.

Teaching was found to be relatively more attractive to low-social economic status (SES), rural/regional students, and women. Low SES and rural/regional students were more likely to consider teaching as an attractive option than high and middle SES students in metropolitan areas. Some regional students perceived teaching as an attractive option because it would enable them to live in their region and play a rewarding role in their community. Students, parents and teachers view teaching as a more 'natural' choice for women, given their perceived biological affinity for children and family orientation. Personal satisfaction and making a difference are the main motivators for students who are considering teaching as a career. Some secondary students liked the idea of teaching students a subject which they would be interested in learning (DEST 2003, p.5).

The Australian Council of Deans of Science study; "Who's Teaching Science" (2005) indicated that the main factor influencing science teachers to enter the profession was the desire to share their love of science with young people. Other students cited the personal satisfaction derived from teaching as a desirable factor. Teacher education students agreed:

When asked to name factors in the ideal teaching job, 94% cited 'Fulfillment' and 91% cited 'Opportunity to work with children/young adults'. Students emphasized the difference a good teacher can make. 89% of teacher education students also cited 'contribution to community' as an important influencer (DEST 2003, p.5).

The most important influence cited by teacher education students in (DEST 2003) was that they enjoyed working with children and felt they could make a difference. A number of mature-aged students had moved to teaching from a better remunerated job because they wanted to do something they enjoyed. This finding is supported by (DEST 2006), which listed "wanted to make a difference, always wanted to teach/work with children and wanted to work in an area of specialization or interest", as the three most important motivating factors (p.5).

In the same study, teaching is seen as an easy option. Some students mentioned that it only takes four years to qualify and does not require a high university entrance

score. Pay, workload, promotion opportunities and mobility are important considerations. Students who weren't considering teaching as a career said they would be more likely to do so if it paid more, the workload was reduced, it provided better prospects for promotion, and there was more mobility within the profession (p.6).

I have reviewed literature on how teaching as a career is perceived from developed countries and the developing counterparts for comparison purposes. This also serves as a reference point for the developing countries as they aim at being developed; therefore they look at models from the west for reference. Secondly, as I mentioned earlier, I have relied more on Western researches on this topic, due to the fact that there has been very little study done on Sub-Sahara Africa in this area and the little that has been done is by American and other Western scholars. African researchers have done few studies of which most are not yet published because of lack of funds and can be found gathering dust on the shelves of many African universities' libraries and offices. The main conclusions from both the African and Western scholars are that teaching as a profession is perceived negatively in both the developed and the developing countries. Teaching is seen as a career for the children from families with low SES. Secondary students in Australia who did not want to become teachers said that teaching is highly demanding, draining work with long hours, badly behaved children, and low pay. In African countries students join teaching as a last resort and that there are teaching is considered as a natural choice for women.

## **Teacher Education and Training**

**Quality and teacher training.** Research in the United States, has reported that teacher quality is the single most important variable in determining student achievement (AFT 2000). Therefore, improvements in teacher education are frequently suggested as solutions to educational problems. This research from the US, can be very useful in African countries where by there is a lot of emphasis on enrolments in both primary and secondary school levels without due consideration to increase in teacher recruitments.

According to a World Bank report (2007)

There is belief that the status of teaching as a profession seems to decline during pre-service teacher preparation and in the early years of experience. These findings call into question the impact of some of the existing pre-service teacher education programs. In addition, there is generally relatively little provision of in-service support for secondary teachers, thus neglecting a potentially powerful way of strengthening teaching skills, introducing reform, developing professional identity, and increasing teacher morale (p.26).

Since the school serves the important functional focus of efforts for improving quality, certainly the most critical factor within the school in facilitating student learning is the teacher and the ability of those in leadership positions to shape a collaborative, motivated, and effective teaching and learning community. Teachers' professional training, energy, and motivation are critical, in combination with teaching skills, in creating quality of learning.

The teaching skills include many factors: among them, child psychology, appropriate teaching methodologies and subject matter knowledge, understanding of the curriculum and its purposes, general professionalism, ability to communicate, enthusiasm for teaching, sensitivity to students, general character, discipline, ability to work with

others, dedication, and relationships within the administrators, policy makers and community (AED, 2008).

In the Kenyan situation, many of the teacher trainees are ill equipped to teach some subjects after college. According to a study carried by Gathumbi (2009) of Kenyatta University in conjunction with the Ministry of Education and featured in the one of local newspaper;

Forty per cent of the primary teacher trainees do not have the desired English language skills. They end up teaching English skills, yet they are poor in listening and writing, which are key skills in teaching of English and other subjects. They cannot even pass the exams they are supposed to set and administer to the pupils (Daily Nation, August 17<sup>th</sup> 2009).

According to Gathumbi, this shows major weakness in the syllabus and attributes this to the fact that a lot of emphasis in TTCs is put on teaching methodology at the expense of subject content. In the case of the English subject, many teacher trainees are trained to teach it in schools after graduation, yet they had failed in the subject in the KCSE which is the entry exam for the TTCS. In Ghana, about 69 % of student teachers had a grade E in English, the lowest possible pass grade, while 40 % had a grade E in mathematics (World Bank, 2007, p.12).

The 2004 UNESCO EFA Global Monitoring Report says:

What goes on in the classroom, and the impact of the teacher and teaching, has been identified in numerous studies as the crucial variable for improving learning outcomes. The way teachers teach is of critical concern in any reform designed to improve quality (UNESCO 2004, p. 152).

The UNESCO report enumerates five areas critical to teacher quality.

These include finding the right recruits, initial teacher education, on-going professional support, teacher earnings; and teacher deployment and conditions of service.

The point is made that, teachers being the largest public expenditure in budgets of less-developed countries like Kenya:

The dilemma is paying them, expanding the teaching force to fulfill the demands of exploding enrollments, and devoting resources to improving the quality of teachers. As with the provision of education itself, many countries need to address issues of quantity and quality of teachers simultaneously. Innovative ways of meeting both demands are urgently being sought; ideas include shorter pre-service teacher education, recruitment of teachers with higher education qualifications, intensified in-service professional development, and increased school-based support teacher effectiveness is expressed most commonly in terms of student academic achievement, an element more easily (and less expensively) measured than some other essential outcomes of good education (UNESCO 2004, p.161).

It is worth noting that Kenya spends 17.9 % of its total budget on education and still there are more problems, especially in shortage of teachers (GOK, 2007).

**Quality Assurance Officers.** Previously, the Quality Assurance Officer (QAO) was referred to as Inspectors of Schools. The title was changed in Kenya after it was realized that, it had a negative connotation, having been inherited from the colonial system, when there was a master-servant relationship between the inspectors of schools and the teachers. The inspectors were always supposed to find fault with the teachers and this antagonized the two, instead of making them complementary to each other. The QAO were entrusted with the responsibility of assisting teachers morally and in their professional development. QAO should assist and guide teachers in their roles as immediate supervisors of their teaching, improving the classroom performance of teachers, particularly the unqualified ones.

In a study I undertook in Kenya for my Masters degree in 2004, I found out that, while they are at work in schools, the QAO were supposed to observe the teaching methods, assessing the performance of old and recently trained teachers with a view of identifying difficulties and shortcomings required for improvement and adjustment of the current teacher education program. The QAO were to assist in development and introduction of new teaching techniques and related teaching aids, designed to compensate for the general lack of teaching equipment and aiding materials being characteristic for schools particularly in rural areas (Taaliu, 2004).

So as to effectively meet the above requirements, the quality assurance officers should necessarily be more qualified and more experienced than the teacher they supervise. Further, they should adopt friendly assistance rather than a patronizing superior attitude to teachers. Provision should be made to aid QAOs to easily reach and inspect schools as this exercise is so vital to educational progress. The teachers' diminishing social and professional status has coincided with a situation in recent years where it has become more and more difficult to move upwards into their occupations, and yet the same period has seen ever growing insistence by parents and pupils that teachers produce "success" in test scores by whatever methods, legal or illegal (Taaliu, 2004).

### **Teacher Education and Information Communication and Technology**

Information Communication and Technology (ICT) is important especially for Africa and Kenya in particular. If vision 2030 is to be attained in Kenya, then schools and the government should embrace the use of ICT. The starting place to impart this knowledge is schools, but in Kenya most teachers are ill-prepared to use computers, leave alone teach their students. Most teachers in their 40s and 50s have never used computers and

other modern ICT implements. From my own experience as a high school teacher and a teacher trainer, I realized that the use of ICT is very limited in the Kenyan classroom.

While I taught I realized that the younger teachers coming out of universities were more computer literate and felt challenged to learn the use of computers in the classroom. My colleagues did not find the need for learning new technology, when they have been teaching effectively for many years without them. I present more on the use of technology in the study findings where the old teachers interviewed felt threatened by the young computer savvy teachers being employed by the government on contract basis. Some teachers argued that they left teaching after going for further education due to this threat from the young university graduates being employed.

A study by Wabuye (2003) indicated that while ICT has penetrated many sectors including banking, transportation, communications, and medical services, the Kenyan educational system seems to lag behind. The study found that computer use in Kenyan classrooms is still in its early phases, and concluded that the perceptions and experiences of teachers and administrators do play an important role in the use of computers in Kenyan classrooms. This highlighted the need to provide pre-service and in-service training programs to enable the teachers to successfully teach using computers in the classrooms.

Wabuye's (2003) study also noted that the government needed to review both teacher preparation and staff development programs, as well as develop a revised national plan to implement ICT into the curriculum. In this study, Wabuye found out that even if teachers demonstrated proficiency in integrating technology in their classrooms, but do not believe that technology has use in the class, they will teach without it.

## **Economic Issues in Teaching**

**Supply and demand.** Kenya is committed to reaching the goal of Universal Primary Education (UPE) by 2015. The UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS) has identified the countries that need to expand their teaching forces in order to be able to enroll all primary school-age children by this target date. According to UIS estimates, 96 out of 195 countries will need at least 1.9 million more teachers in classrooms by 2015 than in 2007 (UNESCO, 2009. p.1).

The projections by the UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS) indicate that 26 out of 45 countries in sub-Saharan Africa face a critical teacher gap. In these countries, 2.6 million teachers were in the classrooms in 2007. This number must grow to 3.7 million in just eight years to meet the Universal Primary Education (UPE) goal. This means that for every two teachers teaching in 2007 in the region, there must be three in 2015. In 2009, World Teachers' Day put the spotlight on the global teacher shortage and the challenge of increasing the teaching force and its capacity to provide quality education, at a time when the financial and economic crisis is placing increasing strain on education budgets (UNESCO, 2009. p.1).

According to Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO

Many countries are making tremendous efforts to meet educational goals. But they will not make it without recruiting and training many more teachers. We cannot let the financial and economic crisis cut into education budgets. Lower spending on education will have dramatic short and long-term consequences on the quality of education (UNESCO, 2009).

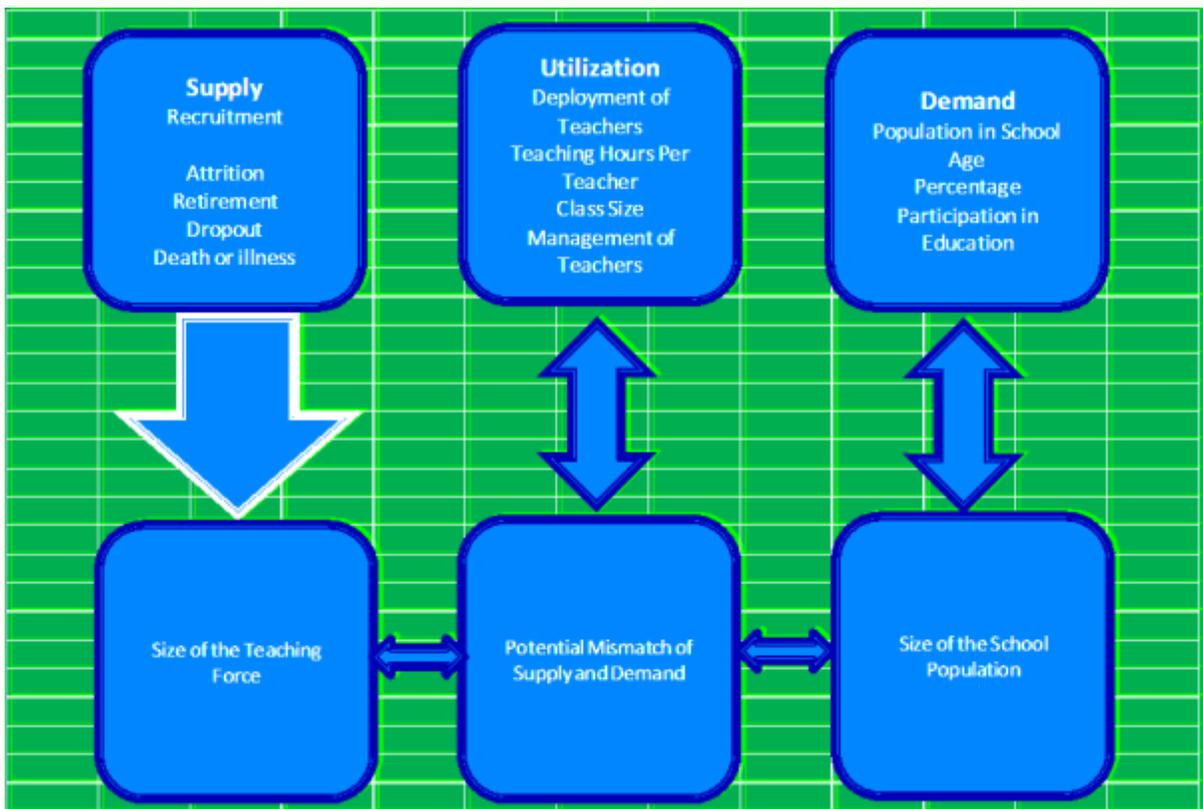
The issues surrounding teacher education can be broken into three main areas.

One variable is the demand for education, which is determined by the population in the

relevant age group and the participation rate. A second variable is the supply of teachers, a function of recruitment and retention patterns. Between these two lay a third issue affecting both. This includes utilization of teachers, their deployment, teaching hours, the sizes of the classes they teach, and other conditions of service (World Bank, 2007, p.5).

As Figure 2.3 below indicates, meeting increased demand for education will require changes in the numbers of teachers.

**Figure 2.3: Key Issues in Teacher Supply and Demand**



Source: Adapted and modified from World Bank (2007).

## Recruitment and Deployment of Teachers

There has been increase in demand for school teachers in Kenya as a result of the free primary education introduced in 2003 and free secondary education in 2008. Due to the high number of new students enrolling in schools recruiting more teachers is important. Little attention is given to the initial recruitment of qualified candidates into the field of education. In Kenya, the role of recruitment of teachers and their employment and promotion is carried on by the Teachers Service Commission (TSC).

**The Teachers Service Commission (TSC).** The Teachers Service Commission (TSC) is the body that recruits teachers in the public schools in Kenya.<sup>14</sup> Teachers in the colonial period were hired by missionaries and different branches of the government. The Teachers Service Commission was created in 1967 under an Act of Parliament (Cap 212) of the Laws of Kenya (TSC, 2009).

The TSC serves a large labor force of teachers totaling 243,000 with a current wage bill of Kshs. 44.4 billion (TSC, 2009)<sup>15</sup>. Apart from recruiting teachers, the Teachers Service Commission is charged with the responsibility of posting teachers who are distributed all over the country serving in over 17,000 primary schools and 3,000 secondary schools and related tertiary institutions. To serve them all, the Commission has established units at the provincial and district levels (TSC, 2010).

The TSC's vision is: "*Effective Service for Quality Teaching*" and its core functions are to: maintain a register of teachers, as well as recruit, post, promote, discipline (sack in case found guilty of misconduct). The TSC has units in all of Kenya's

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<sup>14</sup> TSC recruits teachers for primary, high and tertiary institutions apart from public/private universities.

<sup>15</sup> 1\$ US is currently (11/15/10) changing at 76 Kenya Shillings (KSH)

education districts where it either has its own agents, or has delegated its duties to Provincial Directors of Education, District Education Officers, Municipal Education Officers, Boards of Governors and Parent Teacher Associations (TSC, 2009).<sup>16</sup>

The deployment or posting as it is commonly referred in Kenya has seen teachers preferring urban centers to rural areas. This is common among women who would like to join their husbands working in urban centers. The rural areas are not favored because of the poor living conditions, especially by the young. To encourage teachers to stay in rural areas the government of Kenya introduced hardship allowance. This is an extra allowance of 30% of the total teachers' salaries, to act as an incentive for teachers to work in these areas. Despite this incentive, there is imbalance between the rural and urban schools, with the latter being overstaffed and the former understaffed.

World Bank report (2007) indicates that:

Qualified teachers are often reluctant to stay in rural settings. In Ghana, over 80 percent of teachers said they preferred to teach in urban schools. Rural postings are unpopular for a variety of reasons. In Ghana, student teachers considered working in deprived areas as unattractive because of the danger of disease, problems with local languages, and unsuitable teacher accommodation. In Tanzania, student teachers expressed concern about poor classroom and home accommodation, school resources, leisure opportunities, and medical facilities (p.18).

In Kenya a new law passed in 2009 extended the retirement age of teachers from 55 to 60 years, aimed at easing the problem of lack of teachers due to over enrolment as result of free primary education introduced in 2003. The Kenya National Union of Teachers is contesting the hiring of 12,600 teachers on three-year contracts. The argument is that the contract teachers are being paid lower salaries than the old regular

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<sup>16</sup> The TSC, with 243, 000 teachers is the single largest employer in the Sub-Sahara African region.

teachers and this brings dissatisfaction, because the teachers have the same qualifications. These teachers are also being employed on contract basis, and the Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT) is questioning why they cannot be pensionable, like the rest. The arguments by the government is that they save money from paying pensions, which goes to provision of other needed facilities (GOK, 2009).

**Conditions of service.** The literature on teacher recruitment and retention suggests that recruiting and retaining teachers in the profession is influenced by their conditions of service. In World Bank report (2007, p 45), teachers and principals noted that work conditions were a main reason for leaving the profession. In the same report it was reported that:

In some countries, teachers reported having 50–100 students in a class. Teachers also need time to prepare for their courses and to assess student learning. Teachers in Uganda consistently reported that continuous assessment was burdensome, time consuming, and one reason for not wanting to stay in the job. Teaching more than two subjects was not regarded as a viable option because most teachers felt that it would be difficult to be competent in more than two subject areas. Teachers also felt stretched in the number of periods they currently teach and the number of students they teach. Furthermore, teaching more than two subjects would also place an additional burden on teachers' preparation time and exam marking. Teachers and principals generally felt that an additional subject would indirectly impact teachers' motivation and commitment. Teaching an additional subject would also require longer periods of study in teacher education courses in order to specialize in another area or discipline (p.48).

The definition of work conditions for teachers, according to the World Bank (2007) “refer to the amount of work teachers do, the remuneration they receive for their work, and the support they receive from the community for their work” (p.47). The teachers in Kenya do a lot of work, overcrowded classes and long working hours.

## **Teacher Retention and Attrition**

Due to poor working conditions and low salaries teachers leave the profession before the reach retirement age (increased from 55-60 years in 2010). In Sub-Sahara Africa attrition rates are believed to range between 5 and 30 % (World Bank, 2007).

Commenting on the issue of shortage of teachers, the TSC notes that:

Kenya's schools face an acute shortage of teachers following the introduction of free and compulsory primary education and the waiving of tuition fees for all students in public secondary schools six years ago. But since a freeze on employment of teachers went into effect 11 years ago, the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) has only been allowed to hire few new teachers to replace those who leave the service. The country's recommended ratio of teachers to students is one to 45, but many teachers are handling classes of up to 80 students. This means less individual attention to students and lack of motivation for teachers who are overworked and underpaid. With a significant number of older teachers expected to retire soon - some districts expect to lose as much as 60 percent of their teaching staff in the next five years - and younger ones rapidly leaving the profession, urgent action is needed. TSC secretary Gabriel Lengoiboni recently appealed to Parliament for money to hire 45,000 new primary school teachers and 13,000 secondary school teachers (TSC, 2010).

Without urgent reform, Kenya's plan for education for all by 2015 in line with Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) of universal primary education is likely to be a dream.

Teachers are rarely distributed evenly across the many public schools in Kenya. Attrition is high in rural areas where facilities like electricity, telephones, good roads and housing are lacking. Some teachers also feel insecure when posted in areas which are not inhabited by people from their ethnic group. The 2007/2008 post-election violence, which resulted in deaths of over 1,300 people, left many civil servants and teachers scared to work in areas occupied by a different ethnic group (GOK, 2009).

Attrition is high among newly recruited teachers. Young teachers may have less stable family lives and have less commitment to teaching. If they stay in the areas they

for long they often invest in the area, for instance they might buy houses, start families and settle down (Macdonald 1999).

In Kenya, different rates of attrition for teachers can be attributed to specific subjects like the sciences and math and higher qualifications. There are more science and math teachers than the arts and humanities leaving the profession. As one Kenyan teacher educator put it,

Attrition may also be related to teacher qualifications. The most highly qualified teachers may be the most likely to leave, as they can more easily get alternative employment. Attrition may increase by a perception of teaching as a path to further education or an exit strategy. It is the only profession which will allow one to advance to the higher levels of education. Schemes that allow teachers to avail themselves of paid study leave are very popular in Kenya today. Teachers at all levels take paid study leaves to go for further education, which has an impact on teaching loads, as many of these teachers are not replaced immediately. Attrition also represents the loss of experienced teachers from the system. This is where those who are leaving the profession are the more successful or more qualified teachers. It may have the effect of leaving fewer teachers in the classroom or assuming leadership positions. It can also lead to demoralization among remaining teachers ((Towse et al, 2002 p.167).

The new rule in Kenya (of increasing retirement) could increasingly put the school system in an ageing crisis as the teaching force will comprise a huge chunk of older teachers. Such teachers are likely to find it difficult to embrace new subjects such as computers and HIV and Aids. There is also likely to be a lack of personnel to take children through physical education lessons or sports activities. The Kenya national Union of teachers proposed that younger teachers be posted to schools as they were more suitable to handle maturity problems that affect youngsters (KNUT, 2009).

**The impact of HIV/AIDS on teacher attrition.** The HIV/AIDS pandemic has been recognized as having major impacts in all sectors in Kenya and has specific implications for the education system in country and Africa generally. The government of

Kenya has therefore laid down policies to tackle the issue of HIV/AIDS in schools and colleges by training teachers to teach and handle it in schools after graduation.

Concerning teacher training and HIV/AIDS the government observes that:

Teacher education curriculum (both pre-service and in-service) must prepare educators to respond to HIV/AIDS within their own lives and in their professional lives to build positive attitudes and skills to deal with HIV/AIDS prevention and control among their learners (GOK, 2004).

Quality of teaching suffers as teachers are placed under increased pressure through illness, supporting ill family, and colleagues, and dealing with the consequences of HIV/AIDS in the school.

In the course of HIV infection there may be 10–14 bouts of prolonged illness, leading to long absences from school (Kelly 2000). On this basis each death is preceded by 18 months of disability (Kelly 2000). Goliber (2000) estimates that a typical teacher loses six months of work due to illness before developing full-blown AIDS.

There is productivity losses resulting from HIV/AIDS illustrated by some teachers attending funerals and caring for others who are sick can lead to as much lost work time as being sick themselves. AIDS-related illnesses within the family or community also reduce productivity, as teachers are involved in caring or support. The burden of caring may fall more heavily on female teachers; as a result, in several countries head teachers have reported that the productivity of female teachers is lower than that of males (Kelly, 2000).

Table 2.2 below shows the reasons for being absent and number of teachers who miss work due to their own sickness, sickness of others and other reasons, in both primary and secondary schools in the countries where the study was carried out.

**Table 2.2: Reasons for Teacher Absences (percentages)**

		Sickness Own	Funerals	Sickness Others	Work Related	Others*
Primary						
Botswana	Female	42	18	18	15	8
	Male	35	14	14	15	20
Malawi	Female	42	31	20	2	4
	Male	38	47	11	5	0
Uganda	Female	29	24	10	29	5
	Male	33	17	0	42	8
Secondary						
Botswana	Female	50	10	8	9	25
	Male	26	21	16	16	21
Malawi	Female	40	27	7	13	13
	Male	42	38	17	4	0
Uganda	Female	23	23	14	32	9
Male		16	16	11	35	22

\*“Other” includes collecting pay and maternity leave.

*Source:* Bennell, Hyde, and Swainson (2002).

In addition to lost teacher time, “HIV/AIDS is reshaping how school funds are used. For instance, schools’ financial responsibilities to sick teachers are diverting non-salary funds to non-educational purposes. The expectation in Malawi that schools purchase coffins for teachers who die has depleted the instructional budgets in many schools” (World Bank, 2007, p.15).

Juma (2001) argues that teachers who are ill with HIV/AIDS may not want to make it known to the employer or other teachers for fear of losing their jobs or for fear of stigmatization. As a result, they may continue to teach while unable to do so properly. In some cases, absence while ill may be “covered” by the school to avoid informing the central authorities. As a result, many teachers who are absent as a result of illness are not replaced and their work is distributed among colleagues. Teacher productivity may also be affected by stress resulting from the incidence of AIDS among colleagues or friends or from worry about their own HIV status. UNICEF (1996) reported that less than one-third of teachers who had experienced the death of a colleague had spoken to friends or relatives about it, and most felt unable to do so.

Approximately 25 percent of teachers admitted to worrying about their own HIV status (Siamwiza and Chiwela 1999). HIV/AIDS also places additional stress on teachers when they are expected to act as health educators and, in some cases, as counselors to their students. They fear knowing the details they have to teach their students.

## **Social Issues in Teaching**

**Teaching profession and corruption.** One of the most disturbing problems facing the development of education in Kenya and across Sub-Saharan Africa is corruption. In 2005, the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) ranked as the second most corrupt government unit after the Kenya Police. This was a very significant deterioration from 19<sup>th</sup> position in 2004. Corruption is widespread in other professions but maybe it seems more rampant in TSC because of the number of teachers involved-TSC has 250, 000, the biggest number of employee in Kenya. It is hoped with the new constitution which was passed in August 2010, after a referendum, corruption is going to be tackled (TI, 2005).<sup>17</sup>

Corruption has damaging consequences in that resources are wasted, young people are denied the education they should receive, and those unable to afford bribes are denied access to schooling. A generation of students comes to believe that personal effort and merit do not count and that success comes through manipulation, favoritism, and bribery (Chapman 2003).

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<sup>17</sup> Transparency International-Kenya, retrieved on 10/30/10 from <http://www.tikenya.org/>

**Table 2.3: Illustrations of Common Forms of Corruption at District, School, and Classroom Levels**

<b>Level of Activity</b>	<b>Type of Behavior</b>
<b>School Level</b>	<b>Ghost teachers</b>
	<b>Diversion of school fees</b>
	<b>Inflation of school enrolment data (in countries in which central ministry funds are allocated to schools on the basis of enrolment)</b>
	<b>Imposition of unauthorized fees</b>
	<b>Diversion of community contributions</b>
	<b>Diversion of central Ministry of Education funds allocated to schools</b>
<b>District Level</b>	<b>Diversion of monies in revolving textbook fund</b>
	<b>The overlooking of school violations during inspector visits in return for bribes or favors</b>
	<b>Siphoning of school supplies and textbooks to local market</b>
<b>Classroom Level</b>	<b>Selling of test scores and course grades</b>
	<b>Selling of grade changes</b>
	<b>Selling of grade-to-grade promotion</b>
	<b>Selling of admissions (especially to teacher training colleges)</b>
	<b>Creation of the necessity for private tutoring</b>
	<b>Teachers' persistent absenteeism to accommodate other income-producing work</b>
<b>Source: Adapted from Chapman (2003).</b>	

The teachers' union KNUT has tried to protect the members from some of these corruption cases, but it has stated clearly that any of its members proved guilty of any offence will face the law. One of the main goals for the formation of KNUT was; to check harassment of teachers by supervisors and inspectors of schools, without reference to any ground rules. The Trade unions are discussed later in the literature review.

There is a lot of corruption in Kenya in teacher education sector as shown by this newspaper article entitled "Teachers paying Sh120, 000 for fake jobs" appearing in the Daily Nation of 07/02/09.

A job scandal in which unemployed teachers are paying up to KSh120, 000 has been exposed. Teachers in some districts are paying at least KSh80, 000 to connen, according to findings of the Teachers Service Commission (TSC), whose officials have unearthed the scandal. So bad is the situation that the commission sounded the alarm to head teachers, asking them to be on the lookout for the extortionists and report any cases to the headquarters. On June 9, 2009 The TSC wrote to the affected district officers asking them to guard against the cases of fake employment. The TSC also announced that the shortage of teachers in primary schools, initially thought to stand at about 36,000 had risen to 45,000. That of the primary schools had also shot up from an estimated 14,000 to 22,000, meaning the crisis of the shortage was worsening. The revelations came even as The TSC rooted for the employment of teachers on contract this year, a move that would deal a big blow to more than 50,000 teachers awaiting employment. It is the first time the government will not be hiring the new staff in eight years, since the State lifted the freeze on teachers' recruitment, which was first imposed in 1997 due to the recommendations of the Structural Adjustment Program (S.A.P) by the World Bank. The TSC has indicated that the government will only put 12,600 teachers on contracts this year-2009. In 2008, about the same number of new teachers were hired, 8,000 of whom were meant to replace those who had left service through resignations, deaths and retirement. The rest were additional teachers who were meant to ease the crisis of teacher shortage (Daily Nation, 11/02/2009).<sup>18</sup>

Corruption is also very rampant when it comes to admission to teachers' colleges in Kenya. Appearing in the Daily Nation Newspaper on October 12 2009; this article entitled "College admission scam under probe" gives a glimpse of the level of corruption when it comes to admission to these colleges.

Investigations have been launched after allegations that some Ministry of Education officials were selling letters for admission to teacher training colleges in Kenya. The Director of Basic Education, Ms Leah Rotich, on Sunday said they had launched the investigations following complaints that officers at the ministry headquarters were selling letters for admission into Kenya's 18 primary teacher training colleges. "I will not spare anybody involved in the sale of these letters. We cannot allow anybody to profit from this exercise which is supposed to be free," she said. The public had complained that a cartel working closely with

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<sup>18</sup> Can be accessed on-line at <http://www.nation.co.ke/News>

officers from the Education ministry were behind the sale of the letters to desperate parents and Form Four leavers. One parent, who spoke to the *Nation*, claimed he had been promised admission for his daughter if he paid KSh 30,000. The admission process started in July and those who qualified reported to the colleges on September 8<sup>th</sup> (Daily Nation, 11/12/2009).

Corruption is a big problem in Kenya today, and some donor communities have withdrawn funding to the free primary and secondary education programs, hence affecting the smooth running of schools.

**Teaching and ethnicity.** In the Kenyan context, there exists ethnic divide in career choices. Those ethnic groups favored by the British during colonial rule of divide and rule, like the majority Kikuyu had better and earlier chances than other communities to take their children to school.<sup>19</sup> This meant therefore, that they were educated early and took the best jobs after independence in 1963. They educated their children and today, the best schools are found in central province. This translates into the Kikuyu taking the best and more slots/careers in the public universities. The less educated poor groups are taking their children to poor public schools ending up in less prestigious careers and middle level colleges (including TTCs).

There is evidence of ethnicity in the school structure as shown by the staffing of schools. The government policy is to post teachers, to their home districts. Therefore, majority of the teachers in primary, secondary and tertiary colleges are local people. This research aims at getting the correct proportions of the local teachers versus teachers from other parts of the country in the education institutions in the study. It will also aim at

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<sup>19</sup> The Kikuyus are the majority group in Kenya and dominate in all fields of education in public universities. The post-elections clashes of 2007/2008 were as a result of this dominance by the Kikuyu in leadership.

examining whether there are advantages or disadvantages related to this staffing policy. This policy is also implemented in secondary school admissions, where 85% of the new students should come from the province and 15% from the rest of the country.

**Unprofessional behavior.** The teaching profession in Kenya is portrayed negatively by some teachers engaging in unprofessional behavior with their students, especially sexual relationships between male teachers and school girls. According to the leading newspaper in Kenya, Daily Nation of Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2009 in the article “Shocking details of sex abuse in Kenyan schools”

Shocking details have emerged on the extent to which school girls fall prey to sexual predators — their own teachers. Up to 12,660 girls were sexually abused by teachers over a five-year period, reveals a government report by TSC. The report by the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) says that in some cases, teachers abused as many as 20 girls in a single school before they were reported. The survey, which captured data between 2003 and 2007, said the 12,660 girls estimated to have been abused in schools over the period were enough to fill 79 single-streamed primary schools that have an average of 40 girls a class. According to the report, done jointly with non-profit Centre for Rights Education and Awareness, some teachers were serial sexual offenders and molested girls from one school to another because when caught they were simply transferred and no action was taken against them. The report found that only 633 teachers were charged with sexual abuse in the five years covered by the study, but that was only the tip of the iceberg—most cases went unreported. Records at the TSC were not clear on the number of school girls abused (Daily Nation, 2009).

Education official acknowledges this is big issue and stated that more research needs to be done, to establish the extent of the problem.

Kenya Secondary Schools Heads Association Cleophas Tirop acknowledged the magnitude of the problem but called for a nationwide study to establish its true extent. He said the TSC had only based its findings on the reports that reached the commission but it needed to interview teachers and students to establish more about the problem. It is not a well-researched report since they did not get to the ground,” he said. The problem is there and we need the facts so that we can

confront it.” Although the number of teachers was small compared to the 240,000 working for the TSC, the report warned that the actual cases of abuse were quite high because some teachers abused as many as 20 pupils. So bad is the situation that data collected from the survey showed that majority of TSC staff perceived sexual abuse in schools as pervasive. Yet another respondent said: “The whole business is disgusting and annoying [...] the offenders should be castrated.” Another male participant made a simple verdict on the molesters: “Just execute them. They are useless alive.” The survey, an overview of TSC procedures, systems and policies for addressing girl child sexual abuse in schools, established that the vice was “rampant and endemic”, but majority of the cases were getting to the TSC on average three months after the offence had been committed.

The report also faults the TSC over the punishment given to guilty teachers — dismissing and removing a culprit from the register irrespective of whether he molested one or 10 girls. “Teachers charged with multiple molestations, therefore, get the same punishment as those with a single one. Data collected from questionnaires indicated that 53 % of the respondents viewed sexual abuse of girls by teachers as very high. Only 13.3 % of the respondents thought the crime was uncommon”.

The report questioned why some teachers would regard the existence of the illegal act as low when local media were awash with reports of sexual abuse of girls. The report found out that more than 90 % of sexual abuse cases never reached the TSC, meaning the cases were higher than thought. Failure to report the cases to the TSC was attributed to collusion between teaching staff and education officials who often resorted to cover-ups. In some cases, education officials and the offenders intimidated victims. Parents were also ignorant of TSC disciplinary procedures, and sometimes preferred to hush up the abuse for fear that their daughters would be stigmatized.

Informal settlements, often presided over by local leaders and administrators such as councilors, chiefs and village elders, were also a big problem. In some cases, the abused girls and their parents were given cash as compensation; or the offenders offered to marry the girls. Low rates of reporting exacerbate the

prevalence rates as more and more teachers take advantage of the kangaroo courts and the ignorance of parents, said the report.

The report showed that parents, head teachers and district education officials were the greatest hindrance to reporting of the cases to the TSC. In a situation where the parent is totally negative about proceeding with the case, then the entire process is impaired. The fact that head-teachers and education officials were identified as discouraging the cases from proceeding to the TSC indicated an almost lost battle.

The study showed that 73 % of the culprits taken to the TSC sought leniency on the fact that they were the sole bread winners of their families. Their case was interpreted to mean they loved their jobs and perhaps they would not have engaged in the criminal act had they been given proper advice on the consequences. Some offenders argued they were good teachers producing good results in their schools. This argument has for quite some time sold well to the parents and a number of press reports have highlighted the parents' role in protecting amorous teachers, the report said of the good results argument.

The report blames TSC's disciplinary procedures, saying they contributed in delayed justice in sexual abuse cases. According to the rules, the cases are supposed to be reported by head-teachers. In the event that such cases are reported directly to the teachers, then the TSC writes to the head-teachers to confirm the allegations in the case of secondary schools and district education officials in the case of primary schools. Some of the cases are also handled by school boards and committees before they are taken to higher levels. In handling by different players, says the report, some of evidence is lost along the way and distortions are common (Daily Nation, 2009).

**Gender and Teaching.** To be able to understand teacher education programs well, there is need to look at how gender influences the students, teachers and the schools. On teaching programs as gender regimes, Fischman has this to say:

We need to anchor our discussion in recognition of classrooms as workplaces, teachers as workers who are integrated in the local economy, students as prospective workers all immersed in the context of globalization and its current glorification of market-like arrangements [.....] while it is clear that within capitalist societies there is no term-by-term correspondence between gender and economic actions, we must acknowledge that the appropriation of surplus value constrains, yet does not determine, the possibilities of the emergence of gendered practices and social institutions in the direct challenge to the status quo (p.33).

The underlying principle here is that classrooms are gendered workplaces, and that gender articulates most of the interconnected subject positions that are at stake in schools. The claim that teacher education programs are gendered spaces, does not imply that gender dynamics over-determine the relationship of class or race, but points to particular importance of gender in the process of preparing teachers for their work in schools.

There is an open-ended integration among relationships of power, division of labor, emotions, and meanings. Schools actively create and control their own gender regimes within the confining boundaries of the larger cultural, political, economic, and religious structures.

Each regime allows for creation, recreation, and repression of femininities and masculinities, and in so doing it delimits the institution structure of opportunities, rewards, and punishments embedded in the daily tasks of schools, thus extending the influence of this regime beyond institutional walls (Fischman, 2000, p.33).

According to Fischman (2000), there are many other ways in which schools operate as gender regimes:

Schools [.....] can be seen in the way classrooms adapt characteristics of both public and domestic arenas within the framework of the general gender order of a

given society. Thus, it is not surprising that for most of the twenty first century, women working as elementary school teachers in many Latin American and African countries have commonly been referred to, described or equated to with other “natural” proper feminine figures such as mothers, aunts, misses, sisters and some cases addressed by their first names in a diminutive form (p.35).<sup>20</sup>

This tradition may be seen as a way of creating a friendly and personal relationship between teachers and students but also may reflect a pattern of disrespect for the professional status of female teachers.

The names were (and are) not naïve constructions, but rather societal ways of shifting attention away from the specific histories and characteristics of women teachers (i.e., professional conditions, civil status, age, and above all, their sexuality). In this way, teachers’ concrete characteristics are effectively toned down and substituted with stereotypical features associated with domestic sphere. The few men who work as teachers in elementary public schools are mostly addressed as Mr. X (the last name is used unlike when addressing women teachers, where the first name is often used). These forms of addressing male teachers also conceal their individual characteristics and the presumed professionalism that, nevertheless, is coupled with a suspicious gaze (Stromquist, 1996b, as quoted by Fischman, p.36).

There is a need for school administrators and policy makers to develop an environment that is safe for female students and encourages retention especially in African countries. In doing so, it will be increasingly important that females are adequately represented among school principals. Some countries—such as Kenya and Uganda—have already begun to use quota systems to increase the proportion of female school principals. It is important that the teacher training institutions model gender-fair practices and develop appropriate gender attitudes in all teachers. In doing so, it is particularly important that females be fairly represented among the staff of teacher education institutions (World Bank, 2007. p.35).

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<sup>20</sup> In Kenya this tradition of using the first name in diminutive form is seen when the wives of prominent people like the first lady is just referred to as Lucy, or the wife of the Prime Minister as Ida.

**Governance.** Good governance is an issue that cuts across teacher and principal recruitment, retention, and training in Kenya. In Kenya the head teachers (HT) is regarded as the agent of supervision at the school level, on behalf of the government. They are involved in the translation of educational policies and objectives into programs within the school (Olembo et al, 1992).

According to Olembo et al, (1992):

The head teacher has the overall responsibility for the administration of the school. The head teacher is accountable to the employer, in this case the TSC. The head teacher's responsibility involves the interpretation of educational policies and objectives and implementation of the curriculum. The head teacher is answerable to the profession and is expected to demonstrate superior intellectual, moral and mature characteristics in his or her role as a head of the institution. The head teacher is supposed to be a role model for other teachers under him to emulate. The head teachers are accountable to the community they serve, including the parents. In this role, the head is regarded as a public relations officer. The head teacher is also answerable to the staff in the school. The head teacher is involved in the recruitment, orientation, promotion and transfer of staff. Finally, the head teacher is also accountable on school finances and facilities. This entails budgeting and accounting of the school finances as well as being responsible for discipline in the school for both the staff and the students (p.154).

Although these are the expectations of the head teachers, in most cases they are not always met, as many fall short of them. Owing to corruption and ethnicity, some of the head teachers are promoted irregularly to these positions when they are not qualified. Besides, there is no particular course(s) the head teachers attend to make them qualify as heads. Many teachers feel that they are just equals and to make it worse, some of the teachers serving under them earn more than their bosses and might even be better or more qualified than their superiors.

Across the world, research findings indicate that head teachers are one of the most powerful single determinants of the overall quality and effectiveness of schools. In Kenya, head teachers determine the performance of the schools, because they influence

how teachers and students view their school. If the head teachers are competent, they will influence the schools positively and make the students and teachers excel (GOK, 2007).

**Demoralized teachers.** In a study by Choti (2009) in Kenya, it was found that high school students performed poorly in national exams because the teachers were not committed to their work:

Teachers are not committed in playing their roles. You find that they are committed elsewhere and they miss their lessons. If we could cover the entire syllabus [...] then we would have good performance. All the A's that the whole of Nyanza province schools had was equivalent to the A's that only one national school, Mang'u high school, had. This is due to the commitment of teachers at Mang'u National School (p.311).

The Ministry of Education wanted to introduce performance contracts in 2008 to hold teachers accountable for their work. Teachers supported by their strong unions the Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT) and Kenya Union of Post Primary Education and Tertiary Institutions (KUPPET) resisted the move. According to Choti (2009), “resistance to performance contracts is partly because teachers would not like to be held accountable for their bad performance; that is why most teachers are scared of performance contracts. The teachers cry for a good salary package but are not doing what is equivalent to it.” (p.311). In my opinion, based on my experience of having been a high school teacher employed by the government of Kenya, the teachers would willingly sign performance contracts if the salaries are commensurate with the work they do. Some teachers fear that the contract might lead to loss of jobs and as a result of this, fear signing them.

The Wangai Taskforce Report (2001) on Student Discipline and Unrest in Secondary Schools was handed over to then Minister of Education Henry Kosgey following a wave of strikes in schools. The report made it so clear that teachers had

contributed to indiscipline and poor performance in schools since they were running other businesses (like 'Matatus) and paying little attention to students.<sup>21</sup> The taskforce chaired by then Director of Education Naomi Wangai recommended that this be stopped (Wangai, 2001).

Mr Apollo Mboya, the Law Society of chief executive officer, in the same study argued that "as much as the trend is worrying, government reports and directives are usually ineffective since they lack clear implementation guidelines and do not stipulate penalties against the offenders. They can only bear fruits if there is will and a clear policy. The report could only have worked if it was incorporated in the Education Act, and if it outlined the punishment to be meted out on teachers who defy the directive."

Mr. Mboya in the same report also notes that "timing is important when it comes to the implementation of proposals by taskforces. It is very clear that no teacher in government should teach in a private school or ran another business and the TSC usually take disciplinary action on anyone who breaks this rule".

Kenya National Association of Parents Secretary General Musau Ndunda, commenting on situation had this to say:

The engagement of teachers in private service has totally compromised the quality of education in public schools, yet no one is talking about it. We have a situation where thousands of teachers employed by the Government either own or teach in private schools. Ironically, these teachers send their children to private schools because they know public ones spell academic doom. (The Standard, Sunday, 15th November 2009).

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<sup>21</sup> Matatus are mini-vans used commonly in Kenya as means of public transport.

Teachers in public schools know the state of education in the schools where they teach. . The quality of education in public schools is low compared to the private schools, judging by the number of students who perform well in KCPE examinations and join national high schools, whose students qualify for admission to public universities in greater numbers compared to students from provincial or district schools. The quality of teaching in public schools has been jeopardized by the introduction of Free Primary Education in 2003 and Free Secondary Education in 2008.

**Kenya national union of teachers (KNUT).** In Kenya teachers' salaries and other working conditions are poor leading to demoralization and dissatisfaction. As a result there are two teachers' unions in Kenya for the welfare of teachers, namely; The Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT) and the Kenya Union of Post Primary Education and Tertiary Institutions (KUPPET).<sup>22</sup>

Education in pre-colonial Kenya as I noted in chapter one was highly segregated on racial basis. The Kenya National Union of Teachers was founded in 1957 to fight for the African teachers working conditions, especially the issue of salaries paid to African teachers vis-à-vis European teachers teaching at the same level, harassment of teachers by supervisors and inspectors of schools. There was blatant racial discrimination in housing and allocation of duties, especially in boarding secondary schools and denial of certain basic rights (pension, leave, medical allowances etc) to teachers. At this time of

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<sup>22</sup> Kenya Union of Post-Primary Education Teachers (KUPPET) is a rival to KNUT. It is believed to have been initiated by the government to weaken KNUT, which has been seen by the government as too powerful, with strong membership of over 200,000 teachers and led successful strikes for teachers, the most recent being in 2007. KUPPET has few members, mostly secondary and tertiary school teachers.

agitation for the independence of the country KNUT exerted a lot of pressure on the colonial government to establish an employer for teachers, with whom negotiations could be held (KNUT, 2009).

The KNUT today is a strong trade union, although it has been weakened by the formation of the rival KUPPET and the government trying to corrupt the officials to accept conditions imposed on the teachers. Some of the achievements of KNUT are the salary increments and halting of forced transfers as well as employment of more teachers. KNUT has promoted educational development in the country, and the teaching profession in particular (KNUT, 2009).<sup>23</sup>

## **Conclusion**

This study is put into context by the conceptual framework identified earlier in the chapter. The literature has further explored this conceptual frame work. The review of available literature has shown that the teaching profession is perceived negatively in Kenya and many other countries in Africa and the rest of the world. The issues of supply and demand of teachers as been addressed and through the review it has emerged that, there is a shortage of teachers in developing countries, especially in Africa as result of many factors like HIV/AIDS, poor working conditions, low salaries and many other causes of attrition.

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<sup>23</sup> This information can be accessed on-line from <http://www.knut>

There was focus on gender and teacher training and women and how they are perceived in the African context as well as ICT and teaching. The professional life of teachers is illuminated in the review, especially the demoralization of teachers as result of low salaries and negative perception of their career. Social issues that impact the teaching profession such as corruption, which is very rampant in Kenya especially in college admissions and teacher recruitment, have also been explored.

Ethnicity, a major factor in school, college, and university access, is discussed in the literature review. Some communities, for example the Kikuyu, have dominated university admissions and the best paying jobs. There are poor working conditions for teachers which make them leave teaching. Kenya National Union of Teachers, a trade union movement for teachers, was founded to look into the welfare of their members. There is need to do more research to inform policies in teacher education in Kenya and enable the necessary reforms.

## Chapter 3: Research Design

### Introduction

This study is a qualitative research, which was carried out as multiple case studies. The research was guided by the following research questions:

1. How is the teaching profession perceived?
2. What influences students to choose or not choose teaching as career?
3. What makes teachers stay or leave the profession?

I carried out interviews with the Deputy Principal and teacher trainees/student from Meru Teachers' Training College<sup>24</sup>. Further, I had interviews with the Chairman of Education Department in Kenya Methodist University (KEMU) and students from the same department and university.<sup>25</sup> I interviewed students from Kaaga boys' high school and Kaaga girls' high school, where I wanted to find out what motivates them to choose certain careers. Teachers from Kaaga primary school and Kaaga boys' and girls' high schools (including the principal of Kaaga boys' high school and principal of Kaaga girls' high school and head teacher of Kaaga primary school) were also interviewed to find out how they make meaning of factors that motivates them or the teachers working under them to stay in teaching or would make them leave the profession. Former teachers who have left the teaching profession were interviewed, to find out why they left and what can

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<sup>24</sup> In this study and in the Kenyan context, a bachelor's degree institution (four year) is known as a university and a college is an educational institution (normally two year) that awards diplomas or certificates.

<sup>25</sup> I chose KEMU, because of its proximity to other sites I was collecting data. KEMU has a department of education which train teachers and I also realized that teachers in the neighboring schools had graduated from there.

be done to improve teaching and prevent people from leaving. I also I interviewed Prof Kilemi Mwiria, the Assistant Minister for Higher Education, Science and Technology. I describe in detail the sample size and how I chose the population, later under choosing the sample. I further examined related literature, to establish the government stand and policy on teacher education and teaching generally. I made a pre-visit to the learning institutions to familiarize myself with the gate keepers and pilot the research questions, which I later modified before undertaking the actual field study.

### **Qualitative Research Study**

This study is qualitative whereby research is used to provide an in-depth description of a specific program, practice, or setting. This qualitative research has the natural setting as the direct source of data and the researcher becomes the key research instrument in the project. All data for research are mediated by the human instrument, the researcher. I was responsive to the context, adopted techniques and strategies according to the environment, so as to maximize my opportunities in collecting quality data (Merriam, 1998). Therefore, as a researcher I participated in the social world of the participants in order to collect qualitatively significant data.

According to Mertens (2005),

Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretative, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self (p.229).

Qualitative research helps researchers to make sense of phenomenon using the meaning people attach to it.

Qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials-case study; personal experience; introspection; life story; interview; artifacts; cultural texts and productions; observations, historical and interactional, and visual tests-that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals' lives (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p.3).

Berg (2009) argues that researchers should not always conduct research to amass data, but to discover answers to questions through the application of systematic procedure. Qualitative research looks for answers to questions by examining social settings and individuals who inhabit those areas. The interest is in how people arrange themselves and their settings and how they make meaning of their surroundings. Therefore, research methods on human beings influence how these people will be viewed. On this Berg (2009) further suggests that:

If humans are studied in a symbolically reduced, statistically aggregated fashion, there is danger that conclusions-although arithmetically precise, may fail to fit reality. Qualitative procedure should provide a means of accessing unquantifiable facts about actual people researchers observe and talk to or people represented by their personal traces (p.8).

Qualitative techniques should allow researchers to share their understanding and perceptions of others and look at how people make meaning of their daily lives or the phenomenon under investigation. In analyzing the findings, I was able to discuss the social contours and processes human beings use to create and maintain social settings (Berg, 2009).

According to Mertens (2005) qualitative research methods can be chosen based on three reasons:

The researcher's view of the world.

Mertens maintains that the “researcher's views, which include the constructive view, sees reality as not absolute, but defined through community consensus; and multiple realities exist that are time and content dependent. Therefore, a researcher will carry out the study using qualitative methods so that he or she can gain understanding of the constructions held by people in that context” (p.231).

The nature of the research questions.

Research questions can lead a researcher to choose qualitative methods. The intent is to understand the program or participants' theory, and beliefs, as to the nature of the problem they are addressing and how their actions will lead to desired out comes (p.232).

Practical Reasons.

Qualitative methods might be appropriate because many educational and psychological programs are based on humanistic values, the intended user of the research may prefer the type of personal contact and data collected from a qualitative study. The intended users should be involved in the choice of methods, so that they find the results credible and useful. Qualitative research may be used also when no acceptable, valid, reliable, appropriate quantitative measure is available for the desired outcome (p.232).

## **Case Study**

This is a multiple case study based on teacher trainees from Meru Teachers' College, Kenya Methodist University (KEMU), students, teachers and principals of Kagaa primary school and Kaaga girls' and boys' high schools, as well as former teachers who left the

profession. I also interviewed education administrators including the Assistant Minister for Higher Education, Science and Technology, Area Education Officer-Mulathakari division of Meru central district, Area Education Officer-Special Education coordinator-Meru central district, the deputy principal of Meru Teachers' College and chair-education department at Kenya Methodist University. The study seeks to establish the students' level of conception and how they make meaning of career choice opportunities in school before joining institutions of higher learning, and later the nature of jobs (in this case-teaching), examining why some teachers choose to stay or leave teaching. More elaborate data tabulation is given under sample selection.

A case study, according to Berg (2009):

Is an approach capable of examining simple and complex explanations, with unit of analysis varying from single individuals to large corporations and businesses; it entails using a variety of lines of action in its data-gathering segments and can meaningfully make us contribute to the application of theory (p.318).

A case study research can concentrate on a single phenomenon, individual, community, or an institution, this can enable him to uncover the interactions of significant factors characteristic of the phenomena. This study was an embedded case study, which involved looking at one case study but including several levels or units of analysis. It includes examination of one, or several subunits, of an overall focus of research. For instance, this study aims at examining how high school students make career choices and trying to understand why some careers are taken by certain people. In this study, several programs (high schools, teacher trainees programs, and university programs) were examined and evaluated (Berg, 2009).

Jensen and Rodgers (2001) offer 5 types of case studies:

1. Snapshot case study. Detailed, objective studies of one research entity at one point in time. It has hypothesis testing by comparing patterns across sub-entities.
2. Longitudinal case studies. Quantitative and /or qualitative studies of one research entity at multiple-time points.
3. Pre-post case study. Studies of one research entity at two points separated by critical event.
4. Patchwork case study. A set of multiple case studies of the same research entity, using snapshot, longitudinal, and or pre-post designs.
5. Comparative case study. A set of multiple case studies of multiple research entities for the purpose of cross-unit comparison (pp. 237-239).

This study falls under patchwork case study. It fits a set of multiple case studies of the same research entity using the other three types above. This multi-design approach is intended to provide a more holistic view of the dynamics of the research subject.

This present research study falls within the case study research subcategory. Part of the reason is that the study's main objective is to provide an in-depth examination of a phenomenon within a particular culture and environment. Mertens (2005, p.237) explains further that a case study is viewed by some authors as one type of interpretive research that involves intensive and detailed study of one individual or a group of people as an entity, through observation, self-reports, and any other means.

## **Choosing the Sample and Research Sites**

The selection of the research participants for this study was done through purposeful sampling. Purposeful sampling, according to Lincoln and Guba (1985), is “based on informational not statistical, considerations. Its purpose is to maximize information, not facilitate generalization. Its procedures are striking different, too, and depend on the particular ebb and flow of information as the study is carried out rather than on priori considerations. Finally, the criterion invoked to determine when to stop sampling is informational redundancy, not a statistical confidence level” (p.202). The object of research, as in this present study, “is two-fold: to detail the many specifics that give the context its unique flavor and to generate the information upon which the emergent design and theory can be based” (p.201). The multiple case study characteristics of this research involved students in one primary school, two high schools, Meru Teachers’ College, KEMU and former teachers in different locations.

I selected the research site based on a number of factors. I used accessibility as one of the main determinant of choosing the site. Marshall and Rossman (1998) recommend the selection of a research site “based on its accessibility, with a high probability of finding the phenomenon of interest, and where a researcher is more likely to develop trusting relationships with participants, ensuring high quality data collection and without compromising the credibility of the research project” (quoted in Choti, 2009, p.116).

This study seeks to make meaning of how high school students perceive and aspire for and choose careers. I had the study examine a student who leaves high school and decides or is compelled to be a teacher, and joins either two year teacher training

college or a four year university training as a teacher and I finally tried to look at teachers' perception of their profession when they are employed. To achieve this objective, seven sites were chosen; one primary school, two high schools, one two year teacher training college, one four year university (two former teachers are working there) and two government offices in the region where some former teachers work after leaving the teaching profession. The seven institutions are all located within one mile radius in what is called the Kagaa Academic Village in Imenti North district in Eastern province of Kenya.<sup>26</sup>

The information used in selection of the research sites was based on Mertens, (2005) suggestion of having a pre-visit. During the pre-visit or preliminary visits to potential sites I gathered information to determine their accessibility and suitability. During these visits, I conducted pilot study/work (with permission of the gate keepers at that site) that allowed me pilot research questions; suggest possible activities, locations, and people that I included in the study. I was aware that data provided by participants may vary based on the place, activity engaged in, or social variables at the time of data collection (it is during the pre-visit I was advised by the tutors at Meru Teachers' College to interview the teacher trainees when they were out in field for their teaching practice/internship-this enabled me to capture their training and be able to see how they interacted with the regular teachers and how they influenced each other). The initial pilot gave me an idea about the time required to complete the study and as well as the number

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The seven institutions are: Kaaga boys' high school, Kagaa girls' high school, Kagaa primary school, Meru TTC, KEMU and two government education offices. Kagaa is in Meru Municipality in Eastern province of Kenya and is referred to as an academic village because it has over 15 academic institutions located closely to each other.

of visits. The guiding principle was I avoid premature closure-that is, reaching inaccurate conclusions based on insufficient observations (p.249).

After piloting of my research questions I realized I needed to include the chairman of education department at KEMU, deputy principal of Meru Teachers' College and the principals of Kaaga boys' high school and Kaaga girls' high school as well and have the in-put of the Assistant Minister for Higher Education, Science and Technology (The Minister shed some light on government policies on teachers). A total of 25 participants were the focus of the study, as the table below indicates.

**Table 3.1: Participants in the Study**

Institution	Male	Female	Total
High School Students	2	2	4
Teacher Trainees (College)	2	2	4
Teacher Trainees (University)	2	2	4
Current Teachers	2	2	4
Former Teachers	2	2	4
Chair-Education Dept-KEMU	1	-	1
Principals	1	1	2
Deputy Principal	1	-	1
Assistant Minister	1	-	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>25</b>

An interview with the students aimed at developing an understanding of how high school and college students construct and make meaning of career choices. These institutions were selected on the because of their proximity to each other and to the researcher. The two high schools were chosen with aim of having a true representative sample of secondary schools in Kenya (one girls' boarding high school and one boys' boarding high school). The university, the teacher training college and the primary school were also taken to be a true representative sample of their respective learning institutions in Kenya.

Further, and in order to make the data more reflective of the experiences of both male and female high school students, deliberate efforts were made to balance gender in the types of high schools selected for each category i.e. Kagaa girls' high school, and a Kaaga boys' high school. Kagaa primary school, Kenya Methodist University and Meru Teachers' College are all mixed gender institutions of learning. I therefore, interviewed males and females to serve the purpose of balancing gender in all the cases. I sought views from both the teachers and the school principals. The ordinary school teachers' perception of the teaching profession could be different from that of the principals (one male and the other female) and hence the reasoning behind the choices.

### **Methods of Data Collection**

In this section, I describe the methods I used in collecting data. I present my personal constructions and experiences as a researcher and an instrument of collecting data. Further, I include the use of secondary data as a method of data collection, whereby I did documents reviews to examine newspapers, journals, exam results, teacher documents (syllabus, schemes of work, lesson plans and record of work) and the various government

policies and guidelines on teacher education in the country. Finally, I have described qualitative interviewing, which was the major method employed in data collection and conclude by describing how I gained permission and to enter my field study. In the field I used notes and tape recorders for the interviews.

**The researcher as the instrument.** In qualitative study the researcher is the instrument for collecting data. On this, D.M. Mertens (2005) adds:

The researcher decides which questions to ask and in what order, what to observe, and what to write down. Therefore, considerable interest has been focused on who the researcher is and what values, assumptions, beliefs, or biases he or she brings to the study (p.247)

In general, qualitative research texts recognize the importance of the researchers' reflecting on their own values and monitoring them as they progress through the study (this was done through peer debriefing and member checks), to determine their impact on the study's data and interpretations.

**The researcher.** The motivation and origin of this study can be traced back to my early life, interest and involvement in teacher education in Kenya. My motivation to succeed in school goes back to when I was growing up in Kalithiria (a remote village on the eastern slopes of Mt Kenya) in Meru North district of Eastern province of Kenya. I was the only boy in our family of seven, and I was expected to take the responsibility of herding our livestock. I would wake up early in the morning to take our cows and goats to graze and once in the field I would watch other kids of my age going to school. I developed the urge to go to school from that sight of kids in uniforms and wanted to escape poverty and the hardships of herding, e.g. I never carried any food because it was

not there and sometimes I would be forced to suck milk from our goats as they grazed. After seeing one of our neighbors' children going to school and getting good jobs after graduating, finally convinced my dad to let me go. I could remember walking for 20 km (it took approximately two hours to school and two more going home) to school, bare footed and with worn out clothes because my dad could not afford new ones.

My early days in school and suffering of poor kids in walking long distances to school, influenced me to be a teacher and focus on teaching in my research. In high school, I faced many problems ranging from lack of fees, discrimination by other students and teachers due to the fact that I came from a poor background and most of the other students were from affluent families. This discrimination motivated me to work hard in school and, at the end of the 6 years of high school; I emerged at the top of the class. I chose teaching, because I thought I could influence student's way of thinking and particularly motivate students from poor families to succeed.

I have been actively been involved in the education sector in Kenya and East Africa for over 17 years. Starting as a high school teacher, I was not a stranger to the schools, where I conducted the research on how students make career choices. In the primary school, where I conducted interviews on job motivation and satisfaction, I was not on unfamiliar grounds, because I have been a teacher trainer for over 10 years. As we trained teachers, we would take them for teaching practice in the primary schools<sup>27</sup> This served a purpose of helping me with the gatekeepers, whom majority are people well known to me, e.g. the principals of the colleges and schools are some of my former

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<sup>27</sup> Teaching practice is the term for internship and primary schools in Kenya are equivalent of the elementary schools in the U.S

colleagues or my former students. Apart from teaching in teacher training colleges in Kenya I spent several years at the Kenya Methodist University (KEMU), as a lecturer in the department of education, before I came to US for my PhD program in 2007.

As a teacher trainer I was able to observe the qualifications of both the teacher trainee and the tutors in the teachers' colleges. The teachers' colleges admit students with low qualifications and especially in science and mathematics (it should be noted that they are supposed to teach these subjects once they graduated). Many of the tutors/teachers at the teachers' colleges, like earlier noted in the literature review, are not qualified to teach these colleges because they are holders of bachelor of education (B.ED-secondary option), not the primary option required.<sup>28</sup>

Given that I had conducted a successful research study in 2004 for my Masters degree, exploring what influences performance of primary schools in the region, I drew from this experience to make necessary adjustments, in addition to utilizing my former acquaintances, to achieve the objectives of this research.

Being an insider in terms of culture was also an added advantage. Kenyans are very particular on some cultural practices. In my interviews, I was aware of and took into consideration some of these customs e.g. among the Africans in Kenya, it is a taboo to count children and livestock-they believe that counting them would bring bad calamities. Aware of such beliefs, I was very careful when asking the respondents about their family backgrounds, especially the social economic status where wealth is measured in terms of the number of livestock one has and the number of children and wives they have. After

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<sup>28</sup> The term tutor is commonly used to refer to the teachers or lecturers at the teachers' colleges.

talking to some teachers, they advised me against discussing some cultural practices, like female genital mutilation (FGM) openly; otherwise I risked not getting people to interview for fear of talking about touchy and very personal issues. This became evident in Kaaga girls' high school, where only one girl was ready to talk about FGM.

**Document review.** This is a qualitative case study of teacher education in Kenya and how people perceive the teaching profession. Apart from interviews, the study also relied on secondary data to gather information about teacher education at the macro and micro level in the country. At the macro level, this research focuses on historical and contemporary processes related to the institutional and cultural organization of teacher education.

The use of historical sources was oriented to trace the changes in the institutional patterns of teacher education programs as well as to incorporate significant dynamics happening in other areas; changes in the conception of femininity, masculinity, theories of child development, social and economic pressures, and in the discourses and orientations about teaching in Kenya. This level included data that ranged from origins and evolution of teacher training institutions in Kenya to the most recent reforms in educational policies, particularly those affecting gender issues, shortage of teachers and achievement of vision 2030, which aims to make the country industrialized by 2030 and has mentioned earlier, the role of teachers in achieving these goals.

This study reviewed documents such as local daily newspapers, especially the Daily Nation and The Standard, mission statements of the school, curriculum, national school rankings, staff records showing their qualifications and gender, class registers,

syllabus, schemes of work, record of work covered, and lesson plans. I also examined academic and career counseling departments' events calendar, and other correspondences which showed how the schools guided students for careers. Finally, official memos and policy documents like the code of conduct for teachers, from the Ministry of Education were accessed and assessed to examine how education policies are disseminated and implemented.

**Qualitative interviewing.** In-depth interview was used to provide an opportunity to understand how high school students make career choices and student teachers make meaning of teaching as career. Through qualitative interview the researcher was able to make meaning of students' perceptions of teaching as a prospective career. I was also able to explore how current teachers perceive their profession and what might make them stay or leave teaching. Finally, the interviews brought to light what made former teachers leave the profession and what might be done to rectify the situation.

Interviews as a strategy for data collection involves a researcher taking the role of asking participants questions.

The interview is an especially effective method of collecting information for certain types of research questions [...] and for addressing certain types of assumptions. Particularly when investigators are interested in understanding the perceptions of participants or learning how participants come to attach certain meanings to phenomena or events, interviewing provides a useful means of access (Berg, 2009, p.110).

After the literature review and the conceptual framework, I was able to come up with the general format relevant to the overall topic under investigation. These general areas; the family, school, college/university, career choice and jobs, evolved from the

conceptual framework and literature review. After creating the above conceptual headings, I listed relevant questions under each.

Before I went to the actual field I did a pilot interview. Berg (2009) refers to this piloting as pre-testing the schedule:

Once researchers have developed their instrument and are satisfied with the general wording and sequencing of questions, they must pre-test the schedule. Pre-testing helps in identification of poorly worded questions, questions with offensive or emotion-laden wording, or questions revealing the researcher's biases, personal values and blind spots. Pre-testing is necessary before the instrument is used in a real study. The researcher is able to practice the interviews and assess how effectively the interview will work and whether the type of information sought will actually be obtained (p.119).

I did a pilot study in Meru Teachers' College, Kaaga primary, and Kaaga girls' high school. In the pre-testing I requested the authorities to avail one participant for each of my schedules. After pre-testing, I adjusted and changed some of the questions. I realized that some of the questions, for instance on social economic status (SES) of the family, the size of the family and FGM were very sensitive and I had to rephrase them, asking the respondents to answer only if they felt comfortable doing so. Primary and high school students as well as the college students were not very willing to discuss some cultural sensitive issues.

Before the actual interviews took place I requested the participants to sign consent forms (included as appendices). On consent forms Berg (2009) notes:

Informed consent forms means knowing consent of individuals to participate as an exercise of their choice, free from any element of fraud, deceit, duress, or similar unfair inducement or manipulation. In case of minors or impaired persons, whose exercise of choice is legally governed, consent must be obtained from the person or agency legally authorized to represent the interests of that individual. Typically [...] consent forms contain written statement of potential risks and benefits and some phrase to the effect that the risks and benefits have been explained. As a rule, these forms are dated and signed by both the potential subject and the researchers or their designated representative. It is usual for the

researcher to briefly explain the nature of the research in this form, as well as offer an assurance of confidentiality and protection of the participant's anonymity and identity (p.88).

I made sure I explained verbally what the research was all about and I had the parents or guardians sign their children's consent forms. I took the consent forms to the schools earlier and with the authority of the school principals requested the potential student respondents to give the forms to their parents or guardians during visiting day.

During the interviews, I audio taped the conversations and took notes. The interviews provided a way of understanding how respondents make meaning of careers they choose and what they intend to do now that they might be in the wrong careers. The interviews lasted approximately one hour.<sup>29</sup> I did follow-up interviews when there were some issues which needed clarification. For current teachers, former teachers, and college students I did telephone follow-up. However, for high school students, I went back to the schools.

**Gaining permission:** Before the data were collected, I followed appropriate procedures to gain permission from the gate keepers (defined as those with the power in organization or agency) of the organization or community (Mertens, 2005). In my case gate keepers were the principals of high schools, the head of departments in Kenya Methodist University and the Meru District Education Officer. I had known some of these gate keepers while I worked in the region 5 years ago and this was an added advantage to me.

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<sup>29</sup> The high school principals' interview took less time (30-50 minutes), because of their busy schedules.

In organizational settings, such as schools and other educational institutions, formal procedures are established that define how permission is to be obtained. In this study, I obtained permission from the Institution Review Board (IRB) of Maryland and also from the relevant gatekeepers in the Kenyan Institutions.

**Accessing the field setting.** I made plans to enter the field in the least disruptive manner possible, taking into care to establish good rapport with the participants and the people in authority.

Warren (1988) identifies a number of variables that influence the researcher's entry into the field:

The fieldworker's initial reception by the host society is a reflection of cultural contextualization of his/her characteristics, which include marital status, age, physical appearance, presence and number of children, and ethnic, racial, class, or national differences as well as gender (p.13).

Although Warren speaks primarily within the context of conducting research in a foreign country, all contexts have their own cultural norms and expectations based on various biological and socially defined characteristics of the people in them. The researcher should be sensitive to what these norms are and how they might affect the study.

In effect, all field investigations begin with the problem of getting in. This involves consideration of who the subjects are and the nature of the setting. Robert Burgess (1991b, p.43) suggests that access is "negotiated and renegotiated throughout the research process." He further states that "access is based on sets of relationships between the researcher and the researched, established throughout the project"

Roger Vallance (2001) has a slightly different take on the matter. He suggests that access should be sought through introductions and referrals.

According to Vallance:

The essence of my contention can be summed up in the oft-quoted saying; it is not what you know, but who (m) you know. In a sense, this analogous to snowballing: using one research participant to indicate others who can be equally or more informative [.....] Instead of using contacts to widen the sample as in snowballing sampling, the suggestion here is to use one's contacts and relationships to gain the vital, initial entry into the field, where one can engage with possible research participants (p.68).

Based on Vallance view, I entered the field for the research as an insider of an area and topic in which I knew many people, as noted earlier, having worked in the education sector for over 17 years.

**Field notes.** During fieldwork, I took field notes documenting experiences and observations to augment data collected from other sources. I took interview notes alongside audio tape recording.

Field notes refer to the:

Written account of what the researcher hears sees experiences and thinks in the course of collecting and reflecting on the data in a qualitative study. Field notes are important because they provide with a “personal log,” which helps keep abreast with the development and progression of the study project (Bogdan and Biklen p. 107).

Notes were vital during the period of transcribing the audiotapes because they included “verbal descriptions of the setting, the people, activities, direct quotes” and comments on the margins (Merriam 1998, p.106).

Later, going through notes helped me, to visualize each participant's use of non-verbal cues, facial expression, and each interview setting was replayed live again in my mind. In the process of transcribing, notes came handy especially in detecting any mistakes and errors made during the interviews. Comparing the notes while listening to participant voices from the audiotape helped to detect and fix any errors which I might have committed.

To capture the importance of field notes to qualitative researchers:

Your audio tape misses the sights, the smells, the impressions and remarks made before and after the interview... but field notes provide the study with a personal log that helps the researcher keep track of the development of the project, to visualize how the research plan is progressing as by the data collected and remain self-conscious of how one can be influenced by the data collected (Bogdan and Biklen, 1992 p.107).

Field notes, in addition to a journal I kept during the duration of the fieldwork, helped reorganize for the next interview session, following reflections of the day's work, based on what I had planned to do and actually accomplished within any particular interview session. Adhering to time-schedules and making prompt re-adjustments when necessary, was vital for maximum utilization of my overall fieldwork.

## **Data Analysis and Interpretation Techniques**

Data analysis is the process of moving from raw interviews to evidence-based interpretations that are the foundation for published reports. Analysis entails classifying, comparing, weighing, and combining material from interviews to extract the meaning and implications, to reveal patterns, or to stitch together descriptions of events into coherent narrative. Researchers construct from this analysis informed, vivid and nuanced reports that reflect what the interviewees have said and that answer the research questions. Though the analysis is based on the descriptions presented by the interviewees, the interpretations in the final reports are those of the researcher (Rubin and Rubin, 2005, p.201).

Perhaps I can argue that my data analysis started early, even before I went to the actual field. This was in form of what went on in my mind as I struggled to come up with the research topic and how I would structure the study. The conceptual framework for this study has been evolving throughout my graduate study. Whenever I had a chance to write any academic paper, I always wrote something related to the teacher education topic. The refining moments for my topic came during the Comparative and International Education Society (CIES) conferences in Charleston-South Carolina in 2009 and this year's conference in Chicago. During these two conferences I attended presentations with the themes related to my still 'evolving' topic of study (teacher education and the teaching profession). From sharing with presenters of the papers related to what I was interested for research topic, themes emerged for the conceptual framework of my study. Five main themes emerged: high school students' choice of careers, college teacher trainees, university teacher trainees, current teachers, and former teachers.

As these themes emerged I returned to my literature review to search for appropriate conceptual frameworks, I could use to structure the study. I thought of tracing the academic journey of students from high school, to two year college training as a teacher or four year training as a teacher in the university, and then follow them after graduating and being employed as current teachers. Finally, looking at those who decided to leave the teaching profession and find out why they left.

Analysis in the responsive interviewing model proceeds in two phases. In the first, you prepare transcripts; find, refine and elaborate concepts, themes, and events; and then code interviews to be able to retrieve what the interviewees have said about the identified concepts, themes, and events. In the second phase several paths are followed. You can compare concepts and themes across the interviews or combine separate events to formulate a description of the setting. In doing so, you seek to answer your research questions in ways that allow you to draw broader theoretical conclusions (Rubin and Rubi, 2005, p.201).

Data analysis began early when I started the interviews. As I completed each interview, I examined its content to see what I learned and what I still needed to find out. Based on this on-going analysis, I modified main questions and prepared for follow-up questions to pursue the emerging themes. In the data analysis I let the data speak.

Qualitative analysis is not about mere counting or providing numeric summaries. Instead, the objective is to discover variation, portray shades of meaning, and examine complexity. The goals of the analysis are to reflect the complexity of human interaction by portraying it in words of the interviewees and through actual events and to make sure that complexity is understandable to others (Rubin and Rubin, 2005, p.202).

I started the first analysis while I was collecting data in Kaaga primary school, the two high schools, Meru Teachers College, the government offices where the former teachers were working and the Kenya Methodist University. This took place from May, June, and July of 2010. While conducting interviews I shared my emerging impressions and observations with the interviewees and invited them to comment on these initial interpretations as well as give their own opinion. I also asked my former colleagues at Meru Teachers' College and KEMU to comment on some of the emerging themes and impressions and to offer a broader context for the data I was collecting in the schools.

Following each interview session, I used my notes to check facts with participants to check their interpretation of words I used in the study. In cases where I needed further clarification during the analysis, I conducted telephone follow-up interviews with the participants and made efforts to incorporate any new findings with the already transcribed data.

The second analysis came after I returned to the United States from Kenya with audio tapes, transcripts, field and observation notes and documents which I had collected

from the field for review. The process of analyzing data obtained included transcribing interview tapes and notes, which helped to identify concepts, events and themes emerging from the interviews. The interview duration ranged from 30 minutes to one hour. Some interviews were longer than others e.g. the principals spent very little time with me (30-50 minutes) and the teachers-both current and former give more of their time.

After I refined, elaborated, and integrated the concepts and themes, I began coding. Rubin and Rubin (2005) define coding:

Coding involves systematically labeling concepts, themes, events, and topical markers so that you can easily and readily retrieve and examine all of the data units that refer to the same subject across all the interviews. The overall relationship between codes is called a coding structure. Thought is required to match your codes and the coding purpose of your study.

To enable data analysis, I had to code the data. Coding is described by Creswell as the “operations by which data are broken down, conceptualized, and put back together in new ways (Creswell, 1997, p.57).

Mertens, (2005) talks of open coding:

Open coding is the part of analysis that pertains specifically to naming and categorizing phenomena through close examination of data. During this phase, the data are broken down into discrete parts, closely examined, compared for similarities and differences and questions are asked about the phenomena as reflected in the data. Thus the researcher must take apart an observation, a sentence, or a paragraph and give each discrete incident, idea, or event a name or label that stands for or represents a phenomenon. The researcher should ask basic questions of the data, such as who, when, what, how, how much, and why? (p.424).

I analyzed data from each target students and school or education office as a case study, and later a cross-case analyzed to refine data across participants and schools. The

cross-analysis was important in making the connections between categories. This helped me by bringing the complexity of the context into the picture.

In this analysis I used percentages, tables, and charts. These different methodologies were useful in this study by helping make meaning of career choices among high school students and how student teachers, current teachers, former teachers and the general public perceive the teaching profession in Kenya.

In the section that follows, I describe the various methods I used to make my study credible, transferable or “generalizable” and I try to bring out the ethical considerations that I took into account when conducting the study.

**Credibility.** Guba and Lincoln (1989) identify credibility as the criterion in qualitative research that’s equivalent to internal validity in quantitative research. Internal validity in research deals with the “question of how the research findings match reality” (Merriam, 1998 p.201). In qualitative research, credibility asks if there is a correspondence between the way respondents actually perceive social constructs and the way the researcher portrays their viewpoints. In qualitative research, it is important to note that reality can be subjective and multidimensional. Therefore, I made efforts to ensure that standards are in place through which this study can be considered as valid and authentic (Mertens, 2005). To ensure validity and trustworthiness of the research, I employed multiple strategies to make the research credible.

***Data triangulation and member checks.*** Data triangulation involves the use of different and multiple data collection methods and sources as well as multiple perspectives in the way data is analyzed. Employing multiple sources of data increases the reliability and validity of the findings. To ensure construct validity, I collected

information from multiple sources including participants with different perspectives (i.e., students, teachers, counselors, education administrators, and politicians e.g. the Assistant Minister for Higher Education, Science and Technology) (Yin, 2003). I also conducted minimal observation of the students' teachers and reviewed school records they used in the teaching practice process.

A second strategy I used to ensure validity involved member checks with the participants. Member checks refer to the process of allowing participants review their texts to ensure accuracy and completeness of interview notes. Because of time limitations, after each interview session, I reviewed my notes with the participants to ensure whatever I wrote reflected the participants intentions or concepts. In addition, after transcription process was completed, I drafted case study report for each student and school, and asked the primary contact at each school (a teacher trainee or student) to review the report with individual students and provide feedback (Yin, 2003). In cases of follow ups for clarification, because of the distance between the participants and the researcher, and limited finances, a telephone follow up interviews with the participants was conducted and incorporated new findings with the already transcribed data.

***Prolonged engagement and persistent observation.*** Due to limited finances I stayed in the field for three months. Which, I believe was long enough to identify and observe salient issues for the research. This period was not very long, but the fact that I have been a high school teacher, teacher trainer, education administrator and University lecturer in Kenya for over 17 years went a long way to help in grasping issues better because of this prior knowledge and experience in this area of teacher training and career choices of students (Mertens, D.M, 2005).

**Peer debriefing.** I engaged in extended discussion with disinterested peers (these included my colleagues at Kenya Methodist University and the tutors at Meru Teachers' College where I had worked as Dean of Studies for 6 years), of the findings, conclusions, analysis, and hypotheses. The peers posed searching questions to help me confront my own values and helped in guiding in the next steps of the study (Mertens, 2005-p 254).

**Progressive subjectivity.** As a researcher I was able to monitor my own developing constructions and document the process of change from the beginning of the study to the end. I shared my constructions with peer de-briefers, who sometimes challenged my views and enabled me to keep an open mind and avoid my personal biases. Consequently, as a researcher I did discuss my personal experiences at the beginning and throughout the duration of the study, so this made me to keep an open mind and not be biased by my previous experiences of teacher education for 17 years, which I had as teacher and lecturer in the region.

**Transferability.** Guba and Lincoln (1989) identify transferability as the qualitative parallel to external validity in quantitative research. External validity refers to the extent to which findings from this research can be transferred to other contexts or generalized beyond the current study. The generalizing or transferring qualitative research's findings to other settings can be problematic. Since qualitative researchers engage in purposive sampling in the selection of study participants with an intention to understand a social phenomenon in-depth, it's not possible to generalize statistically (Merriam, 2002).

However, Mertens, (2005) suggest that a qualitative researcher needs to state the theoretical parameters of the research upfront so that readers can determine if the study can be generalized to other contexts.

On the other hand, Merriam (2002) views generalizability in qualitative research as “concrete universals” whereby “the general lies in the particular”, implying that “what we learn in a particular situation can be transferred to similar situations subsequently encountered” (p.28)

In this case, the reader is left to determine what is applicable to his/her context in to case to case transfer. In generalizability, qualitative researchers must also provide the rich details about the context of the social phenomenon in such way that readers are able to make comparisons. As Merriam (2002) points out, providing rich, thick descriptions is a major strategy in ensuring generalizability of a qualitative research. Data triangulation through multiple sources should help to strengthen the study’s validity. In addition, because this was a multiple case study, involving seven different sites, such a research design has the ability to enhance the level at which this study could be generalized to other contexts.

***Dependability.*** Guba and Lincoln (1989) identified dependability as the qualitative parallel to reliability. Reliability refers to the extent to which one’s findings can be replicated, the data is regarded as dependable and consistent (Merriam, 1998 p. 206). Because of that, qualitative researcher is the main instrument of data collection and as such the researcher came upfront to carefully reflect on, deal with, and report potential sources of bias and error (Patton, 2002 p.51).

According to Maxwell (2005), validity of research findings are threatened by the “selection of data to fit the researcher’s existing theory or preconceptions and the selection of data that stand out to the researcher” (p.108). As mentioned in the previous sections, I made an attempt to explain my positionality in the study (as a former teacher trainer in the region for a long period of time), the rationale for selecting the participants and the socio-cultural context from which the research was conducted, all aimed at ensuring dependability and consistence of the data collected. Moreover, using multiple sources of data collection helped to boost the study’s reliability.

**Confirmability.** Guba and Lincoln (1989) say that confirmability is the equivalent of objectivity in quantitative research. Objectivity means that the influence of the researcher’s judgment is minimized. Confirmability means that the data and their interpretation are not figments of the researcher’s imagination. Qualitative data can be tracked to its source, and the logic that is used to interpret the data should be explicit. Guba and Lincoln (1989) recommend a confirmability audit to attest to the fact that the data can be traced to the original sources and that the process of synthesizing data and reach conclusions can be confirmed. Yin (1994) refers to this process as providing a “chain of evidence”. In my case, the peers were used to review field notes, interview transcripts and help determine if the conclusions were supported by the data and not my subjectivity and personal biases.

**Ethical Considerations.** I adhered to the code of conduct in qualitative research, as stipulated by the University of Maryland’s Institutional Review Board (IRB). I used pseudonyms to keep away the identity of the participants, like I had promised when they were signing the consent forms.

Sometimes I was compelled by circumstances to go beyond the rules established by University of Maryland's IRB, to deal ethically with interviewees e.g. in some cases I made a deliberate effort of respecting interviewees wishes of obtaining clearance from higher authorities before interviewing them. In high schools, Kenya Methodist University and Meru Teachers' College I had to get a formal letter from the District Education Officer before being allowed to interview students and teachers. The principals told me that the IRB and consent forms from the University of Maryland, which they were supposed to sign, were not enough to have me collect data from the schools, because according to the government of Kenya I needed further authorization.

Rubin and Rubin (2005) have this to say about respect to interviewees:

Respect is shown in how you act toward your interviewees. Be unfailingly polite and make it clear that you appreciate them. Avoid mockery or sarcasm, not just while interviewing, but also in the write-up of the results. When you promise interviewees that you will not reveal their identities or link comments to their names, it is imperative to keep that promise (p.98).

Therefore, I strived to keep confidentiality by using pseudonyms names, when writing my findings. "Protecting confidentiality may mean collecting and maintaining data in such a way that they cannot be used in a court of law. It means keeping the interviews in a safe and secure place, so that others cannot run across the interviews by chance. Sometimes it means destroying any evidence that might link the interviewees to the specific individual" (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p.99).

## **Chapter 4: Career Choices among High School Students: Making or ‘Unmaking’ Future Generations?**

### **Introduction**

This chapter explores how high school students choose careers and a combination of factors that influences their aspirations and expectations about careers and their future as professionals. In choosing careers, complex factors which include family and its SES, level of parent’s education, interact to shape university course choices and future careers for high school students. These factors emerged from the interview data from high school students as they talked about career choices and expectations about university education. The high school students also talked about their parents’ and teachers’ expectations. There is also discussion on which careers the students like and why high they do not want to be teachers.

There is focus on the role of parents, siblings, peers, teachers, and the school’s influence to the students’ career choices. The community is also focused and how it socializes the students, and under the community, female genital mutilation (FGM) and male circumcision are addressed in relation to education. The issues discussed, ranged from subject choices and career guidance among form four students; to why they make these kinds of choices. The chapter also reflects on the various ways schools passes on information about careers to the students-these include the use of notice boards, media, visits and guest speakers. I have discussed two high schools’ profile, four high school students’ profiles and the profile of Hon Prof Kilemi Mwiria-Assistant Minister for Education, Science and Technology in Kenya. The profiles of Mr Kanya-a high school

teacher and career counselor at Kaaga boys' high school and that of his principal featured in this chapter are discussed later in chapter 7-Current teachers.

## **High School Profiles**

**Kaaga boys' high school.** Kaaga boys' high school is located in Meru municipality in Eastern province of Kenya. The school was started in 1910 by the Christian Missionary Society (C.M.S) from London, under the Meru Mission by Mr. Griffiths, Mr. Bassiet and Mr. Ijara from Ribe-Mombasa Kenya. The trio met chief Mwitari of Mulathankari and was directed to Kongo ka Agaa (place of witches) which was a forest. Since they could not pronounce the name Kongo ka Agaa, they coined the name Kaaga.

In 1913, Rt. Rev. Worthington opened a mission station in the present Kaaga boys' school. The initial buildings were small timber houses with roofs made of stem and banana leaves. They also put up a mission house in Kaaga. In 1923, the Meru warriors torched the banana fiber leaves dormitory and 12 boys were burnt to death. The warriors were unhappy with the intrusion of the White man and the changes he was introducing into their territory. The twelve were the first Methodist Martyrs and are canonized in the Kaaga MCK Hall. Only 5 boys survived the inferno, who became fierce pathfinders of Methodism in Kenya e.g. the late Rev. Philip M'Inoti, Rev. M'timbu. Kaaga grew with the first graduates of the formal Methodist Education group graduating in the 1920s.

The red brick building was built and opened in 1926 and housed 6 classes and an Assembly Hall. Part of the current dining hall was built in 1928. 3 dormitories were built in the 1920-30's named Worthington, Hopkins and Laughtons, all named after missionaries. One of them still stands in the compound and part of it is now used as a

store. The other part was improvised to extend the old and tiny dining Hall. The curriculum offered this time was mainly reading, writing and arithmetic, woodwork, carpentry, home science and agriculture.

In 1928, Mr. Clay took over Kaaga Methodist Industrial School and Rev. Laungton moved to start Meru Teachers' College in 1928. In 1936, Kaaga Girls' high school was started with 40 girls "Mambere" (modern) class which provided education for girls who would later marry the boys in the boys school as they could not marry the 'heathens'.

In 1966 Rev. Imathiu started the current school as a Harambee School<sup>30</sup>. The local community and co-operative societies donated Ksh.120, 000 to put up the school. In 1967, girls were introduced again, making Kaaga a Mixed School. In 1969-1970, Kaaga produced the best K.J.S.E results in the country

The school was required to admit the 4<sup>th</sup> class in Form1. The school then began the torturous journey of expansion. This is because the school was not prepared for this sudden expansion in terms of physical facilities. This meant that every beginning of the year a new class was required. This is the reason why the two old classes have existed to date. The principal of the school Mr. Victor Mutuma explained that very soon other crucial facilities like dormitories and laboratories have to be provided. Parents put up 2 classes on the tuition block in 2007 and 2008 respectively. In 2009, the Constituency

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<sup>30</sup> Harambee school is Swahili for schools which were put up by people pooling resources together and contributing for communal or private projects. This is very common even today (especially with start of free primary and secondary education, where more students have enrolled in schools), whereby the people feel the government is not doing enough for them, they come up and construct schools, and requests the government for public teachers.

Development Fund (CDF) came up to the rescue of the school and helped start two classes. One is now complete and the next is about to. The C.D.F allocated the school Kshs. 1,000,000 as first installment in 2009, and promised Ksh.300, 000 in 2010.

When the C.D.F through the efforts of the Member of Parliament Hon. Silas Muriuki came to the school's rescue, the parents could not afford to relax. They embarked on putting up dormitories. The first one, Longonot was started and completed in 2009, while the second one, Menegai was started in January 2010 and it is now complete and occupied. Hon. Muriuki further donated funding for a fish pond in the school through economic stimulus funds. The pond is about to be completed.

The school has an enrollment of 732 students. It has a total of 30 teachers and 21 non-teaching staff. Among the teaching staff, 20 are male and 10 female teachers. The trend of more male teachers in boys' schools and more female teachers in girls' schools in Kenya is common among all the schools. This is further exemplified by Kaaga girls' high school, which I discuss later in this study (in Kaaga girls' high school 30 out of 43 teachers are female). Among the teachers in Kaaga boys', three have master's degree in teacher education, 18 have a bachelor's degree in teacher education and 9 have three year diploma in teacher education.

**Kaaga girls' high school.** Kaaga girls' high school is located within Meru municipality in Eastern province of Kenya. It is one of the magnet schools in the country and attracts some of the best students from all over the country.

The school was started by the United Methodist Mission (UMM) of London in 1936. The school was started under pressure from the UMM in collaboration with the local chief. The first girls to be enrolled in the school were 7, mostly the children of

Christian parents. It was a boarding school from the beginning-the girls slept in a wooden building next to the bungalow housing the missionaries. The missionaries had trouble starting the school, because of the opposition from the local community, which at that time believed that young girls are supposed to be married and have children not waste time in a “useless school”.

The first principal of the school was W.H Laughton from England, supported by staff of one teacher and two nurses, all from London. The missionary teacher from London is quoted in the school profile:

The chief was the only one in the whole village who allowed his daughters to go to school. I can remember those first years were very difficult, but the girls (except those who were circumcised of course) attended school with the boys and were often dragged away by irate grandparents. These were exciting times. There was no question at all of persuading the girls to come-it was the women who counted. The girls did what they were told to and it was that which made it difficult. The first little group of girls arrived wearing skins- fragments of oily cloth (I can remember the smell so well) and we had to be very careful not to try to wash them.

From the above humble beginning, Kaaga girls’ high school today is a big school, with an enrollment of 1,100 students. It has a teaching staff of 43 and non-teaching staff of 36. Among the teachers, 30 are female and 13 male. This shows the gender dimension in the teaching profession in Kenya. Most of the girls’ schools, majority are female teachers and the few male teachers there, are either in math and sciences. This is portrayed clearly in Kaaga girls’ high school where all the 13 teachers in math, sciences, and computer studies are male. This confirms one of the trends in many Kenyan girls’ schools that math and science subjects are perceived to be hard and are male dominated subjects (this is just a perception in some girls’ school, because there are others -girls’ schools, which perform well in these subjects).

On the positive side, the female teachers serve as good role models for the girls to emulate. The school girls can also be more open to female teachers than male teachers, when it comes to counseling.

## **Participants Profile**

**Kelvin Mugambi.** Kelvin Mugambi is an eighteen year old boy in form four in Kaaga Boys' high school. He is a candidate for national exam for the university entry-Kenya Certificate of Secondary Exam in November 2010. Mugambi comes from a big polygamous family in which his father had three wives. Mugambi's mom is the second wife, but she has been divorced by his dad since 2004. He was born in Kaaga village in Imenti North District.

Mugambi is the first born from his mom. There are a total of 20 siblings, 6 from his mother, 8 from his dad's first wife and 6 from the third wife. Due to the divorce, Mugambi has faced many problems, because his mom remarried later, leaving him with nowhere to stay (his step father refused to take him in). He sought help from Baptist church, which gave him a part-time job and helped him pay school fees. He attended Tree shade Academy in Meru and sat for his Kenya Certificate of Primary Exam (K.C.P.E) in 2007 attaining 355 marks out of 500.<sup>31</sup> He was admitted at Meru boys' high school, but due to lack of fees, he did not go there and instead enrolled at Kaaga boys' high school, which charges cheaper fees. Mugambi is frequently sent home because of non-payment of school fees. The Baptist church does not pay the fee in time and this affects his academic performance in school.

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<sup>31</sup> The best KCPE candidate scores averagely 430-460 out of 500 marks. Therefore a student getting 355 is considered to have passed the exam and done fairly well. The best schools e.g. National schools like Alliance and Starehe take students with over 420 marks. The pass mark is 250 out of the maximum 500 marks.

Mugambi's father was a primary school teacher, but the mom was educated up to class eight (8<sup>th</sup> grade). Mugambi does not love his dad, because of the way he treated his mom and his siblings. His dad did not pay school fees nor did he cater for any of their needs after he divorced his mom. Asked about career guidance in school, Mugambi notes that the school invites motivational speakers regularly to their school. The career counselor/teacher also guides them in selection of courses to pursue at the university

His first choice of courses to undertake at the university was law, followed by business studies, and engineering. He said that he likes law because lawyers earn good money and are highly respected in society. He would consider business and engineering because the pay is also good and he would enjoy being an accountant or an engineer.

Mugambi is hoping to get a good grade to be able to pursue law at the university. For a student to qualify for law in a public university, he has to attain a mean grade A. He hopes perhaps one day he would be able to study at the University of Nairobi and go out of the country, preferably the United States for his masters and PhD degrees.

**John Kioko.** John Kioko is a 17 year old boy from Machakos District in Eastern Province of Kenya. His father is monogamous, and they are 7 in total (three boys and four sisters). He is the second born and all his other siblings are young and attend primary school. The parents are self-employed and do small scale business in Machakos town. His dad dropped out of primary school and the mom is educated up to grade six.

Kioko's parents prefer paying fees for the boys first over the girls. His father pays his fees first, before his sisters; because he (Kioko) went to a good school and he performs better than his sisters. His dad does school shopping for Kioko first and then if there is any money remaining he can shop for his sisters later.

Kioko comes from a very poor family and district-Machakos in Eastern province of Kenya. The district is arid and many people live under one dollar a day. Abject poverty and lack of food in this part of Kenya motivates many students to struggle in school and pass exams to escape from poverty by getting good jobs after college or university.

Kioko attended a public primary school and attained 352 marks out of 500 marks for his Kenya Certificate of Primary Exam (KCPE).<sup>32</sup> He was enrolled at Kaaga boys' high school which is a district boarding school. Kaaga boys' high school is 300 miles away from Machakos and Kioko feels disadvantaged by this distance because his parents do not visit him regularly like other students who come from around the school. The fare to school is expensive and his poor parents find it hard to afford frequent visits.

Kioko aspirations are in engineering. He explained that he would have liked to pursue aeronautical engineering. However, since the course is not available in Kenyan universities, he chose electrical engineering instead. His second choice was pharmacy, and finally business management. He chose engineering, because he thought that it is a good career and he would earn good money. He had to fill the other two courses because it was a requirement of the Joint Admission Board (JAB) to have three choices (I have discussed about JAB in chapter 6).

On the choice of universities he prefers Nairobi University because it is a public university and offers better courses. Nairobi University according to him is also situated nearer his home and this would save his parents a lot of money on traveling expenses.

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<sup>32</sup> KCPE is the entry exam to high school determines what type and class of school one attends. Those who perform well gain admission to the National schools which are very few in the country.

**Patricia Mutwiri.** Patricia is a form four (12<sup>th</sup> grader) student at Kaaga girls' high school. She comes from a poor peasant family in Katheri-Meru in Eastern province of Kenya. In a family of 3 children, two girls and a boy, Patricia is the 2<sup>nd</sup> born. Her first born brother is currently in a teachers' college. Her little sister is in class eight (8<sup>th</sup> grade). Her mother is a peasant farmer and the dad works with MEWASS, a Water company in Meru municipality. Her mother went up to class eight (8<sup>th</sup> grade) for her education and the dad completed form four (12<sup>th</sup> grade). The brother was educated by their uncle, because the dad was never around and had taken to heavy drinking hence was not paying school fees. The elder brother did not make it to the university since he scored grade C plain which could not gain him admission into public universities. Most of the house chores are done by her and her little sister.

Patricia attended a private boarding school and scored 378 marks out of maximum 500 in KCPE. She was initially attending Katheri mixed high school and only got admitted in Kaaga girls' high school in form two.<sup>33</sup>

Being a candidate for the KCSE in 2010, she performs fairly well and hopes to join university next year. She struggles with mathematics and chemistry and gets a C+ and above in those subjects, but she thinks she needs to improve on them to be able to attain a good mean grade. Her friends are always there for her and do not discriminate her because of her poor background, basically they are good friends.

**Vivienne Wafula.** Vivienne is a form four (12<sup>th</sup> grade) student at Kaaga girls' high school. Vivienne was born in Kitale in Western Province of Kenya. She is the 3<sup>rd</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Kaaga girls' high school is a provincial school, while Katheri is a district school and mixed-both boys and girls. Many parents prefer single sex schools, because they think that boys or girls learn better in such schools. I have explained later in the study the types of schools in Kenya, namely; National, Provincial and District schools.

born in a family of five children-three sisters and one brother. Both parents are alive and have master's degrees. The mom is a teacher and the dad works with the government. The parents took care of the children equally irrespective of the gender, especially pertaining to their education. In the family, the children do not get to do so much household chores, because there is house help-a house boy and house girl. Having domestic workers creates ample time for them to concentrate on their studies

Vivienne went to a private primary school until class 7 and later transferred to boarding school, where she did her KCPE attaining 365 marks out of a maximum of 500 marks. She qualified to go to a school in Western province but her parents preferred her to go to a school far away from home, so as to be able to interact with other people from different ethnic backgrounds and develop a wider and balanced perception and appreciation of other peoples' culture. She has interacted with people from other ethnic groups in Kenya and learnt to live with them.

She would like to pursue commerce, business administration and public relations at the university. Her performance is very good and she maintains position number one in class, with a mean grade A. She prefers to do commerce or a business related course but her parents want her to do pharmacy. She has been influenced by the subject (business studies) to do commerce and she loves it. But her friends at school always tell her to do medicine "since she is bright," but she does not like it. Her parents push her to pursue either medicine or pharmacy.

Vivienne often talks to her teachers, especially the career counselor/guidance teacher. She also shares her problems with the principal. She gets career information from the career days and motivation speakers invited in the school. At home, she gets

information about good careers from the internet, reading, her siblings, friends and family in general.

She wants to do a little accounting and then join campus to do medicine after high school. She would like to attend a university outside the country but if that is not possible she would opt for University of Nairobi to study medicine.

Below, I include the profile of Assistant Minister for Higher Education, Science and Technology Prof Kilemi Mwiria. I have quoted him in several parts of this study, and in this chapter he talks about government policy on secondary education.

**Prof Kilemi Mwiria.** Prof Mwiria, Member of Parliament for Tigania West, is the Assistant Minister for Higher Education, Science and Technology in Kenya. Prof Mwiria was born in Meru North district of Eastern province of Kenya. His parents were peasant farmers and both are deceased. He raised from humble a background and through excelling in school; he was able to join Miathene and Kangaru high schools before proceeding to the University of Nairobi in 1975 for his bachelor's degree in sociology. In 1979, he won a scholarship from the Rockefeller Foundations which enabled him to join the University of Chicago where he completed his master's in comparative education. He has a Ph.D. in international development education from Stanford University. He has published a number of books regarding education in addition to compiling reports for donor organizations and governments.

Prof Mwiria has been a researcher, a development consultant, and an education policy advisor for several organizations ranging from the World Bank to the Government of Malawi. He has worked for several international organizations, including the African Development Bank, the Association of Commonwealth Universities, UNESCO, the

American Institute of Research, Cambridge Education Consultants, Commonwealth Higher Education Management Service, and the Rockefeller Foundation. His career has seen him work in over 20 African countries, as well as the United States, Japan and several European countries.

Prof Mwiria has been a member of parliament since 2003 up to now (2010). He was Kenya's Assistant Minister for Education from 2003 to 2008 and the Higher education Science & Technology from 2008 to present (2010). Prior to pursuing politics, Prof Mwiria was an education consultant and a professor in Kenya (Kenyatta University) and South Africa (University of the Witwatersrand). He lost his job with Kenyatta University in 1994 for having spearheaded university staff rights as the first secretary general of the Universities' Academic Staff Union (UASU). His most recent research has focused on education policy making in Kenya and Africa.

Prof Mwiria has promoted reform aimed at improving school management, increased enrollments and opportunities for higher education. Management reforms have resulted in noticeable improvements in educational standards both at the primary and secondary school levels in his Tigania West constituency and the country at large. For example, Mituntu Primary School was the most improved in the Kenya Certificate Education (KCPE) in the whole of Eastern Province while Kibuline Secondary School was among the 100 most improved secondary schools in the country in the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) in 2006. Likewise, of the top 100 students in the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Examination, (KCSE) two came from one of the upcoming secondary schools in the constituency, Miathene Secondary School-where he

is an alumnus. For the first time in 2007, this school was ranked position 80 in Kenya out of almost 4,600 schools.

Other schools such as St. Luke's Secondary School which never had a student qualify to a public university have provided several candidates in 2006. Thus, although the policy of relieving non-performing head teachers of their headship positions was unpopular with the affected heads and their friends, the wider public has hailed this particular reform.

In the following section I discuss the functions of the family and how role models influence high school students in choosing their careers.

### **The Family and Role Models**

Through this study it was found out that high school students are highly influenced by the families. The family socializes the student through hierarchy of authority, which in the Kenyan context, ranges from the highest figures: the father and the mother followed by the oldest son, older siblings to the youngest. Three out of the four the high school students interviewed have parents who are literate. The literate parents are more aware of their children's need for career choice and influence directly what they (their children) choose before they leave high school. In the families where there were older siblings who were already in school, they assisted their younger brothers or sisters in learning how to read and write even before they (younger siblings) joined school. The older siblings continued to help their younger brothers or sisters at home with their assignments, after they enrolled in school.

Vivienne a high school student at Kaaga girls' high school had this to say about her parent's level of education:

Both of my parents have a master's degree. My mom is a teacher and my dad works with the government. They exert a lot of pressure to me and my siblings to excel like them in academics. My performance is very good and I maintain position number one, with a mean grade 'A'. I would prefer pursuing a degree in commerce at the university but my parents want me to be a doctor or to do pharmacy.

Some parents push their children to pursue careers, they (parents) want. This is exemplified by the above case of Patricia. This may be attributed to parents unconsciously or consciously wanting their children to achieve for them (parents) what they were not able to achieve and had ambitions, but did not make it.

The literate parents taught their children reading early, even before joining school.

Vivienne of Kaaga girls' high school recounted:

Through my parents, I learnt how to count and read at home, skills that helped me as I enrolled in school. My parents provided various writing and reading materials like included, wall charts featuring numbers, letters, the alphabet, picture books, sticks for counting, computers and toys.

Through the study it was found out that the socialization function of the family was changing from the traditional African society in different ways. The size of the family is changing from the traditional extended family to a nuclear family and in some cases single parents.

Some families have literate parents and others have illiterate parents. The literate parents provide the child with more learning opportunities; books are bought for such children and their progress is monitored. This may not be true of the illiterate parents.

Kioko points out:

My parents are poor and illiterate. They rely on peasant farming and were not able to afford any kind of learning materials at home. They (my parents) could not help us with assignments at home, like my classmates who always said they had been helped by their moms to do the homework.

On career choices Patricia of Kaaga girls' high school opines:

My parents do not talk to me about career choices and they do not care to ask me what I intend to do after high school. I attribute this to the fact that my parents went up to primary school level in their education. I am not influenced a lot by my parents in my studies and I would not want to lead a life like the one they have. My older brother used to teach me reading and writing before I joined class one. He continued to help me with my assignments even after I joined primary school and in high school.

I wanted to know who influences her and the people she admires (career wise).

She explains:

My aunt is my role model. I would like to be a lecturer just like my aunt. But I don't want to be a teacher. I would like to join Kenyatta University where they produce the best lecturers, and teachers in the country. My mom always encourages me to work hard and my teachers also encourage and advice me on career choices.

I talked to Mugambi of Kaaga boys' high school about his role models and how they have influenced him, he had this to say:

I have always wanted to be a lawyer; Mr. Mutula Kilonzo (Minister for Justice and Constitutional Affairs) is my role model. He is a good lawyer and I admire the way he runs the Ministry as Kenya's Minister for Constitutional Affairs. He has tackled corruption in this country very well.

Vivienne's role model is Martha Karua. Ms. Martha Karua is a former Minister in charge of Justice and Constitutional Affairs and resigned from the current government in 2008 because she argued that they had differed with the president on implementation of the constitutional changes in Kenya.

Vivienne had this to say about her role model:

I find Martha's decision making as very appropriate; and I admire the lady in her and the way she handles her issues in public, is the way I would like to be after my education.

In some homes where both the parents are workers, they have little time to be with their children. Children are left in the hands and care of the domestic workers. Whatever they learn and do is directed by such workers. The workers may not have authority over the children and some children develop discipline problems from their homes, as a result of lack of parental authority.

Some families live in urban centers while others are in the rural areas hence difference in lifestyles. Some parents in urban areas have abandoned certain traditional customs and practices due to the changes in lifestyles in their environment. A child in an urban environment is socialized differently from a rural one.

Vivienne recalls:

We live in the city, and we have access to the internet, libraries and other learning facilities. However, although my parents are at home most of the nights, they are not in most of the week days and some weekends, because they have to go to work every day. In the absence of both of my parents, our house help used to make sure we do assignments and sign them on behalf of my parents (teachers required the students' assignments to be signed by the parents that they had seen the home work and ascertain that it had be completed)

According to Mr.Kanya, a teacher and career counselor at Kaaga boys' high school (I discuss his profile in chapter7):

The family's role shifts to the school; therefore, the teachers become the surrogate parents. A teacher is supposed to show love and a sense of belonging to those children who have nobody to turn to, particularly the orphaned children, and is likely to find himself/herself at crossroads in an attempt to impart values that may not be acceptable to the guardians. The teachers are expected to be role models of good morals and counselors. They are supposed to develop good discipline among children even when some parents want to be over-protective and provide satisfactory learning opportunities even where parents fail to provide learning facilities. In other words a teacher is expected to make for the deficiencies in the roles that families are expected to play.

From the above interviews, the role of the family as an influence to their children's education and career choice has been highlighted. It was found out that in a family where the parents, especially where the mother was literate, they helped their children in learning and with assignments at home. The parents also influenced the careers of their children. For the school-going children, they are with the teacher most of the times. In the Kenyan school system the students have 3 months holiday; the rest of the months of the year they are in school. The teachers are therefore seen as surrogate parents and some of the young parents abdicate their duties to the teachers. In the following section, I relate socio-economic status of families and education.

### **Family Socio-Economic Status (SES) and Career Choices**

Poor families see education of their children as the escape route from poverty. Many parents in Kenya take their children to school as a way of investment. They hope after the children complete school, they will get good jobs and this way they can help them later in life. Education for the children is perceived by the parents as the only way out of vicious cycle of poverty and as their (parents') social security in old age. Many parents would not like their children to take up courses which do not pay well. They advise their children to choose courses like medicine which they perceive as prestigious and pay well.

On this, Kioko asserts:

My parents exert a lot of pressure on me to excel in school. My parents are poor and would like to invest in me, so that I can help them and my siblings later after school. They hope that I will get a nice job to be able to take care of them in their old age. They also hope I will help them to pay for school fees for my younger siblings after completing school and getting a job. My parents always tell me to be a doctor; they do not want me to be a teacher, because teaching does not pay well.

There is a lot of problem in paying school fees among many families in Kenya, which affects the students' performance and in turn make them unable to pursue careers of their dreams.

Patricia laments:

My dad is not committed to paying my school fees or even for my siblings. He never comes on visiting days and I feel very bad when I see my friends with both of their parents. He is the only one in the family with a stable job and income but he doesn't pay much attention to us. My mom works hard to pay our fees with the help of my uncle. I heard my mom tell her friend that, my dad could be having another wife and family, because he is rarely at home and never takes care of us.

Students from poor families feel disadvantaged since the parents are not able to pay tuition in time, visit them frequently and bring good food in school or employ private tutors for them. All these factors and especially lack of prompt payment of school tuition fees affects them psychologically, and leads to the poor students being frequently sent away from schools. These interruptions affect the performances of their children and hence are not able to pursue courses they would have wanted.

Mugambi of Kaaga boys' high school expresses this fear:

Some students are visited regularly and frequently by their parents, I feel disadvantaged when they buy them good foods and nice clothes. Some parents have employed private tutors for their children at home, to teach them (students) during the holidays. Since my family is poor I feel unprivileged and disadvantaged, because boys from rich family live more comfortable lives here in school and even perform better than us in exams. They (students from rich families) are admitted to do good courses at the universities like medicine and engineering. People like us, because of being sent away frequently for fees are likely to perform poorly and undertake careers like teaching and nursing because we might not qualify for better courses.

Vivienne on her part did not have any problems with her parent's SES, because they visited her frequently. They gave her enough pocket money to buy items she required from the school shop. She told me "my life in or out of school is cool".

I was able to get information on socio-economic status of the families from the interviews with the high school students. At first, they were quite shy talking about their families background, but as I explained my research was purely academic and that I would not disclose their real names, the students warmed and opened up about their families. The study revealed that students from poor families were likely to attend poor low quality schools and perform poorly in their KCSE. The poor tests scores disqualifies or locks them from the university courses whose entry requirements are high, relegating them to courses perceived as not prestigious like nursing and teaching.<sup>34</sup>

### **Peer Group and Community Socialization**

In the Kenyan schools, a peer group serves as information bureau—children from different and varied environments meet and share information and experiences. This emerged from the interviews of the high school students about how the peers influence them.

Participation in the formal peer group activities teach students about certain important things in life that may be neglected or not taught by the family and the formal school organization:

Vivienne of Kaaga girls' high school explains:

I learn from my friends how to cope with emotions and stress and fashions of new dressing and good grooming. We also practice amongst ourselves elements of specific modes of speech and practice imitating how our good English teachers speak. We discuss with peers how to relate to members of the opposite sex. My older girl friends in school used to tell us how to cope with the body changes from form two, as we were approaching adolescence, but now we are older and we guide the younger girls in form one and two.

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<sup>34</sup> In the discussion of the findings in this study, I did not incorporate the views of some of the respondents, because there are some topics, some felt they did not want talk about. In my consent forms it was stated clearly that they should not be feel compelled to discuss something they were not comfortable discussing. So, whenever any participant declined to talk about an issue I didn't press them further.

A peer group teaches sex-roles—girls team up with girls, and boys with boys and their plays and activities will be sex-role oriented and future adult roles.

According to Patricia of Kaaga girls' high school:

My peer group in school serves as a practicing venue for adult values where we learn from the older girls how to interact with adult groups in the community. The adult group is the reference point for the peer members; we aim at what adults do. Through the peers we learn cooperation and unity since the group operates as a collective body. We also learn some aspects of the culture of the society-peer group teach certain roles, social expectations and conditions, the attitudes and sentiments of its members. Peer groups discourage social discrimination. Children interact freely irrespective of the social classes of their families, races or tribes. The members, through the peer group, learn to be loyal and truthful to their peers. The peer groups helps me to fit well in school, though sometimes I feel there are some friends in the group who come from rich families, and I feel disadvantaged.

Mugambi of Kaaga boys' high school on his part claimed that:

Our teacher sometimes asks us to identify social groups in the class, by either asking students to indicate the individuals they would like to work with or asking them to be in groups of given numbers. Such groups would be ready to share learning resources like books with little or no friction particularly if the resources are scarce. Group leaders easily emerge without forcing any one of us to lead the group—people always volunteer to lead. Some of my peers are natural leaders, and we just find ourselves following the group leader.

However, peer group socialization can be harmful when its members are involved in anti-social behaviors such as bullying others, stealing other pupils' properties, fighting, dishonesty, disobedience, drug abuse, breaking school rules and regulations, rioting, and generally being indisciplined.

Through the study, I was able to talk to the principal of Kaaga boys' high school Mr. Mutuma, who explained to me how the community assists the school:

The community supports the school financially through Harambee collections for certain projects e.g. buying of school bus, constructing classrooms and other buildings required in the school, provide houses for teachers and make them feel welcome.<sup>35</sup> It encourages parents to take their children to school and pay fees for

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<sup>35</sup> Harambee is Swahili for pooling resources together and contributing for communal or private projects

them. The community also supports the school in ensuring that children are disciplined when they go wrong. Finally it assists the school to ensure that pupils are not allowed to misbehave while out of school, e.g. taking alcohol or other drugs, early pregnancies or early marriages.<sup>36</sup>

It was clear from the study that schools do not exist in a vacuum. They exist in the community, and to some extent they are extensions of those communities. This was evident in the peer groups' members and how they struggled to learn from each other, what the community expected them to be as adults.

### **Male Circumcision, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and Education**

In relation to the community, I now turn to male circumcision and female genital mutilation; an issue which is related to education- test scores, careers, discipline, and school drop-out of both boys and girls in primary and high schools in Kenya. I conducted this research in Meru region where male circumcision and female genital mutilation is a form of initiation practiced among some clans. Circumcision and FGM were not openly discussed by the high school/college students and teachers, because of the sensitivity of the matter.

Female genital mutilation (FGM) and male circumcision is practiced among many communities in Kenya, but some don't want to acknowledge its existence because of the stigma associated with it. I tried discussing FGM with the female high school students, teacher trainees, and even teachers themselves, but they were too inhibited and shy talking about it and I felt I should not pressurize them to discuss a topic they were not comfortable discussing with a stranger. It was only one girl from Kaaga Girls' high

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<sup>36</sup> In the Kenyan traditions, children belong to the community, not the individual; hence the role of molding them is a mandate of the entire community. The community expects the children to pay back to the society by being good citizens.

school, a teacher at Kaaga primary school and the Area Education Officer of Mulathakari division of Meru central district who were able to talk to me about it. The other people I approached said that was very personal, therefore I relied on my own personal experience and interviews of the three people I have identified above.

Ms. Monica Kubai a teacher at Kaaga primary school attributed her poor performance of KCPE to FGM. She explained to me that her friends who did not undergo FGM did not feel ashamed of themselves and concentrated in their studies, and today they are lawyers and doctors, while on her part she had been indoctrinated while in seclusion during FGM, that girls are meant to be wives at home and not go do a “Man’s” jobs. She told me that the old ladies taking care of her during the initiation had impressed upon her that “she did not require a degree in anything and from any school to be a good wife, and the only degree necessary was the ‘cut’ and good manners”.

Those who had not undergone FGM or circumcision were advantaged because they were not indoctrinated to think they were mature enough to leave school or feel ashamed of themselves, and hence concentrated in their studies, performing well in the exams and joining good high schools and later pursuing their desired careers.

FGM and male circumcision among boys and girls who are in school affects their performance.

Ms. Monica Kubai explained:

In our family we are Christians and did not practice FGM because my parents knew the dangers of doing it. However, my aunt who thought that I would not get someone to marry me sneaked me out of our home and took me to undergo FGM, without the knowledge and permission of my parents. FGM makes the girl child to be affected negatively but we did not realize it at that time. Many girls do not continue with education since they consider themselves “ready” for marriage. Some parents believe that by going through circumcision, children will reduce being naughty. Some children especially boys who have undergone circumcision,

feel like they are grown-ups and this affects their performance in school, since they do not respect the people around them, especially the female teachers. The boys in school once they undergo circumcision start developing discipline problems, because they feel they are adults and are not ready to respect authority. Indiscipline-which includes truancy, contributes to poor performance in test scores and this affects the courses the students will choose at the university. During my time in primary school, many girls who underwent FGM, with me dropped out of school to get married. Others felt ashamed of the fact that many other girls in school had not undergone FGM and this made them feel inferior, especially when they learnt the dangers of the practice. I was lucky my parents supported me and encouraged me to continue with my education.

Through experience I can explain briefly boys' circumcision, because when I was growing up, it was one of the practices among my community (the Tigania clan of the larger Meru ethnic group). The initiation process includes separation of the initiates from the rest of the family members and the community at large. The young initiates are kept under instructions and supervision of carefully selected adults-mostly relatives of the boy. The boy is instructed on adult duties, responsibilities and obligations. They are taught about traditional legends, folklore, history of the community and their sexual responsibilities (in preparation for marriage), and respect for the elderly. As the young initiate go through the rites, they are tested for physical and mental courage and endurance. These tests may be in form of various kinds of torture, which are regarded as a gauge of how they will endure pain and discomfort which the new life will bring in their future lives.

Through circumcision and FGM initiation adolescents are formerly transformed socially and spiritually into adulthood. In this way the society not only socializes its young by outwardly moving them into new roles of social responsibility, but also transforms them inwardly by molding their moral and mental disposition towards the people around them e.g. their parents, siblings, spouses and neighbors. Initiation for both

boys and girls is a collective responsibility for the entire family and village and serve the purpose of testing the courage and completion of education.

Male circumcision is practiced by most families in Meru and many other tribes in Kenya. Boys between the ages of 10-18 years (teenagers) are expected to undergo circumcision. This is carried out mostly after the boys have sat their Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE), but some may undergo it after or before. In the past, boys were circumcised by traditional experts whose knowledge of performing the “surgery” was passed from father to his son-hereditary. The traditional “circumciser” used the same surgical blade on many boys in the traditional set-up to signify some form of bondage of those who shared the same “knife” (these regarded each other as “knife brother”, by virtue of having shared the same knife). The sharing of the knife marks the establishment of a peer-group or “age-set”. Such age-sets are common non-kin groupings found among the Meru people. People who are of the same age set regard each other as brothers and age mates and generations are founded on them (those who were circumcised at the same time are members of that age set which is given a name e.g. my age set was given the name of “Miriti” and all boys or men who underwent the initiation during that time belong to that generation or age-set).

Today, with the spread of HIV/AIDS has made medics through the government campaigning against the sharing of knives to curb spread of the pandemic. Today, because of the fear of the spreading HIV/AIDS many parents take their children to hospitals for circumcision.

The circumcision ceremony takes place during the December holidays after the KCPE and schools close. After circumcision, the boys are secluded for duration of one

month. During this seclusion, only men who are circumcised are supposed to visit the initiate. The boy's parents and sisters are not allowed to see him. The boy is fed with the best food during this period (the wealth of the family is gauged by how fat and well clothed the boy is during the "coming out" ceremony).

In the Meru traditions, FGM and male circumcision are highly valued in the clans who practice the ritual. I now turn to FGM and since I may not be knowledgeable enough on the rite I interviewed two women and one high school girl, who shed more light about the initiation for girls.

Patricia Mutwiri of Kaaga girls' high school was bold enough to talk about the taboo subject of FGM. She told me that many girls in her school had undergone FGM, but they were too ashamed to admit it:

I feel what I underwent was not fair and I should talk about the disadvantages of FGM for those younger than me to benefit. I would encourage parents not take girls for FGM, because of the pain I went through. My mom and my aunt took me to undergo the rite without the knowledge of my dad and I almost died because of excessive bleeding after the operation. I was taken to an old traditional "circumciser" who did not have knowledge of modern medicine, and were it not for my dad who discovered what had happened to me, I would have died. My dad took me to the hospital and the doctors were able to control the bleeding. FGM is barbaric and outdated in this modern world. I almost dropped out of school, because immediately after undergoing FGM I could not go back to my former school for fear of scorning by teachers and fellow girls who had not undergone the rite. My dad came to my rescue again when he looked for another school where I was very happy to transfer.

According to Ms. Monica Kubai, during her time as a young girl, female genital mutilation had gone down due to religious factors. One of the positive relics of colonialism in Africa was discouraging of some cultural practices which were considered by the colonial governments through the Christian missionaries as harmful e.g. FGM and

women inheritance. Christian families today do not practice FGM, though some of them do it secretly.

To Ms. Faith Makena (I have her profile in chapter 8) a former teacher and currently the Area Education Officer in Mulathakari division of Meru central district, FGM is very common in the area. Through the study I found out that FGM and male circumcision were leading to school drop-out and made those who underwent the rites feel alienated from the rest in the school. In some cases the new initiates' performance deteriorated after undergoing the practice. Once the tests scores went down or the initiates did not perform well in KCPE, then they could not join good high schools, which meant they could not pursue the careers they always wanted to do at the university

She observed:

FGM affects learning in this division where I work. I count myself lucky, because my parents were educated and Christians and therefore didn't make us undergo FGM. Many girls in our school underwent FGM in class 6 (grade 6) and in our class I felt like an outcast because among the girls, I was the only one who was "mkenye" (derogatory for uncircumcised). Both the boys and girls and sometimes even the teachers would tease me and my sisters for not undergoing FGM. FGM was believed to prepare girls for their future roles as adults, mothers and wives. In the area where I work, many girls drop out of school after undergoing FGM, because it is believed to prepare them for marriage, hence make them feel out of place in school, with others who have not undergone the "cut". Those who have had FGM, sometimes feel inferior today, because many NGOs, the church and the government have had very successful campaigns to stop the practice, to the extent of those who have undergone it to feel ashamed. From the medical perspective FGM is known to fuel the spread of HIV/AIDS because some traditional specialists who perform it use the same knives or razor blades on many girls, without sterilizing them. FGM has also been known to cause difficulties in child birth, as a result of complication emanating from undergoing the ritual. Some have argued that FGM was originally designed by men in the African traditional set up to reduce their women libido. Today, FGM has sometimes led to break-up of families as a result of divorces due to husbands accusing their wives (those that have undergone the 'cut') for not being very responsive in bed. The churches, NGOs and the government have reacted by coming up with alternative rites of passage (ARP) to replace the harmful FGM. Through alternative rites of passage, the girls are secluded and taught cultural issues pertaining to their roles as future

wives, mothers and women without undergoing the 'cut'. These virtues were some of the reasons why FGM was valued in the African traditions and they can be taught without necessarily having the girls undergo the painful, torturing and traumatic FGM. The ARP is very common and liked by many parents and girls as it avoids all the dangers associated with FGM. The emphasis is that "it is not the physical 'cut' that matters, but the knowledge and life experiences passed to the young girls."

I purposely tried to look for women who would give me views from two perspectives-one who has undergone FGM and the other who has not. It was very difficult and challenging endeavor, because this is considered a taboo subject (circumcision and sexuality) among the Meru people. I had first to talk/convince some female teachers I knew in Kaaga primary school to convince Ms. Monica Kubai that my research was purely academic and not intended for any other proposes. Fortunately, when I interviewed Ms. Faith Makena, she was very open-minded with me and talked about FGM at length, because she is a campaigner against it and she has not undergone the rites, so she did not have any inhibitions.

### **The School as a Socializing Agent**

In the Kenyan context the school is defined in terms of having a population composed of students, teachers and the non-teaching staff. It occupies a territory – the school compound, with complex buildings, playgrounds and gardens. It has a set of goals which define the aims of the institution and has a structure of authority with the head teacher at the top, followed by the deputy head teacher, then other teachers and students.

Tribalism is very common in many Kenyan schools. Tribalism is noticed when students are admitted from the local region, hence not being able to interact and socialize with others from different parts of the country. This is partly to blame on the government

policy that high schools admit 85% of students from the province and 15% from the rest of the country.<sup>37</sup>

Prof Mwiria-Assistant Minister for Higher Education, Science and Technology, points out:

I agree with the Secondary School Head Teachers Association that the system of admitting 85% of our secondary school students from local communities is bad for socialization, quality education and national unity. We however must first address challenges in the way of changing this policy. Although the genesis of the national school admissions' policy may have been more political than professional, we now have to address the issue of cost to parents.<sup>38</sup> Remember that the recently introduced day secondary schools' policy meant to make secondary school education affordable has resulted in many parents opting to enroll their children in day schools even when they have been admitted to national and provincial schools. For parents to afford sending their children in any part of the country, we need a richer national society, not one almost totally dependent on educational bursaries. I have previously suggested a compromise; two well resourced national schools (one for boys and another for girls), in each constituency. These schools would recruit the top Kenya Certificate of Primary Exam (KCPE) students from all over the country. In addition to national unity, such a measure would address issues of equity and quality in education because many more Kenyans, especially those from public schools would have a chance to enroll in a top school. We are almost getting there with the proposed budgetary support for at least one centre of excellence in each constituency. We could do another such school for each constituency next year. The other constituency schools can continue to recruit locally.

There is a developed sense of belonging together, manifested during competitions when students wear school uniform which identifies their school.<sup>39</sup> In the schools, time is

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<sup>37</sup> Kenya has 8 provinces, among which there are some which are more developed than others. The marginalized provinces e.g. North Eastern feel that the 85% policy in high school admissions compounds the problem more, by reproducing inequality in education, whereby children from rich provinces are favored by being admitted in better schools in their provinces. The schools in North Eastern province are of low quality when you compare them with other provinces.

<sup>38</sup> Tuition fees in national schools, is normally very high and some parents are not able to take their children there.

<sup>39</sup> In Kenyan schools, all students are supposed to be in school uniform. The uniform's color is chosen by the schools' management; hence different schools have different uniform colors.

divided in specific ways; every student is expected to be in a given place at some particular time and there is an informal organization within the formal set-up represented by peer activities.

In the formal setting in the two high schools I visited, there was the academic culture which is transmitted through: students learning to obey and accept authority. Students are socialized to different status e.g. as members of different classes, clubs, dormitory and they learn to cooperate for the success of a group or a team. Students learn to accept competition in academic achievements and excellence that is rewarded. Students learn good morals, e.g. respecting their seniors. They also learn their rights and those of others.

Ms. Maria Marete, a teacher at Kaaga girls' high school lamented:

We find ourselves too busy trying to cover the content provided in the syllabuses which form a basis on which pupils will be examined or tested. The success of a teacher is gauged by the number of children who perform well and join good high schools or universities and not how well they take part in music or drama at national level, or how well behaved and socialized students are or the number of trophies they have scooped in sports, or how they teach. The number of students assigned to each teacher may be too large to enable him/her give special attention to the bright or poor students who need guidance and encouragement to further their reading or class work. Our school lack adequate facilities to enable the students to develop the numerous types of traits that they may possess, e.g. musical instruments, art materials, tools for craft-work, libraries, etc.<sup>40</sup>

In the schools I visited, I asked the teachers about the problems they face in helping students to cope with socializing and interacting with each other. I learnt that

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<sup>40</sup> Test scores and exams are given a lot of emphasis and importance in Kenyan schools. They determine who goes to which university or college. The value of a teacher, head teacher or a school is gauged on how many students qualify to join university (public) and what courses they pursue there.

teachers often find themselves in a busy time schedule that leaves no time for creative work with the students.

### **Why High School Students do not want to be Teachers**

According to the study, none of the four form four students from Kaaga boys' high school and Kaaga girls' high schools interviewed chose teaching as the first choice of courses to be undertaken at the university.<sup>41</sup> They gave varied reasons for not choosing teaching as their first among the preferred degree courses.

They viewed teaching as a low status job, and negatively perceived by the community, not given the credit it deserves, irrespective of the work the teachers do.

They said that teaching is very demanding with very little pay, as Patricia put it:

I would not like to be a teacher because I find the job tiresome and some students are naughty and I don't think I can handle them. I also think the teachers are not paid enough to suit the life I would like.

Some of the parents exerted a lot of pressure to their children when it came to choosing careers. The parents pushed their children to choose careers that they (parents) wanted and not necessarily what the students wanted.

Vivienne explains:

I would not like to be a teacher. Teachers seem to be poor if you compare them with other professionals like doctors and lawyers. I prefer commerce but my parents want me to be a doctor. I have been influenced by the subject (business studies) to do commerce and I love it. But my friends at school and my parents always tell me to do medicine 'since I am bright', but I don't like it. My parents push me to pursue either medicine or pharmacy and I fear making them unhappy.

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<sup>41</sup> Form four is equivalent to the 12<sup>th</sup> grade in the US education system and this marks the end of the primary and secondary education cycle and students sit for Kenya Certificate of Secondary Exam, whose test scores are used as an entry requirement to the universities.

I sought to know how Kioko of Kaaga boys' high school perceives the teaching profession. He shared his opinion on the teaching career:

Teaching offers poor career progression and very few promotion opportunities. Some of my teachers are still in the primary school where I went. They stagnate in one school and without any promotion at all, and some have even retired, having taught in one school and one class for their entire teaching career. Teaching is boring, uninteresting and repetitive. Teaching is highly demanding in terms of preparation, draining by working long hours, dealing with undisciplined and badly behaved children. I would not like to be a teacher because dealing with human beings is difficult. I would rather deal with machines instead of human beings. The only job I can take up, which is related to teaching is a university professor, because professors do a very crucial job of research and deal with adult students at a higher level of education and are well paid.

Mugambi of Kaaga boys' high school had mentioned to me how his dad who is a teacher mistreated them and failed to pay school fees for them. Mugambi had developed a very negative picture of teachers because of his dad. I asked him to tell me whether it's only his father's influence or if he had other reasons to hate teaching so much, and whether he would consider choosing teaching as a career:

I hate teaching with all my heart because my father was a teacher and the way he treated us (my mom and my siblings) was horrible. He neglected us although he had money he did not pay school fees for us. He influenced me to hate teaching and was also a bad role model to me. My dad and most of my other primary school teachers, especially male teachers were perpetual drunkards. My dad had three wives and 18 children. He never cared about us, especially my siblings from my own mom, whom they divorced when we were small. He was a very dad and impacted very negatively on me, since I feel that if I will treat my children like he did, then I wouldn't even like to be married and if I get married, not to many wives [...] and definitely I would not like to be a teacher like him.

Teaching was less attractive especially to male students and high academic achievers (those students who had good mean grades never considered becoming teachers)

On the above Kioko of Kaaga boys' high school adds:

I perform very well in exams and I would not want to waste my good grades on teaching. I come from a poor family and I am the first born son and if I get good grades I will go for engineering which pays well. Besides, I find teaching to be more of a career for women and those who don't do well in K.C.S.E.

The teachers were not good role models to the students and they (students) did not admire the kind of life the teachers lived. Mugambi of Kaaga boys' high school, opines:

My class five (fifth grade) primary school teacher came to school always drunk and smelling of cheap liquor- "chang'aa" ( a local alcoholic brew) I think teachers are not well paid and therefore cannot afford expensive and decent beers and dressing. He was always late in coming to school and classes. I can't forget the kind of clothes he used to wear [...] "mitumba" (second hand) oh [...] worn out and with "chapatis" (patches) all over. This coupled with the negative picture of my dad, made me form a very low opinion of teachers, although majority of the teachers who taught me were good, others were disgusting.

In the discussions I covered the profiles of schools, four high students and the Assistant Minister for Education, Science and Technology. I have found out from the study that parents (especially the mothers' level of education) and peers influence the careers that high school students want to train for in the universities. The SES of the family also plays a very important role in determining the performance of the students in school, hence influencing the careers that they take at the university. Through the study, teaching was not appealing to the high school students (the preferred careers are law, engineering and business). Their teachers and parents who were teachers seemed to have depicted a negative picture of teaching, making the students to dislike it. The students thought teachers were not well paid and they gave examples of teachers not dressing well, not having good cars or none at all and dealing with indiscipline students as some of the factors they do not consider teaching as a career.

## **Ways through which Information about Careers is disseminated**

**Notice boards.** In the schools that I visited, there was a vocational references shelf in the school libraries where important announcements were displayed. Information about career openings and higher education were displayed in some places where students were able to see i.e. on notice boards and in the classes. The teacher counselor serves as adviser to a specific prefect whose responsibility is to post appropriate and display current items. Through the notice boards, current information on careers is posted to help develop awareness on potential jobs and training.

**Guest speakers.** One of the most effective ways described by the career counselor and all the students interviewed was to have guest speakers who work in a given trade or professions, be invited to the school/class and give an account of his/her training and share some of on-the-job experiences. According to the students and the career counselor, the guest speaker would be a creative person, particularly one who has excelled in some form of self-employment, can make a special contribution by helping students realize the importance of their own initiative in seeking out a suitable career.

Mr. Kanya the career counselor at Kaaga boys' high school described such a speaker:

When inviting people to come to speak to our students, we look for charismatic professionals and eloquent speakers. The speaker should be an enthusiastic person who can hold the attention of the students. He/she should be free to talk about the disadvantages as well as the advantages of given kinds of work, and willing to engage in a question-and-answer period/sessions with the students. The motivational speaker should be able to impress the students, to make them to aspire to be like him or her.

In some schools according to Mr. Kanya, it was possible to schedule a series of career talks. Those were probably more helpful at the level of form three (11<sup>th</sup> grade) and

form four (12<sup>th</sup> grade), though many students will show an interest in form two (10<sup>th</sup> grade). Mr. Kanya shared about the guest speakers:

Some of the speakers may even become role models to be imitated by some students. They teach students about the values and importance of work and work ethics. In some incidences they give students motivation and so that they can learn through their experience (speakers) to become responsible workers. They stress the values of honesty and integrity at work. Guest speakers challenge students to explore their occupational interests and abilities in order to make an assessment of themselves and make informed decisions about their career choices.

The form four students were more likely to benefit from the speakers, because they are in their final year in high school, before joining university, college or the job market.

**Career conferences.** The career day(s) or career conferences were found to be useful in informing students about prospective careers. Schools are invited to attend the conferences where there are presentations from key representative of employers/and training institutions. The career conferences are mostly held in centrally and strategically located schools, where other institutions can attend. The career conferences are attended by the graduating classes and their teachers.

**Visits.** First hand exposure to working conditions in an office, shop, factory, or place of outdoor employment were often found to help a student focus on conditions which he/she will hope to find, or to avoid, in the career he/she will choose.

Vivienne of Kaaga girls' high school seemed to enjoy visits so much and explained:

Our school has a new bus, which our parents bought for us to use in school. We enjoy when we take tours and visit factories and other places we would like to work when we graduate from college. Our teachers schedule class visits to some of the representative businesses or industries in the area. Such visits are very meaningful to us because they are more real than the theories we learn in the

class. Our teachers and parents have to plan in advance for the trips to succeed. We are expected to learn as much as possible about the business or industry and the kinds of work that is done there before we visit, so that we will know what to look for and what questions to ask. We also visit universities and other institutions of higher learning to familiarize ourselves with the courses offered there, before we make our career choices in form four.

The visits to factories, offices and universities were very popular with high school students, because they (students) argued that these visits “broke the classroom monotony” and made learning more real, in a real world not the abstract theories learned in the classrooms.

**The media.** Mr. Kanya explained that the media plays a very important role in giving information on careers to high school students.

He further expounds:

As school counselors we are always alert to current radio and television programs and print media advertisements and publications, which are pertinent to educational or vocational guidance. If possible we organize career guidance session to coincide with these programs. We allow our students to watch TV at specific times and show education documentaries and movies on weekends. We have a computer lab, where students are allowed in at specified periods to familiarize themselves with how to use them, get access to information about universities and course they would like to pursue, careers and jobs. Printed material from newspapers are displayed in the notice board, libraries or even discussed in the class.

**Careers information booklet.** According to Ms. Kinya the principal of Kaaga girls’ high school:

Information booklet is produced by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology to be a guide for career counselors and their students. The booklet has the information about opportunities for higher education in universities, middle level colleges, public and private employers who sponsor students (i.e. pay school/tuition fees and provide living/subsistence allowances). Students have access to the careers information from their career counselor, so that they can read and understand the requirements for the careers they choose. As principals we have the duty of giving communication on careers from the Ministry of Education to the career counselors to transmit to the students.

Careers information booklet availed to me by Mr. Kanya had information on the following careers: Teaching e.g. teachers in schools, college tutors, university lecturers, and professors. Agriculture, forestry, and water conservation e.g. soil specialist, veterinary doctors, agro-foresters, water engineers, field officers, and dairy officers. Health e.g. doctors, nurses, laboratory technicians, and dieticians. Technical work e.g. designers of home/office furnishings, men and women wear. Tourism and related services e.g. tour guides, booking officers for tourists/visitors, hotel managers, chefs, dancers, and musicians. Skilled office work e.g. clerks, secretaries, bank managers and accountants. Social services e.g. community development workers, local leaders e.g. chiefs, psychologists and counselors. Armed forces careers e.g. policemen, prison wardens, and security guards. Legal profession careers e.g. lawyers, magistrates, and judges. Miscellaneous careers e.g. librarians, journalists, commercial artists and salesmen and newscasters (GOK, 2009).

**Career forms.** Mr. Kanya of Kaaga boys' high school further explained that during the third term of form four, students are given an opportunity to complete the Ministry of Education careers form, on which they indicate their preferences for continuing their education at the university, and for training to work in one of the groups of careers listed above. Completion of this form results in the opening of educational and vocational doors for many students. They are notified during succeeding months of their selection to further educational or vocational opportunities. Students, who fill the career forms and submit them on time, pay an application fee of Ksh 200. However, those who do not fill forms as scheduled are allowed to do so when the form four examinations

results are out. The results are announced in March each year. The late applicants pay a fee of Ksh 400.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter I have discussed how the family, community, peers, and the school influence high school students in choosing their careers. The chapter has further explored the role of the career guidance teacher and the factors he considers when guiding students in choosing their careers before leaving high school. I also examined why high school students do not consider teaching as their first career choice in the two high schools sampled. There were four form four students interviewed from two high schools-two from a girls' high school and two from a boys' high school. The Assistant Minister for Higher Education, Science and Technology was also interviewed and he gave the official policy of the government on high school education. I have views of the career counselor at Kaaga boys' high school and the principal of the same school.

I have included summaries in every sub-topic in this chapter, however the main ones were that all the high school students interviewed did not want to be teachers. The careers ranked high among the high school students were law, medicine and engineering. Poverty was seen as one of the factors motivating students from poor families (Kioko, Patricia and Mugambi) to excel in school and pass exams to train for "perceived lucrative" and better careers to escape from the vicious cycle by getting "good jobs" after college or university.

The students are highly influenced by their peers, role models and parents' level of education. The courses they undertake at the universities (and future careers) are determined by their performance in national examination and this performance in turn is

influenced by the type of school they attended. The students are socialized by the school, which does not operate in a vacuum (it is highly influenced by the society in which it exists). The students get information on careers from the guest speakers, career conferences, actual visits, career booklets and the media.

## **Chapter 5: Teacher Education in Teachers' Training Colleges:**

### **Teaching as a last resort?**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter illuminates the training of teachers in the two year colleges (Teacher Training Colleges fall under this classification). The chapter offers a brief overview of teacher education in Kenya, especially in teacher training colleges. In the Kenyan context, a college is a post-secondary institution that awards either a certificate or a diploma. Colleges, unlike universities tend to be smaller and emphasize teaching over research.<sup>42</sup> The chapter also features profiles of Meru Teachers' College and those of its deputy principal and the four teacher trainees from the same college. The analyses and results of the interviews are discussed throughout the chapter.

The study examines why the teacher trainees chose teaching as a career and how their training is undertaken. It examines salient social issues related to teacher education including the family, community, role models, gender, and corruption. Finally, the chapter includes information on training of teacher trainees and the various documents prepared by both the teacher trainees and regular teachers in readiness for teaching. I visited Meru Teachers' College and also went to Kaaga primary school, where the teacher trainees were undertaking their teaching practice (internship).<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> College in another sense can also be educational divisions or campuses of a larger university such as college of Arts or a constituent college e.g. Meru university college is a constituent college of Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology

<sup>43</sup> Teaching practice (TP) is a form of internship, where the teacher trainees are attached for a certain duration to do actual teaching. I discuss TP later in this chapter.

## College Profile

**Meru Teachers' College.** Meru Teachers' College is one among the 18 public teachers' colleges in Kenya. It is located in Meru central district of Eastern province in Kenya. Meru Teachers' College was started by the Methodist Church of Kenya in 1947 at Kaaga Mission Center. The main objective was train teachers for the Methodist schools in Meru district.

In 1949, the college moved to its present site as a government teachers' college, with objectives of training teachers for public schools. The college has had 13 principals since its inception. From 1947 to 1970 the college was headed by white principals only and the first Kenyan African principal took control in 1970.

Meru Teachers' College is among the 18 public teachers' colleges in Kenya. It has 355 males and 613 females, with a total of 968 students both first and second years. It has teaching staff of 80 lecturers and among them 25 are male tutors.<sup>44</sup> The non-teaching staff is made up of 58 employees, who are paid by the government.

**The Deputy Principal of Meru Teachers' College.** Mr. Jim Muna is the deputy principal of Meru Teachers' College. He is married with two children. His wife is a secondary school teacher in a neighboring school. Mr. Muna hails from the Meru central district just like most of the lecturers in the college.

He was promoted to the post of deputy principal after serving for 4 years as the dean of studies in the same college. Previously, he served in Meru Teachers' College for 20 years as a lecturer. Since Mr. Muna graduated from Kenyatta University in 1996, he has been teaching in Meru Teachers' College for his entire professional life.

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<sup>44</sup> I discuss the issue of gender and teacher education later in the chapter

He has a bachelor's degree in secondary education from Kenyatta University and has registered for a master's degree (guidance and counseling) in Nairobi University, and he hopes to graduate next year.

As a deputy principal, he is in-charge of discipline of both staff and students. He also acts as the chief administrator in the absence of the principal and serves as the teaching practice coordinator. His other duties include being in-charge of the teaching and non-teaching staff, overseeing the day-to-day smooth running of the college. He serves as the chair of the graduation committee and coordinates all the students' co-curricular activities e.g. sports, music and drama.

### **Meru Teachers' College Students' Profiles**

I wanted to interview teacher trainees and find out why they chose training as teachers. I was also interested in training of teachers and hence I interviewed student trainees when they were out undertaking their teaching practice.<sup>45</sup> The four teacher trainees I talked to were all in Kaaga primary school. Kaaga primary school neighbors Meru Teachers' College, and is one of the many schools the college uses to attach its teacher trainees for teaching practice. Teaching practice is seen as an important component of teacher training and is therefore mandatory to all students before they qualify for the certificate in primary teacher education.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> I timed my research to coincide with the teaching practice session, so that I could interview students when they were out in the field for internship and be able to observe first hand. I also wanted to ease my work, because I could interview student trainees and current teachers at the same venue and save myself going to another school.

<sup>46</sup> I discuss the profile of Kaaga primary school in chapter 7 on current teachers. The two current primary school teachers I interviewed teach in Kaaga primary school.

**Steve Mash.** Steve comes from Katanga division in Thika district in Central province of Kenya. In his family, there are five kids and he is the second born, two boys and three girls. His father is a painter and his mother is a peasant farmer. His dad and mom have primary education only, but they value education very much because they never managed to pursue education further. They encourage Steve to work hard in school so that he can get a good job and help them out of poverty.

His eldest sister went up to class 8 because the parents were not able to pay for her secondary school fees and they married her off at an early age of 16 years. He went to a rural school which was public and scored 295 marks out of 500 marks. Steve was admitted to a day high school in his home district.

Meru Teachers' College is far from his home and he felt that traveling far is good; he is able to mingle with people from all parts of the country. All students are treated equally and learn from each other, since they come from different backgrounds. I have incorporated more of his views in the discussions that follow in this chapter.

**Priscilla Jep.** Priscilla was born in Kitale in the Rift valley province of Kenya. Her family is made up of 10 members, 8 children and 2 parents, 4 girls and 4 boys. Unfortunately 1 boy and 1 girl died, so there are 6 children left.

When it comes to the household chores, all the children helped their mother, but naturally the girls in African context did more work especially cooking and cleaning. When it came to going to the shamba (farm), they all went to help. Her mother is a housewife and her dad is a peasant farmer. Her mom went up to primary school level and the dad studied up to form 6 but did not go to college. Her parents rely on agriculture to sustain the family. It was a challenge to pay all their school fees, because

agriculture was their only source of income to educate all the 8 children. There was no preference when it comes to children going to school and both girls and boys were all given a chance to go to school.

Due to lack of school fees, she had to drop out of school in form 2 and stay at home for two years. She always wanted to be an engineer, but could not make the grade required because of being away from school. Her first career choice was to be an engineer since she used to get good grades in physics and she loved it. Her second choice was to be a nurse then the third choice was to be a teacher. When she resumed high school, she was not able to make the minimum qualification to join a public university and only managed a mean grade c+.

Her parents could not afford to pay fees for private university, as there were other children in high school who needed attention. Therefore, after high school she got a job in her former school and worked for two years as an office messenger. Her former principal helped her to get admission to Meru Teachers' College and pays her college fees.

For now, she is in college training to be a primary school teacher. Afterwards, she hopes to continue with her education in the university and get a degree. She likes Meru Teachers' College, because of the good physical environment and the diversity of the students. There is no tribalism in the college and student trainees socialize without any tribal prejudice. She has friends from many of the tribes represented in Meru Teachers' College.

**Shadrack Muriuki.** He was born in Mbeere district in Eastern province of Kenya. His father is polygamous and has three wives. First wife had 5 children.

Second has none and the third has eight children. Among the three wives, his mother is the third wife. He is the second last born in his family. There are 3 boys and 5 girls in his family.

Shadrack said his parents treated all of them-boys and girls equally. He was inspired by his mother, his sister and his step sister to become a teacher since they are teachers (high school). His father is old (80 years) and is a peasant farmer. He (his dad) attended school up to class 7 (grade 7) and though he wanted to continue with education his parents refused and this made him to aspire to have all of his children to have the kind of education that he lacked. His grandparents saw it as waste of money to educate their children and instead they used the wealth saved to pay off their sons' dowry to marry as many wives as possible.

For primary education, Shadrack attended a public day school. He attained 392 marks out of 500 marks, but unfortunately he could not join high school immediately. He had to wait for his elder sister to go to school first. So he repeated class 8 and got 400 marks out of 500 marks. He was later admitted to Kangaru high School in Embu. He wanted to do law or become a judge; however he got a C+ which could not allow him to pursue a degree in law. He attributes his average performance in high school to frequently dropping out of school due to lack of school fees e.g. in form three he was in school for one and a half terms only.

**Harriet Atieno.** Atieno was born in Nyanza province in Siaya district of Nyanza province in Kenya. She was raised in a family of 5 children where she is the last born among 3 girls and 2 boys. Her father is a retired manager of Kenya Tea Development Authority (KTDA). The first born in the family is a boy who is pursuing a degree in

education, the second born is a boy and training as a priest, the third born is a girl who is a nurse and the fourth born is a girl and a secretary. His father identified more with the boys and the mom with the girls. They used to help with household chores in their different gender roles in the day-to-day work in the home.<sup>47</sup>

She attended a boarding mission school in an urban center. She got 488 marks out of 700 marks in the Kenya Certificate of Primary Exam (KCPE) and was admitted in a provincial high school-Ng'iya girls' high school. Her dad encouraged her to pursue education up to the university level. They were guided about careers in school and their teachers would invite guest speakers to encourage them to do the courses of their choice.

She got a C+ in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Exam (KCSE) in 2004. After high school, she expected to join university for a parallel degree program but funds couldn't allow. Her dad encouraged her to join an institution in animal husbandry where she attained certificate before joining Meru Teachers' College to train as a teacher.<sup>48</sup> In the next part I examine the status of the teacher education in Kenya.

### **Current Status of Teacher Education**

Admission to primary teachers' colleges is based on the 8-4-4 system of education. This system includes 8 years in primary school, 4 years high school and 4 years of university. For the primary teachers college, it means 8 years in primary, 4 years in high school and 2 years in college.

Mr. Muna the deputy principal (DP) of Meru Teachers' College laid it down:

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<sup>47</sup> In the African (Kenyan) traditions, girls are expected to perform household chores and boys are expected to take care of the domestic animals (e.g. herding of animals is seen as more manly)

<sup>48</sup> Parallel degrees are common in Kenya especially for those who fail to join public universities for the government sponsored degrees. I explain this further in chapter 6.

The minimum entry grade to be admitted to a teachers' college is a C plain in KCSE, without any regard to the quality of certificate in terms of subject areas. After two years of training those who pass the Primary Teacher Education examination (PTE) and teaching practice are awarded a P1 certificate. After qualifying the graduates are expected to register with the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) which is mandated to register, employ and promote teachers. The PTE curriculum was revised in the year 2004 to allow for specialization in either Science oriented subjects or Humanities. This is done in the second year under what is called option A & B; option 'A' being Sciences and 'B' Humanities. Though there is specialization in second year there are core subjects which every student is expected to undertake. These are Physical Education (PE), Information Communication and Technology (ICT), English and Kiswahili. Option 'A' is comprised of Agriculture, Home Science, Mathematics and Science. Option 'B' comprises –Social Studies, Music, Art and Craft and Religious Education. Teaching Practice is mandatory and comprise of three sessions – one in 1<sup>st</sup> year and two in the second year. In line with the Sessional Paper No.1 of 2005 and Vision 2030, the Ministry of Education has embarked on upgrading the P1 certificate to diploma in primary teacher education. It is envisaged that this move will improve the quality of teacher trainees. With the envisaged improved quality of primary teacher's education through the diploma curriculum, avenues should be opened up for the graduates to upgrade to university level. There should be some form of accreditation to enable the graduates from primary teachers' colleges to take fewer units and hence a shorter time to graduate with a degree in education.

According to the Assistant Minister for Higher Education, Science and Technology Prof Mwiria (profiled in chapter 4):

Public teachers' colleges admit students based on quota basis. This means that each district has to give statistics of the teachers needed and that is used as criteria to allocate the number of teacher trainees to be admitted from each district.

### **Why Teacher Trainee chose to be Teachers**

The major goal of the interviews was to help explain why teacher trainees chose to train as teachers. Two males out of the four teacher trainees interviewed put it clearly that they landed in teacher training colleges because they had failed to qualify for public university admission. The other two were female teacher trainees, who stated that they always wanted to be teachers. All the four teacher trainees mentioned that they would have

wanted to attend public universities or private universities but they could not afford fees charged in the later.

Steve plans to complete training as a teacher but ultimately his ambition is to become a lawyer after attaining university education. He never really chose teaching and joined teacher training college because he did not qualify to go to public university.

On this, Steve adds:

I have always wanted to help people since I was brought up in a poverty-stricken family and I have encountered many problems. I would like to represent poor people who are downtrodden and languish in jail because they don't have anyone to pay bonds for them or they cannot afford lawyers. Basically, I would also like a job that is well paying, to be able to help my parents and my siblings. My first choice in high school was being a lawyer, then a civil engineer. I got a C+ in KCSE which did not qualify me to join a public university. After high school, I stayed at home for 2 years while helping at home. I was also teaching in a local primary school where I noticed that I could teach. If I were to be given another chance to choose a teachers' college to attend, I would choose one far away from home since I wanted to experience a new environment far from my home area.

Jep is one of the two teacher trainees and teachers interviewed, who said that they chose to train as teachers:

I love children and would like spending more time with them. I have friends who have influenced me to be a teacher. I like being a teacher because I like interacting with little children and teaching them. I would like even my children to be teachers. I like being a teacher because; I think it's a good career, its fulfilling and rewarding.

Atieno of Meru Teachers' College was encouraged by her mom to be a teacher.

She illuminates why she chose to be a teacher:

My mom encouraged me to take a course in teaching. Another reason which made me to choose teaching is that one can get a job and at least earn a living however small it is. I am also ready to get employed by a private school or if I get a chance with the government; the better. I am not married yet and even the man I would like to get married to would be a degree graduate teacher. I want to be the best English teacher ever. I will strive to improve my English and hence I will try

all means to do another course in English, maybe get a diploma or a degree. Actually in high school I chose bachelor of education as my first choice, then animal husbandry followed by business studies.

Shadrack did not want to be a teacher but wanted to use it as a spring board to other careers.

He emphasized:

I want to be a teacher for a short while then later when I get enough money; I will go after my dream career to become a lawyer. I want to use teaching as a stepping stone to get to law. I think that there are many other people like me in the college, who are just training as teachers because they did not make it to the university where they would have loved to pursue courses of their dreams.

The student teachers interviewed chose teaching for varied reasons. However, the common reason was that all of them had failed to secure admission into public universities and therefore joined teachers' colleges as a spring board to their dream careers. Two students out of four wanted to be teachers and it is worth noting that the two were females. The other two males, Steve and Shadrack entered teaching as a spring board to other careers.

### **Family, Community and Teacher Training**

All the four Meru Teachers' College students I interviewed talked of having grown up in poverty. This explains why teaching is seen as a career for students of a poor socio-economic status. Affluent families can afford to take their children to private universities, even if they (children) did not qualify to join public ones. Many teacher trainees come from poor households, and their parents hope that once they graduate, they would help the family out of the poverty. For example, Pricilla Jep grew up in Kitale, in the Rift Valley Province-Kenya. Her life was a struggle as the family was poor and her father, a

perpetual violent drunkard; often beat up her mother, who was struggling to look after Priscilla and her 7 siblings.

But thanks to her former principal and her determination and tenacity, Priscilla has turned her life around and today has enrolled in college and lives in relative comfort. But she has not forgotten the pain of growing up in poverty and is determined to save as many children as she can from the suffering she went through.

Priscilla Jep felt that people can do something to alleviate poverty in the community around them and vows that she will make a difference:

I grew up without shoes and my school uniform was always in tatters, because my parents could not afford new ones. When I graduate from college and I am employed, I want to make a difference and give children from poor families a chance to go to school with a full stomach and not experience the hunger that made me unable to concentrate in class. I would like to set up a children's home for the destitute.

Priscilla Jep seemed to have read widely and used this statement by Indian pacifist and human rights activist Mahatma Gandhi to aptly summarize her childhood:

There are people in this world so hungry that God cannot appear to them except in the form of bread. No child can learn effectively with a rumbling stomach; I know it because I've been there.

After sitting her Kenya Certificate of Primary Education exams (KCPE) Priscilla who performed well enough to go to secondary school, but she could not pursue her education immediately due to lack of fees.

After wasting nearly a year at home, she went to live with her aunt, in order to help her around the house. Her aunt later enrolled her at Moi Nangili Girls' High School in Kitale town, but she could not raise all the money required for the fees. As a result, Priscilla's father had to borrow money from a neighbor to top up the amount, but he was

unable to repay it. “My father had no choice but to sell part of the family land to pay him,” Priscilla recalls.

Despite their efforts, after a while, neither her aunt nor her father could afford to keep her in school any more. “Eventually, I threw in the towel and dropped out of school in Form Two,” she told me.

Being out of school only led to more problems, with Priscilla’s hopes of continuing with her studies dashed, her mother felt she would probably be better off married. So the following year, she brought home a barefoot, shabbily dressed, illiterate, 30 year old suitor and married her off to him for KSh200 (\$3) bride price.

The petite, soft-spoken Priscilla further lamented:

I wanted to get away from our leaking grass thatched house, lack of food, and my father’s violence. I could not stand seeing my classmates going to school, while I was here wasting away as a house wife. I could not imagine being a teenage mother and not continue with my education. To my mother’s disappointment, the union lasted only two month. I ran away because I was not interested in marriage.

But her family would have none of it. “You are now married; go back to your husband,” they told her.

In the meantime, her brothers were fighting with their father for having sold a piece of the family land to pay Priscilla’s fees without consulting them. Soon afterwards, her father left for Kisumu to look for a job and died mysteriously the following year. Priscilla later returned to Moi girls’ Nangili high school, through the efforts of the principal, who offered to pay her school fees and take her to college thereafter.

About people (community) raising funds for him, Mash of Meru Teachers’ College explains:

I feel indebted to the community that helped pay my fees through a Harambee. I would like when I am employed to give back to the society, so that other needy students like me can benefit and go to school. There are many bright and needy children in our village who cannot attend school because of lack of fees. This is very sad for our community, since such brains go to waste.

Further, Mash faced poverty when growing up. He recalls:

There was a problem in paying school and college fees and my parents had to do a Harambee to raise my school fees. I want to be able to help people in my society when I start earning. I feel indebted to the community and the only way to wash away the feeling of guilt is by giving back to the needy.

As I talked to teacher trainees, it dawned on me the extent to which they felt indebted to the community. Many felt that they would not be where they are today, if the community did not come to their rescue. Through the study, it emerged that most of their families were poor and this had a negative impact on their KCSE performance, which disqualified them from joining public universities to pursue courses of their choices.

### **Peer Influence and Role Models in choosing Careers**

Priscilla Jep of Meru Teachers' College had nothing but admiration for her former principal in high school, whom she was proud of as her role model:

My role model is the principal of Moi girls' Nangili, where I went for my high school. My former principal not only encouraged me to work hard while in school, but also her generosity and big heart are unequaled. She is a woman of her words and never keeps grudges. She not only helped me secure a place in Meru Teachers' College, but also pays my tuition fees, buys college uniform and gives me pocket money.

Atieno of the same teachers' college was also influenced by her high school principal as well. She shared:

While I grew up, my role model was my high school principal. The principal was hard-working and inspiring to the students. Our principal was always ready to

listen to our grievances and help where possible. She was really motherly and she made us feel comfortable in school.

Shadrack puts it clearly that he never wanted to be a teacher but went to teacher training college just to enable him to get money to join law school.

He lamented:

My role model is one of my cousins who is a lawyer. He is respected in the society and also lives a good life and that is what I want in life. My family really encourages me to be a teacher, but I plan to join law school once I get a job in either a public or private school, as long as I get money. My cousin has money always and drives very expensive, classy and flashy cars; that's the kind of life I would like.

Mash on his part had this to say about his role models and how they influenced his life:

Apart from getting my teaching certificate and being a pastor, I want to further my studies, do guidance and counseling and maybe a degree in education. I have people who influence me positively, like my friends and a cousin who are at Jomo Kenyatta University pursuing degrees in engineering. They give me hope since they faced similar challenges like me. I want to continue to be a teacher after training, and also do other courses like guidance and counseling and theology. My role model is my local pastor in our church. I would like to be a teacher and part-time pastor later in life and model my students spiritually.

I found out from the study that the teacher trainees were highly influenced by family members, principals of their high schools and friends in their career choices. The role models had a positive impact on the teacher trainees to study to be able to emulate them e.g. Priscilla Jep was highly influenced by her high school principal, who had even taken her to college, no wonder then she wanted to be a teacher.

## Teachers' College Faculty Qualifications

I explained earlier in chapter 1 that there are few lecturers who have formal training for teacher training colleges in Kenya. Teachers who wish to teach in teachers' colleges train for bachelor of education degree-B.ED-primary option (G.O.K, 2004)<sup>49</sup>

I also mention in the same chapter, teachers who wish to teach in Teacher Training Colleges train for bachelor of education degree (bachelor of education-B. ED-primary option), but many in teachers' colleges are holders of bachelor of education-secondary option. This was very evident in Meru TTC because, out of the 80 lecturers only four had qualifications to teach in a teachers' college.<sup>50</sup> The rest were holders of B.ED in secondary education and five have M.A in the same. This poses a dilemma of qualifications of the faculty which the policy makers either seem not to put into consideration or ignore. The issues are; the secondary schools teachers with bachelor's degree in secondary education are ill trained to handle primary school teacher training colleges and are better equipped in teaching secondary schools or diploma teachers' colleges like Kagumo, where high school teachers take a diploma in secondary teacher education, which takes three years to complete.

In Kenya the Teachers Service Commission posts teachers (especially former principals and deputy principals) who have not been performing well in their previous

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<sup>49</sup> In many of the teachers' colleges in Kenya exemplified by Meru Teachers' College, lecturers with bachelor of education-primary option are few and many are found teaching in primary schools instead of teachers' colleges. The government seems not aware of this anomaly or there is a lot of ignorance on the part of policy makers. Because the bulk of the lecturers with bachelor of Education in secondary option are best suited to teach in secondary schools or three year diploma teacher training colleges like Kagumo Teachers College for high school teachers.

high schools to the teachers' colleges.<sup>51</sup> This is because some of the principals and deputy principals are demoted and feel ashamed remaining in high schools and request to be transferred to teachers' colleges. In Meru Teachers' College, I found a total of 20 former principals of secondary schools and deputy principals. The situation in Meru Teachers' College was further compounded by the fact that the principal, the dean of studies, the dean of students, and 10 out of the 20 former principals of high schools were chairmen of departments. Teachers' colleges have been viewed as dumping grounds of underperforming high school principals and heads of departments, hence lowering the standards of training of teachers. Besides, all the 20 former principals were holders of secondary education degrees, not the required primary option degree.

I discussed the issue of colleges being a dumping ground for ineffective high school principals with the deputy principal of Meru Teachers' College.

He opined:

I think the former high school principals negotiate with the Teachers Service Commission on trying to get a "soft landing ground" after demotions from the high schools. Some of these former high school principals are in their 50s and almost retiring and they don't want many problems in the "politics laden" high schools. They want to retire peacefully and they think the best retirement ground is teachers' colleges, where they can teach 2-3 days in a week and go to their home or businesses. This makes it difficult for the government to post younger teachers/lecturers with better qualifications to colleges, because we are over-staffed with these former "re-cycled" principals who have failed in high school. It is also common to find the former high school principals corrupting their way back and getting to be principals of the colleges. It's very frustrating for people like me, because these former high school heads come with 2 or 3 job groups ahead of us (deputy principals), making it difficult for us to be promoted to principals when we have them (former high school principals) with senior job groups.

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<sup>51</sup> A high school principal and his/her counterpart in the teachers' college belong to same job group, this explains the reason the high school principal feels demoted when deployed to teach in a Teachers' College. In most cases the high school principal feels he/she is working under a college principal who could be of the same job group or even sometimes his/her junior.

Among the current teachers in the next chapter, I discuss the issue of teachers feeling threatened in their job security by new young graduate teachers. The same case applies to the college tutors among whom majority (80 %/) in Meru Teachers' College were 40 years old and above. This case of aging teaching force was found to be common among high schools and in Meru Teachers' College because the government had frozen teacher recruitment and extended retirement age from 55-60 years.

### **Corruption and Teacher Education**

As I have alluded in the literature review, corruption is very rampant in the education sector in Kenya. Corruption ranges from primary schools, all the way to the universities.

The deputy principal of Meru Teachers' College explained about corruption in teachers' colleges:

Some of former high schools principals are very rich. Some were accused of embezzling school funds and this may explain why they are so rich. They use this ill-gotten wealthy to corrupt their way in the TSC and get posts in teachers' colleges as deans and chairmen of departments. If you are a college principal and try to transfer or reject them once they are posted in your college, they use their influence and money to make you transferred instead. So, many college principals have no option, but to take them in [...] since they fear for their jobs.

This trend of corruption is also found in admission of teacher trainees to the teachers' colleges. Talking to Steve Mash about his admission to Meru Teachers' College, he volunteered:

My parents had to "cough" Ksh 50,000 (\$700) to some education officials at Jogoo House in Nairobi (Ministry of Education headquarters where admission to teachers' colleges is coordinated). My dad has been saving to "buy" college admission for me, and he asked me to work hard and help him in securing teachers' college admission, by contributing to the bribe money. This is an open secret in many colleges, including here. If you talk to majority of students here in Meru Teachers' College if they will confide in you; you will be shocked to find

out that, either their parents, relatives or themselves “bought” the college admission letters.

On corruption, exams and what goes on in college, Priscilla Jep of Meru

Teachers’ College contributed:

When we were in high school, some of the students were given KCSE exam papers, before they sat the exam. These exam papers were bought through illegal and clandestine ways by their parents from officials of the Kenya National Examination Council. I only came to realize that the children of the rich had leaked exam papers which their parents had “bought” for them before we sat for the national exams. This demoralized us so much, and I think indirectly, it made me to perform poorly in the KCSE. I felt very demoralized that some of my colleagues in high school could just sit there for four years without working hard, waiting for their parents to “buy” exam papers for them. Even here in college, some female students do not attend classes since they have relationships with male lecturers who mark their exams favorably and make them “pass” exams. To me, this is a form of corruption of the highest order and moral decadence on both sides-students and lecturers, and we call those kinds of grades “sexually transmitted marks”, because we loathe and look down upon the student teacher trainees and the lecturers who practice this form of moral corruption.

Corruption is a major and a thorny issue in Kenya, not only within the teaching profession, but it is also widespread in almost all sectors of the economy. To many people, it is way of life as they have grown with it and it seems to have been integrated in their everyday life e.g. people will give bribes even for services they deserve as a basic right, like school/college admission, getting a voter’s card or a driver’s license.

## **Gender and Teacher Education**

Table 5:1 below, show the enrolment of teacher trainees in all public colleges in Kenya. In Meru TTC, and 12 other colleges there are more female teacher trainees than male. In Kenya there are only 5 teachers’ colleges which have more male teacher trainees than females. There are 143 more females than males in the total number of teacher trainees in

the public teachers' colleges. This trend of more female teacher trainees is further reflected in having more female teachers in primary schools and teacher training colleges.

**Table 5.1: Enrolment in all Public Teachers College in Kenya-2010**

College	Male %	Female%	Total
Asumbi	47	53	769
Moi Baringo	48	52	705
Egoji	54	46	1342
Eregi	48	52	1062
Garissa	49	51	747
Kaimosi	49	51	1070
Kamwenja	59	41	924
Kericho	49	51	1020
Kigari	50	50	1277
Kilimambogo	49	51	1211
Machakos	49	51	1027
Meru	37	63	968
Migori	51	49	1036
Mosoriot	51	49	983
Muranga	49	51	730
Shanzu	50	50	887
Tambach	50	50	954
Thogoto	49	51	651
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>17363</b>

Source: Ministry of Education-Kenya (2010).

Meru Teachers' College is one of the public TTCs where I collected data. It has 355 males and 613 females, giving a total of 968 students, both first and second years. Among the teaching staff of 80 in Meru TTC, there are only 25 male tutors. In Kaaga primary school, where I carried out the study on current teachers, the total number of teachers is 22 and only 1 male teacher.

Interviewing Ms. Monica Kubai-one of the female teachers in Kagaa primary school about the situation, she had this to say:

Teaching is seen as a job for women in the Kenyan society. Women are charged with the responsibility of taking care of children and many Kenyan men like marrying teachers and nurses. Maybe men would like a wife who can take care of their children and nurse them as well. Majority of the civil servants (teachers) in rural areas are women and they act as good role models to young girls and to parents who are reluctant to take their daughters to school.

Dr. Nira is a former high school teacher and currently a lecturer at Kenya

Methodist University (discussed in chapter 8) adds:

The proportional of teachers on gender are imbalanced in the high schools, I have taught; for example arts and humanities subjects like English, History and Religious Studies have more female teachers while sciences and math are male dominated. There are also fewer women administrators like principals and heads of departments compared to their male counterparts-I think the men feel that they need to be in-charge even in schools to continue the domination of women found in most African homes.

All the top managers of the institutions of learning I visited for this study were male apart from the principal of Kaaga girls' high school. Starting from Kaaga primary school, the head teacher is the only male in the staff of 22 teachers. In Kaaga boys' high school, the principal is also male as well as the principal and the deputy of Meru Teachers' College. The chairman of department of education at KEMU was male and the Minister for Education, Science and Technology and his two Assistants. This further explains the trend found in Kenya, that females are found at the lower echelons of teaching hierarchy especially in primary schools, but as one moves up, there are more males who dominate the administrative positions. These administrative positions are seen as more powerful and this reproduces the gender inequality witnessed in the country.

Perhaps, it would be appropriate to end this section on gender and teacher education in Kenyan teachers' colleges and other educational institutions with a quote from Prof Nelly Stromquist, an expert or authority in gender issues and education:

It can be affirmed that women's greater access to various levels of schooling does not automatically reflect the disappearance of gender as a discriminating marker in their respective society. If such were the case, there would be a much more even distribution in salaries, professions, and political positions of men and women.<sup>52</sup>

The above statement summarizes the nature of gender and education in Kenya, whereby there is gender parity especially in primary and high schools, but this does not translate into leadership positions, same salaries and promotions for women in institutions of learning, civil service and even in political positions of power. From the study, it emerged that women were found in the classrooms, especially in the primary schools. Up in the positions of authority, there are fewer women administrators.

### **Teaching Practice**

The focus of this study is; Perspectives on the Teaching Profession in Kenya, and in view of this; I was interested in how teachers are trained and the quality of this training. The student trainees are supposed to learn how to prepare various documents necessary for teaching. Through observation and interviewing, I examined the meaning and explanation of each of the various documents that the teacher trainees were supposed to make in preparation for their teaching practice.

I was interested in the quality of training of teachers and one of the things which came up in my interviews with the teacher trainees both in Meru Teachers' College and KEMU was the issue of micro-teaching and teaching practice and how the two exercises are organized.

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<sup>52</sup> Nelly Stromquist, "Equality of Education: A half century of comparative evidence seen from new millennium" in *Comparative education: The dialectic of the Global and the Local*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Edited by Robert F. Arnove and Carlos Alberto Torres. p.183 (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2003, Maryland-USA)

Before teach trainees in both teacher training colleges and universities go out for teaching practice, they have to undertake micro-teaching. I have been a teacher trainer and I know about teaching practice and micro-teaching but I sought to know the perception of the teacher trainee on these two exercises. I talk about the documents the teacher trainee prepares in readiness for teaching practice, because through my own experience as lecturer at the teachers' college and at the university, these documents are the backbone of a good teacher. From the interview I conducted and from my own experience as a teacher trainer, the teacher trainees are supposed to prepare the above documents before they go out for teaching practice. The lecturers for each of the subjects are supposed to assess them and make corrections. The final copy of the teaching practice documents are then signed by the course instructors and certified for teaching practice by the teaching practice coordinator. This exercise of marking and correcting the schemes of work and lesson plans is carried out for two weeks prior to the teaching practice. The students have three teaching practice sessions-one in first year and two in the second year of their training. The teaching practice last for one term of three months.<sup>53</sup>

Training of teachers, therefore cannot be complete without the student teachers undergoing micro-teaching and teaching practice as well as having acquired the knowledge of making important documents I discuss in the section that follow below.

Shadrack, a student teacher in Meru Teachers' College described micro-teaching:

Micro-teaching is a scaled down teaching encounter designed to develop new skills and refine the old ones. The teacher trainee practices specific teaching skill,

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<sup>53</sup> The colleges follow the calendar used by the primary and high schools in the country. A school term is made up of three months and there are three terms in a year and three school holidays in April, August and December. One school holiday is one month.

like use of questioning in a short duration of between 5-8 minutes, in a small class of 5-6 students (peer teaching). The micro lesson is videotaped and later reviewed and then evaluated by both the peer teacher trainees and the supervisor and feedback is given to the trainee.

I sought to pursue further the issue of micro-teaching and talking to Mr. Muna, the deputy principal of Meru Teachers' College, he commented:

Micro-teaching is important in the training of teachers, because it helps them to sharpen and develop their teaching skills. It eliminates gross errors and builds confidence and also offers immediate feedback following performance with aim of helping the trainees to develop an insight in adopting suitable teaching skills. Micro-teaching also helps the trainees to accept criticisms from peers and the tutors by engaging themselves in identifying the weaknesses and strengths pointed out.

The chair of the education department in KEMU and the deputy principal of Meru Teachers' College both emphasized the importance of this practical training component of the internship.

Dr Baariu emphasized teaching practice:

Teaching practice is the process through which the teacher trainee tries his/her hands in the business of teaching in real school situation, under the guidance of a supervisor. The teacher trainees have an opportunity to try out practically the skills and techniques learned in theory and try to perfect them. TP enables the trainees to discover their potential abilities and bring them into the classroom situation where they try to rehearse and perfect them. It provides the trainees with practical experience in the school which will reveal problems of students' discipline and control and enable teacher trainees to be creative in developing appropriate techniques of dealing with such situations. The teacher trainee also develops confidence as he/she acquires useful techniques, experiences success in teaching, and therefore creating a sound student-teacher (trainee) relationship.

The deputy principal of Meru Teachers' College and chair of education department in KEMU reiterated the importance of the documents which the teacher

trainees should have prepared before they go for teaching practice, and maintain while in the practicing schools.

The deputy principal of Meru Teachers' College emphasized about the syllabus:

A syllabus is the breakdown of the curriculum into subject areas. A syllabus gives an outline of the subject content to be covered by a specific class in that subject – it is the summary of the course of study for the class. The syllabus specifies what should be taught, why it should be taught, how it should be taught, what to teach with and the time taken to teach. The syllabi for the various classes in the various subjects are usually compiled into one document or in volumes for example, the primary school syllabus, the secondary school syllabus or the primary teacher education syllabus.

In Kenya, it is important to have a national syllabus to ensure uniformity—all students are supposed to go through the same teaching and learning experience.<sup>54</sup> The syllabus spells out the objectives of teaching the specific subjects which enable the teacher in deciding how to present the given content. In a syllabus, subject matter is arranged in a logical manner which helps teachers in their preparation of the scheme of work.<sup>55</sup> The syllabus is made by the Kenya Institute of Education (KIE).

According to Mr. Muna, the deputy principal of Meru Teachers' College:

A syllabus has the national goals of education, objectives of the course, subjects to be covered in various classes. The syllabus ought to have topics or content to be covered in each subject, spelling out specific objectives for each topic. The syllabus should also have time allocation for each subject in terms of number of periods per week and the suggested methods or approaches to enhance effective teaching and learning methods of learner assessment and recommended text books especially teachers' guides and students' books.

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<sup>54</sup> The uniformity is important because the students in the whole country do the same national exam at the end of their education level (primary school students have to do the Kenya Certificate of Primary Exam-KCPE at the end of class (grade) 8. KCPE is an entry exam to high school. At the end of high school the students are supposed to do Kenya Certificate of Secondary Exam-KCSE, which is an entry exam to universities and other colleges.

<sup>55</sup> For universities, each of them prepares its own programs or syllabi for the different departments because universities are autonomous from the government.

From the syllabus, the teachers are supposed to make the schemes of work for the classes that they teach.

Mr. Muna describes a scheme of work:

A scheme of work is a plan that breaks down the syllabus into teachable units to be covered by a class in a certain subject within a given period; this could be for a few weeks, a term or even a year. A scheme of work gives an outline of the objectives, content, methods, resources to be used and modes of assessment needed to make teaching and learning effective for a class in the specific subject and within the period of time given.

A scheme of work is an important document in the teaching and learning process, especially for the teacher trainee.

Dr Baariu of KEMU on his part adds:

Since the schemes of work are teachers' plans to cover syllabuses, in making them, teachers or teacher trainees put into consideration their students' abilities, background, previous experience and available resources. This helps teachers plan for appropriate methods of teaching, learning experiences and modes of assessment. In a scheme of work, the topics in the syllabus are put in a logical sequence. This is particularly important in certain subjects such as mathematics and languages where acquisition of certain knowledge is dependent on previous learning; for example, knowledge of addition helps pupils to understand multiplication in Math and in English the teaching of nouns comes before pronouns. In schemes of work, all topics in each subject are covered and given due time allocation. Schemes of work enable teachers to ensure that students in mixed ability classes of the same standard are taught the same content at more or less the same time. This is particularly useful when students sit common tests or examinations. Schemes of work help school administration to ensure that teachers are following the official syllabus in the schools that they teach.

I asked the deputy principal of Meru Teachers' College the process of making the schemes of work. Mr. Muna also doubles up as the TP coordinator. He explained:

There are various steps that should be followed by teacher trainees in making schemes of work. They should study the syllabus to understand the objectives in relationship to the content in each subject. Then they decide topics that should be

taught in each term of the year. In making this decision, teacher trainees need to consider that certain topics could be taught more appropriately at certain times of the year. A topic on Christmas for example would be more appropriately taught towards the end of the year and at around the Christmas season. The teacher trainees are taught to plan for school outings and visits more appropriate during dry weather. Teacher trainees also need to be aware of “lost time”. This is when teaching and learning experiences are not effectively carried on because of other activities at the beginning and end of term, co-curricular activities and public holidays. Teachers and teacher trainees need to consider how such activities affect teaching time in each term. Multiply the number of weeks in the term with the number of periods allocated to the subject per week. This will give the total number of periods in the specific term. Calculate the estimated time; number of periods, each topic needs bearing in mind the total number of periods available and the level of difficulty and depth of each topic. They should decide on topics for each week in the term; time for tests and examinations should also be reflected. Then they should arrange the topics in a logical, continuous and progressive manner that will enhance effective and learning. They should decide the appropriate teaching learning strategies and resources to be used.

A lesson plan is drawn from the scheme of work. Dr Baariu described a lesson plan:

A lesson plan is a frame of work that translates the syllabus and the scheme of work into systematically arranged activities for both the teacher and pupils to ensure that set learning objectives are achieved. It is a written document summarizing the lesson preparation a teacher has made for the particular lesson. It outlines the teaching and learning activities that will be carried out during the session in order to achieve the objectives. A lesson plan is prepared for each lesson.

On his part Mr. Muna of Meru TTC emphasized the importance of a good lesson plan:

A good lesson plan should be BRIEF but systematic; easy for the teacher to make quick reference. It should correlate with the scheme of work and be clear enough for a teacher who did not make it to be able to use it if necessary. The lesson plan should be made as soon as the previous lesson has been taught and drawn for every lesson. It should be used as a guide by the teacher and be flexible enough for the teacher to adjust if necessary.

The purpose of lesson plan and its preparation cannot be underestimated: On the importance of the lesson plan, Dr. Baariu of KEMU comments:

Lesson preparation is paramount in ensuring effective teaching and learning. In order to emphasize the importance of lesson preparation, it is often said that “a well prepared lesson can be effectively taught without notes but a good lesson cannot be taught without preparation”. In lesson preparation, the teacher looks at the related section of the scheme of work, expands that information and uses available resources to effectively pass the information to the pupils. For effective preparation, the teacher has to think of three main factors: the pupils to be taught, the content to be used in teaching and its presentation. As teachers and teacher trainees prepare lessons for their particular class, they need to consider the students’ age, abilities, background and any other characteristics that could affect their learning. In considering the content to be taught, teachers need to understand the topic and objectives of the lesson. Although most materials can be gathered from textbooks, good teachers will also get additional information from other sources such as: observation, mass media and general experience. In order to organize the learning material effectively, teachers employ theories learned in college or university, on child development and the psychology of learning. They also look at other factors such as available resources and pupils abilities and interests in order to come up with methods of teaching and learning that will lead to achievement of set objectives.

Some of the reasons why preparing for the lesson is important according to Dr. Baariu of KEMU were enumerated:

Teachers can work with confidence as they have the relevant facts and can pass them to the pupils in adequate details. Information is passed to the pupils in an orderly and systematic manner. This enhances learning. Teachers are able to think out in advance about the methods and resources that will make the lesson effective. They could therefore source for needed materials and use relevant methods. It helps teachers to manage given time adequately. This means they are able to cover the set work in the time given.

Dr Baariu further talks about the chalk board plan:

The chalkboard is the most used teaching-learning resource by both regular teachers and teacher trainees. They therefore need to think ahead and plan how to use it effectively. A chalkboard plan gives an outline of how a teacher intends to use the board in the course of the lesson. A well-organized and systematic use of the chalkboard enhances the teaching and learning process.

In facilitating effective teaching and learning, a good timetable is very useful.

The school timetable is made by the deputy head teacher or the senior teacher in a primary school. In the high school, the school time table is made by the dean or director of studies/curriculum. A good time table is used for allocating sufficient time for various subjects, effectively dividing the work amongst teachers, organization of various resources for effective learning and generally co-coordinating all activities in the school.

On school timetable Dr Baariu had this to say:

The length of periods should go according to students' age and level. Younger students have shorter attention spans than older ones and hence their lesson periods are shorter. The syllabus may guide teachers and teacher trainees on this and school administration should ensure the guidance is adhered to. Usually in lower primary, a lesson takes thirty minutes, thirty five minutes in upper primary and forty minutes in high school. The timetable should reflect time allocation for each subject as given in the syllabus. When distributing time, the nature of subject should be considered; for example, languages and mathematics should be distributed each day of the week to enhance practice. Subjects that are mentally challenging should be put early in the day when pupils are fresh and can think more clearly. Those subjects requiring practice and physical activity can be put later in the day. Practical subjects should be alternated with those which are mentally challenging and have less physical activity. Sequencing of successive lessons should allow for a variety of learning experiences and activities. For example, in a day the lesson could flow in the following sequence: Mathematics–English–Social Studies–Science–Religious Education–Kiswahili AND NOT Kiswahili–English–Mathematics–Science–Social Studies–Religious. Some subjects like math have concepts which are hard to grasp and therefore they should be taught when the minds of the students are fresh in the morning. Subjects with more than one period should be evenly distributed within the week without bunching together in one or two days. Some practical subjects such as physical education and art may need to be taught just before a break because of related activities, for example, changing their dressing and cleaning up. When possible, physical education should be plotted at a time when the sun is not too hot; the students are not too hungry or too full. Mid morning is the best time. The regular teachers and teacher trainees should arrange for teaching to take place in the most convenient place; matching the subject in their respective rooms if available in the school. In plotting the timetable, the subjects with double lessons should be plotted first to avoid the possibility of double lessons running across breaks. The timetable should allow for adequate break time.

I asked Dr Baariu whether there are other documents that teachers and teacher trainees make in preparation for teaching.

He added:

There are other documents made in relation to the students' attendance as well as their performance in tests and exams. These are the class register and the students' progress records. The purpose of a class register is to enable the teacher to check students' daily attendance making it possible to monitor absenteeism and drop-out from the school. It sometimes explains poor performance, which may be caused by gaps in learning through absenteeism. It can be used to alert parents on students' progress. It helps teachers in issuing of materials as the number of students present is spelt out. Teachers can use it to plan teaching and learning as it gives, not only the number but also the sex ratio of the pupils.

Dr Baariu further expounds on the learners' progress record:

Learners' progress records show individual students' continuous performance in a given subject within a school term. In the teaching and learning experiences, the teacher at times give students assignments that can be used to evaluate learning. Some of this work should be marked and grades be entered in the progress records. The teacher should arrange to give this sort of exercise to students in a regular manner so that by the end of the term, each pupil has several entries in the records – it provides for continuous assessments.

Mr. Muna, the deputy principal of Meru Teachers' College comments about records of work covered:

Although teachers spend a lot of time planning the teaching and learning activities, the work is not covered as planned at all times. Record of work covered is a short description of the lesson that has actually been taught including short remarks relating to the lesson. This record should show what the teacher and class have covered in a given subject within the term. The purpose of record of work covered is vital in a situation where the teacher is teaching more than one class in the same subject. The records tell where the teacher stopped and where to start the next lesson.<sup>56</sup> The records are useful in monitoring and coordinating

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<sup>56</sup> The record of work covered is very important to both the regular teacher and teacher trainee at the end of the teaching practice. It helps the regular teacher in taking over of a class from the teacher trainee. Normally, the regular teacher in a school will induct (act as a mentor) the new teacher trainee and hand

teaching and progress made by teachers in different classes. It is possible for teachers to set valid tests and examinations as they are aware of what students covered. The records help with supervision activities—administrators can check on individual teachers' progress. The records are very useful when handing over a class by the teacher trainee to the regular teacher. This is because it shows what has been done, what may need more emphasis and gives an indication on work that has been covered and what need to be covered. Teachers should enter information in these records as soon as possible after teaching when the lesson experience is still fresh in their minds.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter I have examined the profiles of the Meru Teachers' College, that of its deputy principal and four teacher trainees of the same college. The profile of Dr Jim Baariu the C.O.D of education department is discussed in chapter 6. Through the study the families of the teacher trainees were found to of low SES. The parents of the trainees couldn't afford to take their children to private universities (though all the trainees had failed to secure admission to public universities, they were qualified to join private one). The trainees felt indebted to the community for having contributed through Harambee to take them to school.

Their former principals (especially to the female trainees) had great impact as role models. On gender, there are more female teacher trainees in the colleges and two women trainees chose to train as teachers, while the two men interviewed didn't (the total trainees interviewed were four). There is corruption in admission to the teacher colleges and two trainees admitted that their parents bribed to be admitted to the college. I have reflected on the intricacies of teacher training, paying particular attention to the micro-

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over the record of work covered and other records of the class at the beginning of the TP. The teacher trainee hands over to the regular teacher after the end of TP.

teaching, teaching practice and the documents that the teacher trainees make in preparation for internship.

## **Chapter 6: University Education in Kenya: Dream or Reality?**

### **Introduction**

The focus of this chapter is university education in Kenya paying particular attention to teacher education at the university level. In this chapter there is a profile of Kenya Methodist University (KEMU) which was one of the samples sites where the research was done. The profile of the chairman of department (C.O.D) of education in KEMU and profile of four students from the same university are further discussed. The information gathered from the interview conducted on the four university students and high school students is incorporated in the discussions.

The chapter sheds some light on factors that university students and their career counselors consider in high school before making choices about courses to undertake at the university and which one to attend. Relying on the interviews with the teacher trainees at Kenya Methodist University, I try unearthing the reasons as to why they chose to train as teachers at the university, why they chose to go to Kenya Methodist University (a private university), and if they are intending to stay as teachers after training or leave the profession. I focus also on views of the chair of the education department and those of the career counselor at Kaaga boys' high school, Mr. Kanya who doubles up as a part-time lecturer in Kenya Methodist University.

### **University Profile**

**Kenya Methodist University (KEMU).** Kenya Methodist University is a private university, sponsored by the Methodist Church in Kenya. The university is located in Meru central district in Eastern province of Kenya. KEMU was awarded its Charter on

June 28th 2006 by President Mwai Kibaki. The coming of KEMU in Meru in Eastern province of Kenya was a long process in educational planning and development.

The university is dedicated to the furtherance of the Christian faith and promotion of the required activities for the restoration of relationship between human beings and God the creator. It strives to apply its Christian principles and practical evangelism in all its endeavors. The university's philosophy is to “foster the intellectual, spiritual and physical development of the wholesome individual in order to recognize and utilize the available opportunities for enhancement of human development with the appropriate recognition and respect for other creations” (KEMU, 2010)

The vision of the university is: "To be a leading world class university in East Africa, committed to rising a new generation of transformational leaders, who are well grounded and committed to spiritual and ethical values". The mission of the university is: "To contribute to the transformation of our society by providing high quality education that promotes excellence in scholarship, research and selfless service to the community". The university's mission is achieved through the following objectives; “to provide quality training through provision of scholarship, advancement of knowledge through research and development of specialized activities in the university; to produce effective graduates with the appropriate practical and specialized skills, attitudes and values required for personal growth and advancement of responsible citizens in the global environment; participate in community service through provision of continuing education, conduction of research, participation in external services, provision of specialist consultative or referral services, facilitation of community empowerment, promotion of fairness and

natural justice and maintenance of good neighborliness with the community” (KEMU, 2010).

Kenya Methodist University came as a logical step toward educational excellence as the focus of the Methodist Church in pursuance of its gospel. However, the university was not established as an isolated project. At least two institutions namely; Kaaga Rural Training Centre and Methodist Training Institute consecutively formed the basic foundation, in form of physical and other infrastructure in the establishment of Kenya Methodist University. Due to an increased population, rising unemployment of the youth and poor land use in the 1950s, local church leaders came up with the idea of training local people to become self- reliant through training in agriculture. Consequently, a local committee was formed and funds were sought from Christian Aid in Britain (KEMU, 2010).

The Meru Country Council leased 54 acres of forestland close to Kaaga in Miriga Mieru to house the proposed centre. In 1956, the ground was cleared and the following year the first physical infrastructure was established comprising a hostel, offices, dining hall and kitchen, meeting room, three staff houses and two duplexes along with a workshop and animal farm house. In 1958, the Kaaga Rural Training Centre was born for the purpose of training people and providing skills that would promote self-reliance (KEMU, 2010).

At the MCK annual conference held at Shanzu Teachers’ College-Mombasa in 1986, the then Presiding Bishop Rev. Dr. Lawi Imathiu publicly announced a vision to establish a university sponsored by the Methodist Church. In 1987, the Methodist Church in Kenya formed a working party to study the possibility of establishing a Methodist

University. At a later date the working party formed three sub-committees to deal with programs namely, academic, finance, and documentation committees. The academic committee was chaired by David Mwiraria. Other members were Prof. Mutuma Mugambi and Prof. Zablon Nthamburi. The finance committee was chaired by Mr. F.T. Nyammo with Rev. Dr Brenchly chairing the documentation committee. It was later in November 1988 that the committee met with Professor J. Mungai, the then Commission Secretary to the Commission for Higher Education (CHE), for accreditation (KEMU, 2010).

In 1992, the draft proposal was completed and approved by the Commission for Higher Education. This paved way for visitation by the Commission's Technical Committee. Funds were raised to build an office block and to sink a borehole. A chlorinating unit for piped water was also installed. This undertaking took nearly four years to complete. The Brotje Family from the USA donated \$ 50,000 to renovate the kitchen and dining hall. The Family gave a further \$ 200,000 for putting up a library (KEMU, 2010).

Prof. Mutuma Mugambi was appointed a pioneer volunteer principal of the proposed university in 1995. The university project continued to attract international and cross-cultural relations with peoples of the world. The major non-Kenyan actors were from the United States, Korea and Britain. Friends of the proposed university from Richland, Washington State -USA, visited Kenya and shared their views on the university idea (KEMU, 2010).

The Commission for Higher Education granted a Letter of Interim Authority, giving an approval for the establishment of Kenya Methodist University in 1997. The

university opened its doors with 11 pioneer students, 3 in theology and 8 in business administration programs. In 1998, Prof Mutuma Mugambi was installed as the first Vice Chancellor on 31st January 1998. The student's population has grown phenomenally from the initial 11 students in 1998/1999 to over 9,000 currently, while the staff population has expanded from 21 to around 400 over the same period.<sup>57</sup>

I taught at Kenya Methodist University in the department of education and Counseling for 7 years before I came to the University of Maryland for further studies. This was a plus for me as I did not have a problem with the gate keepers when I went to collect data there.

I was interested in the department of education at KEMU, because that is where the student teachers whom I interviewed are enrolled. The department of education and counseling is one of the three academic departments in the faculty of science and social studies in Kenya Methodist University. The department is under a chairman, who reports to the dean of studies.

The department has three academic sections; teacher education (this department houses the primary and secondary teacher programs), counseling and centre for community development programs.

While the department is under the chairman, each of the sections is under a section head. The department collaborates with other departments e.g. those student teachers who take business studies as a teaching subject, take courses from the business school. Education professional courses for teacher trainees like philosophy of education,

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<sup>57</sup> This information was retrieved from <http://www.kemu.ac.ke/> on 9/16/2010 and supplemented with interviews the chairman of education department and my own personal knowledge and experience of the university having been a lecturer there for 7 years before coming to the US in 2007.

education administration, and comparative education are taught by the department of education.

For an applicant to qualify for a diploma in teacher education in KEMU, the minimum requirement is grade C. The diploma in teacher education takes three years to complete. For the four year degree, the minimum requirement is grade C+ or a diploma in teacher education. An applicant with a P-1 certificate (primary teacher education certificate) can also be considered for a degree if he/she has some teaching experience and had a C+ in KCSE.

### **Kenya Methodist University Participants Profile**

**Dr Jim Baariu.** Dr Baariu is the current chairman of the department of education at the KEMU. He has been teaching at the university level for the last 30 years, 20 of them at public universities and 10 years at KEMU. Dr Baariu was my former professor at the university and my supervisor in education department where I used to teach before I came to the US for my studies. He is a very knowledgeable and informed professor, having been teaching at the university level for over 30 years.

Dr Baariu is married with two children and hails from Meru North district in Eastern Province of Kenya. He went to a public primary and high school in Meru North district. He later joined Kenyatta University, where he attained his B.A, M.A and PhD in secondary education from the same university.

He started his teaching career at Kenyatta University and moved to KEMU, 10 years ago. In KEMU he started as a senior lecturer and later was promoted to head the education department. For his entire teaching career he has been training teachers for both primary and secondary schools at the university level.

**Hazel Oyanga.** Hazel lives in Naivasha, together with her mother who is a single parent (the parents separated when Hazel was 5 years old). They are two in their family, just her and the sister. The mom tries hard to sustain the family by doing small business and farming. She had to apply for a loan so as to be able to pay for her fees. From primary school, the mother would pay their fees; in secondary school it was hard since she would end up borrowing money from her friends and family. Up to today Hazel still owes a large fees balance in the secondary school she attended and hopes to clear it once she is employed after graduating from college.

About her parent's level of education, Hazel noted:

My mother is a form four leaver. She did a few certificate courses after completing secondary school, but they were not able to help her secure any form of regular employment. Her lack of higher education has affected our family negatively because maybe if she had a better job, there would be less financial problems, especially in paying school fees for us.

Hazel went to a public primary school in Kakamega. She got 375 marks out of a maximum of 500 in KCPE. Afterwards she joined a public mixed-sex secondary school (Kiboye Secondary School).

Currently she is attending KEMU to pursue a diploma in education. She wanted to do a degree course but she did not have the funds to do it. She is planning to complete her diploma then find a job through which she is going to get money to pay for a degree course.

Besides being a teacher trainee (training to teach English and CRE) she would like to be a counselor. It was her second choice after being a teacher (a counselor maybe in a hospital or a school).

Her role model is her mom. Her mom is really determined and hardworking since she was able to raise her and her little sister, single handedly. She really adores her.

**Lily Wambui.** She was born in a family of 6 children. She is the only girl in the family. She is the first person in her family to go to the university. She is the last born and feels advantaged being the only girl in the family because she gets some privileges which her brothers do not get. Her brothers are all into business, since they did not see the advantage of joining university for higher education and also because they did not have anyone to advise them on the importance of higher education.

Her parents are both in business. Her mother studied up to class 7 (7<sup>th</sup> grade), but her father was privileged enough to go up to college. In her family, the boys used to do a lot of household chores, because she is the only daughter and the last born.

I asked her if she felt a spoilt kid, “I feel special because in other families where there are more girls, they (girls) do most of the domestic work at home, but because I am the only girl and the last born and among boys, my family treat me like a queen”. She said.

She attended a boarding private primary school (this was a privilege, because none of her siblings attended a boarding school) and attained 365 marks out of a possible 500 marks and was admitted to Makuru Secondary school.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Boarding private schools in Kenya are a reserve of the rich. The schools charge exorbitant fees and many not well-to-do parents cannot afford the fees charged. The boarding private schools have better facilities, take students with better grades (mostly advantaged children from the affluent families) and have more motivated teachers than public schools; hence they always perform better than their public counterparts in national examinations. The performance of schools determines who goes to which university and to pursue which course—those who perform poorly or are average end up in lowly perceived courses and careers like teaching and nursing. The best “A” students from private boarding schools are admitted to good high schools and attain the best grades to win them admissions to the best course and universities.

In her high school exam she attained grade B which qualified her to join a public university, but she chose to go to KEMU. She argued that it takes a long time to graduate from a public university because of frequent closures as a result of strikes. Therefore, she chose KEMU because it is a Christian university and a private institution with less strikes and riots unlike the public universities and one can study peacefully and graduate in time. She seems a charismatic, go-getter, open minded and outgoing woman who is willing to help people.

**Antony Wanga.** Wanga was born in Mumias district in Western province of Kenya. He was brought up in Kitale in the Rift Valley province of Kenya. His father has 1 wife and 8 children, 5 boys and 3 girls. He is the third born in his family.

His Father went for high school education in Uganda while his mother only went up to primary school level. His father worked in Mumias Sugar Company but he is now retired and operates a small business at the local town center.

Wanga went to a public primary school attained 310 marks out of 500 and was admitted in Afwefwe Secondary school in Kakamega district. His role models are Bill Clinton and Nelson Mandela. He would like to venture in politics later in life. He wants to be a leader and participates in students' politics in the university as a way of preparing himself to join politics in future.

Being a Luyha in a Meru environment makes him easily fit in and gets along with his lecturers and fellow students, whom majority are from the local region. His parents strain in paying his tuition, because he applied for a loan from Higher Education Loan Board but they have not responded yet.

He would like the government to intervene on school fees matters, especially where students are not able to pay for their school fees. The government should develop plan to help the poor people who cannot pay school fess.

**John Otieno.** Otieno was born in Uasin Gishu district in the Rift Valley province of Kenya. His parents migrated from their original homeland in Migori in Nyanza province of Kenya. His father is a secondary school teacher and his mother is a housewife doing a small business. He has 3 brothers and 2 sisters, a total of 6 children. He is the first born and the siblings look up to him as a role model. So, he has to set a high standard academically. His mother did not go to the university. She studied up to form four.

Otieno went to a public day primary school then went to a public secondary school. He got 320 marks out of 500 in his KCPE and was admitted to a provincial high school.

In high school they were not given enough guidance on career choices. Since he was not good in sciences, and was good in arts, he wanted to become a lawyer. His second choice was business then third choice was education. He got a C+ and thus disqualified him from pursuing law, so he joined KEMU to do a degree in education. He wants to be able to sustain his family. He would like to work hard to help his parents and siblings. According to him, teaching should be a priority to the government and more teachers should be employed without any contracts getting involved so that they can get dedicated to their professions. Teachers do sacrifice a lot to help students to become good citizens of the society.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> This year (2010) the government of Kenya introduced the employment of teachers on contracts. This is different from the previous system where teachers were employed on permanent and pensionable terms. The system of contract teachers has been opposed by the teachers' union-Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT)

According to Otieno, there isn't much tribalism in the school and students are not discriminated on tribal basis in KEMU. However, Otieno notes that most lecturers are from Meru (local region) but he thinks there should be equity in terms of having more students and lecturers from other parts of the country, since most private and public universities are aligned along tribal lines, which according to him is not a good thing.

He comments:

Having a university with many students from the same tribe promotes tribalism and hinders national cohesion. For instance looking at the 2007/8 post-election violence many students and lecturers who were in a zone not in their home districts were threatened and some even killed leading to many seeking transfers to campuses nearer their homes. This is not good for national unity and should not occur in an institution of higher learning. This portrayed Kenya as a country with instability, which was the first time such a thing happened after 45 years of independence.

There is much freedom in public university which is perceived by many as one of the reasons that encourage strikes by both the students and lecturers. The private institutions have fewer strikes. Otieno chose KEMU because it's a Christian institution with good virtues and education is taken seriously. There are fewer strikes in private universities.

### **Status of University Education**

The growth of university education in Kenya in the last two decades cannot be overemphasized. While this phenomenal growth has provided vast opportunities for many Kenyans to pursue university education, it has also presented an opportunity for the government (through public universities), individuals, churches and other organizations

to venture into this lucrative sector.<sup>60</sup> The consequences of these expansions are varied but mainly related to concerns of the quality of education offered by some of these institutions.

The history of teacher education in Kenya can be traced to the establishment of the Royal Technical College of East Africa in Nairobi in the colonial era (1956) which was renamed the Royal College of Nairobi and turned into a university College. In 1970, the university college of Nairobi was renamed the University of Nairobi. In 1985 Kenyatta College, a constituent college of the University of Nairobi since 1972 was elevated into a fully-fledged university. Kenyatta University was mainly training secondary school teachers and today it is ranked the best in both teacher and secondary education in Kenya (GOK, 2009). The opening of Kenyatta University marked a shift of policy by the government and the proliferation of universities in Kenya which now stand at 42 as the next table indicates:

**Table 6.1: Number of Public and Private Universities**

<b>University Status</b>	<b>Number</b>
Public Universities	7
Constituent Colleges and Campuses	12
Chartered Private Universities	11
Private Universities with letter of Interim Authority	8
Private Universities with Certificates of Registration	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>

Source: Government of Kenya, 2009.

<sup>60</sup> The public universities have also ventured into business, through launching the parallel degrees (I discuss parallel degree programs later in this chapter)

Public universities will admit 4,000 more government sponsored students to cap this year's intake at 24,300. The Joint Admissions Board (JAB), charged with the selection of the students for the country's seven public universities, set the minimum grade in last year's (2009) Form Four exam as B of 63 points.(JAB, 2010)

In its meeting held annually, at different universities every year and attended by all vice chancellors, JAB also lowered the points to B of 61 for the female candidates. Kenyatta University (KU) Vice-Chancellor Prof Olive Mugenda chaired the board this year (2010).

The maximum a candidate needs to score the best 'A' mean grade is 84 points. A total of 20,073 students who sat for the fourth form examinations in 2008 joined the universities at various dates starting May this year. They scored mean grades of B plain of 65 points and above. Female students and those from arid areas were admitted with two points less under the affirmative action policy (GOK, 2010).

In that admission, Kenyatta University had for the first time overtaken the University of Nairobi (UoN) by admitting the largest number of regular students, beating UoN that has traditionally taken the lion's share of first year students (G.O.K, 2010).

JAB also allowed the qualified students an opportunity to revise their degree choices starting at their provincial centers. Selection to various degree programs is guided by the grade a candidate scored against the number of slots available in the universities (G.O.K, 2010).

From the class of 2009, some 81,048 candidates scored the minimum C+ grade required for admission to a public university. This effectively means that about 57,000

students will not have a chance to get government sponsorship to join the universities.

This is despite the fact that JAB has been increasing the intake for the last three years.<sup>61</sup>

Through the study it was found out that, while the social demand for university education in Kenya is quite high; there have been political and tribal motivations and considerations when upgrading some colleges to universities, which has been done to rally the support of certain communities to the political establishment (G.O.K, 2010).

Prof Mwiria lamented:

Between May and July 2008, the Government of Kenya upgraded the Kenya Polytechnic, Pwani, Chuka, Kisii, Mombasa Polytechnic and Kimathi Colleges into University Colleges. During the same period, four university campuses, Kitui, Kabianga, Taita Taveta and Kenya Science were upgraded to be under Kenyatta University, Egerton, Moi, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT) and the University of Nairobi. In January and February 2009, Narok Teachers College, the Meru University College of Science and Technology were upgraded and would be part of Moi, University of Nairobi, and Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology. All these were created by executive orders by the President establishing the institutions through a legal notice. The manner in which these institutions were created raises questions to the mechanisms and processes used by the government in creating them. In November 2008, the government upgraded Kenya Communication College of Science and Technology, Mbagathi-Nairobi into a Multimedia University under JKUAT. Of late, the Commission of Higher Education has defended the creation of these universities while the Minister in charge is opposed to this expansion. Personally I am opposed to this expansion based on ethnic lines.

In connection to the state of university education in Kenya, I would like to discuss the main institutions dealing with the admission, funding and quality control of higher

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<sup>61</sup> Daily Nation Newspaper, retrieved on 8/24/2010 from <http://www.nation.co.ke/News/Public%20universities%20to%20enrol%2024000%20students%20this%20year%20-/1056/993222/-/wk44r4/-/index.html>

education in Kenya. I later turn to how university students choose courses and universities.

### **Joint Admissions Board (JAB)**

Public universities in Kenya admit students jointly through the Joint Admissions Board. Through this system, an applicant can apply to three different Universities for a similar course. The choices are therefore structured as a choice 1 (a), 1(b), and 1(c) to represent three choices of similar courses in different universities. The other choices would be 2, 3 and 4 to represent three choices of any other courses in any university. A candidate who does not wish to be considered for his/her first choices in a 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> university should leave choice 1(b) and 1(c) blank. This change implies that similar degree programs from different universities will admit independently and will therefore have different cut off points depending on the number of applicants of each program (JAB, 2010).<sup>62</sup>

The JAB advises candidates to select their third choice from less competitive courses after selecting their first and second choices. It further advises applicants that it is a mandatory to make sure that they select a course that is not competitive, depending on whether one performs better in Science and Arts subjects (JAB, 2010).<sup>63</sup>

The board acknowledges receipt of a student's application through the candidates head teacher. Once selected for admission, candidates are notified of their admission through letters sent to them individually by the university to which they have been

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<sup>62</sup> The private universities do their admissions on their own.

<sup>63</sup> JAB, Retrieved on August, 30<sup>th</sup>, 2010 from <http://jab.uonbi.ac.ke/>

admitted and also through lists of candidates sent to their respective former secondary schools. The board also publishes admission lists in the local print media.

There is an application processing fee of Ksh. 300 (\$5) per candidate. Candidates with special needs get some attention, as the head teacher is to give details of any candidates with special needs. There is a deadline for submission of applications and this is 15<sup>th</sup> January of every year. The board does not consider applications later than the stipulated deadline (JAB, 2010).

Candidates who wish to revise their choices after the K.C.S.E examinations results are released, have a chance to do so. This is done as announced in the media by the Joint Admissions Board (JAB, 2010).

The JAB has published a table showing how to calculate the grade required for each degree. Due to this, candidates are advised to perform well in all the seven required subjects since they will be taken into account while working out their cluster points for the various degree programs (JAB, 2010).

### **The Higher Education Loans Board (HELB)**

Those students whose parents or guardians can afford to pay for their university education are advised to finance their children. For those who can't afford, there are several ways in which one can finance their education at the university level. Students pursuing studies in public universities and chartered private universities can apply for education loans through the Higher Education Loans Board. The Higher Education Loans Board (HELB) was established in 1995 and its mandate is primarily to lend finances to students pursuing their higher education (HELB, 2010).

Between 1995 and 1997, HELB gave loans and bursaries only to students admitted in public universities by the joint Admissions Board (JAB). In the following year (1997/1998), the facility was extended to students in chartered private universities. The board has further extended its financing to needy students under the parallel degree programs in public and chartered private universities. This follows an increase in Government allocation to HELB by Ksh.500 million to Kshs.1.367 billion, from a figure of Ksh 867 million previously. The board has also increased the amount of money each student receives to Ksh 60,000 up from Ksh. 55,000. Further, students who are academically bright also benefit from an additional Ksh. 8,000 top up bursary (HELB, 2010).

These loans are awarded on the basis of the level of need of the applicant. The applicable interest rate is 4% per annum. This category of loans is awarded towards meeting part of the tuition and the students' upkeep. Some of the funds are remitted into the student's bank account and some are remitted directly to the universities where the applicant is registered. Most of teacher trainees get loans for self sponsored students from HELB. The applicable interest rate is 12% per annum. These loans are awarded on the basis of the ability of the borrower to start servicing the loan immediately it is awarded. This category of loans goes towards meeting the cost of tuition. The funds are remitted directly to the universities where the applicant is registered (HELB, 2010).

Students who pursue courses that require field attachment receive loans to this effect. The funds are remitted to the respective universities for distribution among the concerned students. The applicable interest rate is 4% per annum. Bursaries are awarded to students who are assessed to be from extremely poor families. Bursaries go towards

meeting the cost tuition and are remitted directly to the universities where applicant is registered (HELB, 2010).

Loans for postgraduate students (M.A & PhD) are also available and interest rate of 12% per annum is applicable. These loans are awarded on the basis of the ability of the borrower to start servicing the loan immediately it is awarded. These are awarded on the basis of the academic merit in liaison with the universities will be evaluated in the same way as those in regular study programs and will attract an interest rate of 4% per annum (HELB, 2010).<sup>64</sup>

### **Commission for Higher Education (CHE)**

The commission was established by an Act of Parliament, Universities Act CAP 210B in 1985 as a corporate body to make better provision for the advancement of university education in Kenya and other connected purposes. The Commission is the governing body and provides policy direction to both private and public universities in Kenya. The Commission of 28 members is appointed on the basis of their experience and expertise in higher education and research. Their mandate is to give guidance and advice on matters of higher education in the country (CHE, 2010).

CHE offers advice to individuals and sponsors wishing to establish universities in the country and works with them to ensure the provision and sustenance of quality university education in Kenya. It approves academic programs for proposed or existing private universities and also organizes annual exhibitions by public and private universities to showcase the opportunities available to prospective students

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<sup>64</sup> Retrieved on 9/24/10 from the Higher Education Loans Board (HELB) website [www.helb.co.ke](http://www.helb.co.ke)

The commission facilitates the standardization equation and recognition of academic qualification from foreign universities for those intending to pursue higher education and for employers wishing to recruit persons with such qualifications (CHE, 2010).

The commission is further involved in planning, budgeting and financing of universities. The Commission co-ordinates the overall planning and budgeting of universities working jointly with universities to draw up short term and medium term financial plans for government planning as well as a master plans for development of physical. It has established linkage with international quality assurance agencies and other organization that influence higher education locally and globally (CHE, 2010).

The Commission is also involved in accreditation of universities and offers advice to individuals and sponsors wishing to establish universities in the country and works with them to ensure the provision and sustenance of quality of university education.

The Commission has developed comprehensive mechanisms to ensure that existing and proposed private universities have adequate and appropriate physical, spatial, financial, and human and library resources for the academics programs to be offered. The commission also ensures that such institution have a sound governance structure (CHE, 2010).

Additionally, the Commission's function includes equation, standardization and recognized of academic qualifications. For those Kenyans who obtained qualifications from foreign universities, the commission examines the content of their respective training programs in order to equate the content of their respective training programs in

order to equate the content and achievement level with those that have obtained within the Kenyan university system (CHE, 2010).

The Commission develops guidelines for the equation, standardization and approval of degrees and diplomas. Further the commission also performs documentation and information services. The Commission has a specialist library with collection of material on higher education. The usage is currently limited to the student and staff of accredited institutions and readers. It has 4,500 volumes and it has a capacity of 30 readers (CHE, 2010).

The Commission is also involved in the fight against the HIV/AIDS pandemics which is performed by the HIV/AIDS control unit. The Commission facilitates the main streaming of HIV/AIDS programs and activities into the core functions of higher education institutions. It provides a link between universities, National HIV/AIDS control council (NACC) the ministry of education and stakeholders. It also mobilizes funds from NACC to finance HIV/AIDS activities in universities (CHE, 2010).

The Commission is facilitating the establishment of criteria for ranking Kenyan universities. A shareholder workshop on enhancing quality in higher education in Kenya held in August 2008 came up with proposed hometown criteria for assessing quality in university education. The workshop resolved that the commission would coordinate the ranking of universities.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> This information was retrieved on 08/30/2010 and can be accessed at <http://www.kenya-advisor.com/higher-education-loans-board-kenya.html>

## **Parallel Degree Programs**

Most of the teachers who have certificates or diplomas (associate degrees) in teacher education have joined the universities through the Privately Sponsored Students Program (PSSP), also referred as the module II program and popularly known as the parallel programs in Kenya. Because of the failure of public universities to absorb all those who qualify to be admitted under the cut-off point of C+; these individuals have a chance to pursue degree courses at the university under the parallel programs. The seven public universities tie admission for the government sponsored program to bed capacity. This year (2010) for example, more than 57,000 qualified candidates will miss the admission to particular universities (Daily Nation, August 1<sup>st</sup> 2010).<sup>66</sup>

Many of those locked out will go for the parallel degree programs. The parallel degree programs were started in the 1990s as public universities sought additional avenues of generating money to run their programs after the government reduced funding for higher education under the World Bank funded Structural Adjustment Program (SAP). The parallel programs now have estimated 150,000 students enrolled at all public and private universities (GOK, 2009).

The programs' success has been so high that slightly more than 50% of students at both the University of Nairobi and Kenyatta University are enrolled in it. University of Nairobi has 46,000 students, 25,000 of them under the parallel program. 6,000 parallel program students are enrolled each year against 4,000 governments sponsored ones (Daily Nation, August 1<sup>st</sup> 2010).

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<sup>66</sup> Daily Nation, Retrieved on August 1<sup>st</sup> 2010, from

[http://dn.nationmedia.com/DN/DN/2010/08/02/index.shtml?ArtId=001\\_006&Search=Y](http://dn.nationmedia.com/DN/DN/2010/08/02/index.shtml?ArtId=001_006&Search=Y)

The department of education at KEMU has a big number of both primary and secondary school teachers under the privately sponsored program. The teachers, because of the nature of their jobs cannot attend university full time, so they come over the school holiday; hence the term used to describe the program in KEMU is the School Based Program (SBP).<sup>67</sup>

Despite success of the parallel degree programs in terms of growth in numbers, it has been criticized, with analysts citing the quality of teaching over the school holidays, evening and weekend classes. The low ranking of Kenyan universities globally has also been blamed on the parallel degree programs. Some have recommended that the program be abolished. The claim is that the expenses involved can only be afforded by the rich, which locks out the children of the poor out.<sup>68</sup>

However, a recent decision by the Higher Education Loans Board to give loans to students in the parallel degree program means this hurdle could lessen. Recently, the government has accepted a recommendation of the Public Universities Inspection Board that was set up about five years ago to study public university education. Its proposal is that universities merge the parallel courses with the regular ones through which 16,000 students join the seven public universities annually under the Joint Administrations Board.

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<sup>67</sup> Vacation for all Kenyan public and private schools are held in the months of April, August and December. These Holidays are for one month each.

<sup>68</sup> African universities fare dismally in the world universities ranking released on 09/15/2010 by the British Times Higher Education. Africa only produced the University of Cape Town in South Africa and Alexandria in Egypt in the top 200 slots globally. In the African region, Kenyan Universities were ranked by the same institution as follows; University of Nairobi was 1<sup>st</sup> position in Kenya and 24<sup>th</sup> in Africa, Strathmore 2<sup>nd</sup> Kenya and 32<sup>nd</sup> in Africa, Moi 3<sup>rd</sup> in Kenya and 74<sup>th</sup> in Africa, Kenyatta 4<sup>th</sup> in Kenya and 80<sup>th</sup> in Africa.

The universities have rejected this proposal. Under the parallel programs, students pay the full cost of the course unlike their regular counterparts who are subsidized by the government. The Vice Chancellors have argued that the level of government funding will not run the institutions effectively.

On its part, the government argues that the merger of the two programs was aimed at standardizing education so that none of the two groups feel they get inferior instruction. Lecturers who earn more from teaching parallel programs have also resisted the recommendation<sup>69</sup>. In academic year 20008/2009 HELB set aside Ksh. 500 million to finance students in the parallel program. However, because it is not enough to meet the demand, the money was only given to needy students (HELB, 2010).

Despite the success of the parallel programs, there has been disquiet over the quality of education offered. This has taken the government back to the drawing board with the drafting of a bill which if enacted will bring each of the different University Acts under one Act. This bill will also give the Commission of Higher Education (CHE) power to extend supervisory and regulatory roles to public universities.

The CHE has powers to register, regulate, supervise and inspect private universities, while the university councils and senates control public universities. This will ensure the policing of some universities who have gone overboard and allowed their names to be used by institutions that do not have the capacity to offer university education (CHE, 2010)

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<sup>69</sup> University lecturers earn little compared to those in the US and Europe. This has led to brain drain from Africa, leaving the many private and public universities in Kenya with few qualified faculty. Therefore, those who do not want to leave to the West, maximize and take opportunities of making extra money by teaching in two or more universities-this is commonly referred to as 'moonlighting' in the academic lingo in Kenya.

## **Mushrooming of Campuses**

Other than the growth in numbers, the other trend which is worrying the government is the aggressive competition to grow in numbers and have more branches in as many towns as possible. As the demand for university education among the teachers in Kenya continues to grow, many universities are rushing to establish campuses in most of the larger Kenyan towns. The emergence of a commercialization culture in university education has become a noticeable and sometimes worrying trend of the sector. Universities in a bid to raise funds aggressively enroll students in the parallel degree programs without paying much attention to quality and this has strained the limited resources available.

Dr Baariu the chair of education department in KEMU commented:

Some of the emerging campuses are like “kiosk” universities. Almost all universities have presence in all the major towns. Where universities have no campuses, they partner with commercial colleges to offer the programs. The universities are competing with each other. For example, when KEMU started the school based program for teachers in Meru region, three other public universities, which I will not name set up campuses here, after realizing how our enrolment for teachers had gone up. Some of the commercial private universities are even lowering their tuition fees to attract more students, without caring about the academic quality of the programs. We welcome this competition, but academic standard must be maintained. In recent times, the CHE has warned that some universities were collaborating with unaccredited colleges, potentially risking the credibility of their qualifications. Some universities have even bought buildings on top of bars and restaurants, without caring about availability of facilities for their students. They hawk or vend university education for commercial gains. This is lowering the standards of education in this country. Even our neighboring countries have not been left behind. Uganda has several universities with campuses in major cities in Kenya. Kenyan private universities have also started to set up branches in Southern Sudan and Rwanda.

Prof Mwiria complained of universities in Kenya:

In Nairobi and other major cities in this country, universities are competing for every strategic place available. Recently, Nairobi and Kenyatta Universities were

competing to buy a sky scrapper at the city centre. Analysts point out that academic quality has dropped in most universities, especially the public ones. The emphasis of universities seems to be financial gains as opposed to academic rigor. Although private universities claim to have quality control processes to maintain quality, a look at the lecturers' profiles in many of these universities raises a lot of questions. Many, even the prestigious ones hire very few full-time lecturers. Exacerbating the problem is the fact that most of these institutions have none or only one lecturer with PhDs in their departments. Most depend on 'roving' part time lecturers who lecture campuses across the country. One wonders the impact of this trend given that no studies have been done. In any case, those to conduct such studies are the subject of the study and the major beneficiaries of the trend. Because of this intense affinity for university education, many Kenyans do not seem to care about the quality of the education they receive-the only care is the end result-certificates. Some parents and students have been conned by 'bogus' universities which have mushroomed all over.

The universities, both public and private seem to have turned a blind eye to issue of quantity being emphasized at the expense of quality.

Dr Baariu agrees:

It is only a matter of time before the negative impact of this trend hits the county and many institutions are likely to suffer the negative effects. Analysts have also pointed out that some lecturers, especially in public universities, are not qualified to teach at the University level. This is as a result of neglect of human development. The number of academics taking training in research and doctoral studies has almost stagnated in all departments. This has led to a situation where public universities have raised the retirement age of Professors to 74 years. Many take early retirement and move to greener pastures. Despite additional emoluments from fees paid by parallel students, a combination of factors, including low salaries, heavy teaching loads and lack of research opportunities, has made retention of the best lecturers near impossible. Because of this, teaching at most universities is often through dictation and not taking with very little discussion and question/answers procedures. This literally means anybody can teach in the universities with little skills and abilities needed. Most of the universities have no comprehensive staff development program and Lecturers without PhDs are expected to pay for further studies and scholarships are hard to come by. The result of this is a serious lack of research output by the universities. Although many claim that there are no research funds, the fact is that many academics would rather teach part time as much as possible rather than engage in what they consider a non-lucrative field of research.

University education in Kenya may no longer be the preserve of a few, but there are many emerging challenges that need to be addressed in order to ensure that quality, reputation and recognition of a Kenyan degree is maintained. The government through the CHE will need to regulate the sector more rigorously while universities will need to re-examine their policies so that they may achieve a balance between their commercial and quality objectives.

### **Why Students Chose to Train as Teachers at the University**

The study's focus is perspectives on teaching profession in Kenya and one of the main research questions of the study was how and why high school students and teachers choose their careers.

Asked why she chose teaching Lily Wambui of KEMU explained:

My high school was not so much into guiding students about career choices. It was most inclined in making the students to pass and join the university. I used to love pursuing art subjects but not sciences. I had a dream of being a journalist one day and I was advised by my father to enroll for a degree in education which would pave way to journalism. I had chosen to pursue clinical medicine and journalism. I do not like the course I am doing right now (education). I want to attain a diploma in teacher education, then work for some time, a year or so, and then enroll for journalism. I have a passion for journalism ever since I was little girl. My parents want me to do a PhD in education but I want to do journalism. I think that teaching is a calling and needs a passion [...] which I don't have. My role model is Hassan Abdi (a reporter with Kenya Broadcasting Corporation) and I would like to help people to know the world they live in and expose the problems facing our society.

On the choice of university and courses, Otieno was influenced by his friend who came to KEMU and he opines:

Although this factor may vary in importance to others, there are many people like me who let their friend's choice of university impact their decision. This was a benefit as it helped me by providing companionship and security, especially in the first few months of starting life in a new environment. However, I found that in some instances this made me reluctant to make new friends. This is certainly a

missed opportunity to get to know new people, especially as am studying with them for up to three to four years. So, I started making new friends after I realized that I cannot stick to old friends only. After high school, I worked as a Kiswahili teacher in one of the secondary school. This made me aware of the fact that I had teacher qualities. The experience of teaching after high school was one of the reasons why I joined KEMU for a teaching degree.

Wanga of Kenya Methodist University explained why and how he came to the university to train as a teacher:

In high school, we were not usually given career guidance; the teachers were mostly reluctant and would leave that duty to parents. In high school, I wanted to be a doctor. My parents advised me to be teacher since there would be instant cash once employed [...] teachers were being automatically employed by the government after graduation by then and a job was guaranteed. Deep inside my heart i wanted to be a lawyer. I got a C plain in KCSE which did not meet the minimum qualification to join a public university. This grade was influenced by a strike which affected me and my fellow students in our school. I wanted to repeat form four but this was not possible because there was no enough money. My parents at that time were educating my siblings and these financial constraints made me to stay at home for some years. I landed in KEMU through an advertisement I read in the newspaper. I am currently pursuing a diploma in education. My main reason for choosing to enroll for a degree in education is that as a teacher you become a role model to many people, especially the young students. But the disadvantage of teaching is that there is little money. My intention is to become a lawyer or a lecturer at the university in future. While in high school, my dad was my role model and this encouraged me. Now, I want to join politics later in life. I admire Mr. Raila Odinga, (the Kenyan prime Minster) I would like to involve myself in student's politics when I am in 3<sup>rd</sup> year [...] or something of that sort. Paying fees is quite difficult and my parents are really struggling to keep me in school. I have applied for the HELB loan but it has not been successful. I would like to teach for a few years after graduating before continuing with my dream of becoming a lawyer and joining in politics later in life.

Hazel of Kenya Methodist University shared her choice of career in the high school she attended:

While in high school, there was a teacher who used to advise us on career choices. I wanted to be a nurse, so I chose nursing, then education and counseling. I thought I would enjoy being a nurse, I think I was influenced by a nursing school around my home which really thrilled me, especially when I saw nurse trainees in their shining white uniforms. In form four, I attained a mean grade of B and really

wanted to join university but I was not qualified to join a public one in Kenya. I went to Uganda for form five and six and completed my “A” levels, but I did not have funds to join a university in Uganda, though I qualified to do a degree in education there.

All the four KEMU students interviewed had chosen other courses as first choices in high school instead of education. The students only joined KEMU to train as teachers because they did not meet the minimum university entry requirements for their desired courses. Wambui, Otieno, and Wanga indicated that after attaining a degree in education, they would seek employment as teachers to get money to enroll in their dreams courses. Parents, peers and teachers influenced how the students chose their careers. For instance, Wangui was influenced by her parents to join KEMU to train as a teacher, though she has always wanted to be a journalist.

### **How Students choose Courses and Universities**

Perhaps one of the most important decisions one has to make regarding their career is the choice of university one intends to undertake for their undergraduate or postgraduate degree courses. Unlike a house or parcel of land where one can sell, if it does not fulfill their objectives, degree certificates once acquired become a permanent feature of one’s life and the process of getting another one or repackaging it, becomes much more difficult and an expensive process both in terms of time and money<sup>70</sup>.

It is in light of the significance of decisions by the students on the type of university and career they want to pursue, that I sought guidelines to university students on how they made informed decision about universities they are attending. In the section

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<sup>70</sup> Repackaging means going back to school and university education is very expensive and if someone is working, going back to school would be difficult. Changing ones career would also be very difficult given the fact that the individual has to start afresh, and pay more money as well as the time wasted in training for the previous career.

that follows I include the interviews of a career counselor, students and the university lecturers on how and why students make career choices and join certain universities.

Prior to making a decision about which university to pursue a degree, one will have made a decision about which degree courses to pursue. This depends among many factors, e.g. one's perceptions and their real academics abilities, and their career goal or objective. The first step is choosing a degree program that fits one's aspirations and academic abilities. After making a decision on the degree program, a student must then analyze the requirements that are needed to get into the program.

Mr. Kanya, a career counselor at Kaaga boys' high school and part-time lecturer in KEMU argues that:

If a student yearns to apply to a public university, then they will need to look at the guidelines to KCSE candidates on application for admission to the universities set out by the Joint Admission Board. Admission to the universities is done through the school principals and a processing fee of Kshs.3000 is charged by the Joint Admission Board. There is a deadline for submitting this application (15<sup>th</sup> January of every year). To be admitted into an undergraduates program, the JAB has developed a weighted cluster points which a student needs to attain in order to be considered for admission. This was developed during the 1997/98 admission. This formula takes into account the basic aggregate point for the 7 required subjects, weighed against the raw cluster point of relevant subject in a particular cluster.<sup>71</sup> One therefore has to ensure they are aware of this and strive to meet the cluster requirement. If the student does not qualify to join public universities, then he/she has a wide variety of private universities to choose from.

As for private universities, a student will have to look at the admission requirement for individual universities as given by the universities. Different universities will have their own additional admission requirement, which may include an application fee, and an entry exam.

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<sup>71</sup> The formula and a table showing how to calculate weighed cluster points is available in the guideline booklets by the JAB and their web site.

A prospective student must ensure that the university has the degree program they intend to pursue. One can check the listing through the universities website, prospectus, university marketing materials (brochures) or press advertisements. Some degree courses like medicine are offered by very few universities while others like commerce and education are offered by almost all universities.

Universities vary in size and students' preferences are also different. Hazel from KEMU had this to say about the size and type of university:

While some may prefer a big university, I prefer a small one which offers personalized attention to student's needs. I looked at size of the KEMU, which is a Christian private university. My parents were very particular about a university with a good reputation and KEMU being a Christian university was a natural choice for them. Private universities generally have smaller student populations. Some people say in Kenya, the private universities have smaller classes but the quality of education there is lower than the public one (public universities are more popular and are preferred by many parents and students) However, on my part a large university may offer more program and facilities, but the class sizes could be bigger than their private counterparts. Class sizes might however not be used alone in making a decision. A small class size may sometimes indicate the unpopularity of the university. I looked at the University calendars and read the individual course outlines. I also looked at how the individual programs are designed. This may include the course structure (is it group work or exam based or research oriented?) I also talked to former students and asked them about the programs in KEMU and the prospects of getting a job with a certificate from this university.

The location of a university has a major influence on the choice of the university. There are universities spread all over Kenya, from Mombasa to Kisumu. While a large number of universities are based in Nairobi, others are based in Nakuru, Meru, Western Kenya (Kisii, Kisumu, Kakamega) and Eldoret. Some students favor the rural location of Eldoret, Athi River etc. Issues that will affect the university as far as location is concerned include the cost of living.

On location of the university Kioko of Kaaga Boys' high school responded:

On choice of universities I prefer Nairobi University because it is a public university and offers better courses. Machakos is like 50 km from Nairobi city, therefore Nairobi University which is in the city is nearer my home. My parents are not rich, so I would like a university nearer home where I will not be using a lot of money as fare.

A university's reputation continues to be a major factor in how students choose where to study. That said, choosing a university should NOT be done solely on reputation, but also take academic programs and overall environment into consideration. Some people will take the age of a university into consideration, but they should be aware that reputations based on age of universities are sometimes out of date or overstated.

Some of the older universities may be sleepy and extremely bureaucratic while some of the new universities are dynamic and market oriented. Prospective students can visit the university and do their own research by taking current students and old once and getting a feel of the campus. Some generalizations about some universities could be on false perception and things might be very different on the ground.

The costs associated with university education include tuition fees, housing or accommodation, food, book supplies and personal living expenses. There is intense competition in the universities education sector, and fee plays an important factor. Although the tuition fees in Public Universities will almost be the same, those of private universities may vary and one needs to be aware of this. If a university is expensive, it may be that they offer better quality and facilities, but this may not necessarily the case.

On cost and why he chose Kenya Methodist University, Otieno explained:

The cost of living in Nairobi especially in private accommodation will be higher, while the cost of living in a town like Meru is cheap. Thus my budget and a city's cost of living (for food), rent, and social activities informed my decision. Others will seek their independence and want to be away from home. The weather of a location is an important factor and Meru where KEMU is located is cool and

moderate (Meru is located on the slopes of Mt Kenya, which is the second largest mountain in Africa, after Kilimanjaro in Tanzania).

Dr Baariu the chairman of education and counseling department at Kenya

Methodist University advised potential students:

When I am invited by high schools as a motivation speaker, I always advise high school students to do research and match the cost of tuition charges of a university and the education and services it offers to its reputation. Most universities have other charges other than tuition that one has to consider. These include medical, sports etc. The costs will also be dependent on the nature of the program. Programs such as medicines are expensive compared to others. Public university also requires a subsidy from the government and its costs may be comparatively cheaper as compared to private universities. Other costs e.g. accommodation, have to be factored into the university selection. While towns such as Nakuru and Meru are cheap in terms of accommodation, major cities like Nairobi and Mombasa will be expensive and accommodation difficult to find.

A prospective student will also consider living in university accommodation or off campus. Most universities have accommodation facilities on campus but these may be limited and expensive. This will include a meal/catering plan. If one prefers living alone at their parents' home, then arrangements will have to be made. One will also consider living in single/shared accommodation. This decision will depend on the student, his/her sponsor and ultimately their budget and convenience. Some universities can provide assistance in finding accommodation and answering questions through their students' service but this will be almost always is limited to advice.

Universities have varying degrees of sports facilities. Some have a swimming pool, basketball court, tennis court, soccer pitches, athletics tracks etc. Some have nationally recognized teams in some sports. All universities allow students to join clubs which suit their interests and allow students to further their skills or are just for relaxation

purpose. Some universities may also have radio, TV station or newspapers/newsletters which journalism students will benefit from.

Students in public universities who are admitted by JAB will have access to government loans through Higher Education Loans Board. Private chartered universities like KEMU help their students to have access to this facility. Additionally, KEMU offers programs such as work-study programs which enable students to earn money and help offset some costs. KEMU also has academic (assistantships) athletic and sports scholarships which are mainly dependent on academic performance and excelling in sports. However it is good to note that these are offers which are very limited.

Kenyan universities increasingly have to contend with a shortage of lecturers. The majority of lecturers in the both public and private universities have M.A degrees only. The reality is that at this level, a university needs to have a majority of its lecturers with PhD degrees.

Mr. Kanya explained:

We normally ask our students, to look at the internet and visit universities and ask former students about the kind of lecturers in their universities. I remind them this might be the most important factor while choosing a university and it is often overlooked by students and parents. I tell them that a university's worth is not the building; it is the lecturers, libraries, ICT facilities and research profile of the university that really determines the quality of education one receives. Once the students make their university choice, they need to make one key decision: choosing the course that they would like to study. These decisions should not be taken lightly as they will affect their future. Due to the large number of courses available to students, there are a number of issues that need to be reviewed when deciding which course to study.

Dr Baariu emphasized:

When looking at university prospectuses to decide on which course one would like to study, there is need to be careful that the actual specific detail of the course is considered. A student needs to read beyond the course title and course summary

as the module options and content can vary significantly. It is important to be aware that although many universities offer courses with similar names, the specific content can vary. The course may focus more on one area rather than another. This is particularly important as many university courses include modules which can be selected by you depending upon what you want to learn.

I talked to Dr Baariu of KEMU on how they advise students when they admit them and place them in various programs in the department. Dr Baariu added that they advise students to look at the teaching style:

The teaching style for the course is also important, as you may find that one course consists more of module assignments and group work rather than examinations. By considering this factor you can be sure that the course that you finally decide on is the best for you. Particularly, if you are aware from previous experience that you prefer or perform better with specific teaching styles, for example you need to consider things such as: how much of the course is exam based and is the course based on essays as compared to course work. Considering these factors will help ensure that the course that you the students have chosen is right for them, both in terms of content and also teaching styles.

Many courses provide the option of work placements or internships/TP. For most Kenyan universities, this is done in the third or fourth years and may usually be three months long. Dr Baariu emphasized on work experience:

For our education students in KEMU, we attach them for teaching practice to schools that are near the campus or in the schools that they teach. If you have limited work experience, or if you have never worked in the field that you are considering in taking, it is important to look for a course like a degree or diploma in education which has internships. These internships will provide important experience that will be of benefit when looking for a job after graduation. Work placements can also provide a break from studying so that students are refreshed and ready to complete the final semester(s) of their courses when they come back. If they are interested in working far from the university, a placement with a large company or a school may provide an opportunity to work in different regions. Some students find jobs even in the schools they went for TP after they graduate.

Mr. Kanya summarized the issue of career choices for high school students, before joining universities:

Being aware of factors to consider when deciding on a course will make it easier for student to make his/her final choice. It also helps to reduce the possibility of choosing a course that may not be right for them. If one has already chosen the career that they would like to pursue, making a decision on the course will be significantly easier. However, if a student is unsure which path they would like to follow in the long-term, they need to be sure that the course they select will leave multiple options available. In this instance, it is also better to choose a subject that one is good at or enjoy. If one does not like the subject, it is unlikely that they will be able to commit themselves for the time required. When making a decision on course it is also important to remember that most professions, including law, information technology, business, journalism and communication do not require a subject specific degree.

Dr Baariu further noted:

Ranking of universities is a useful tool in making choices between universities because they explain how well that university is doing in comparison to others. However, these rankings do not give information at course and department level. It is also important to remember that attending a university at the top of the league table does not imply that a student will achieve higher grades. This will be the responsibility of the student studying at the university. A high placing does mean that generally, facilities and grades are above the average compared to other universities. This can also be important in terms of student's career as some blue-chip companies have a preference of students from some specific universities. Many universities offer careers advice centers, and although a student may not consider this important at the moment they are choosing courses, they can be invaluable when they are looking for a work placement or once they have graduated.

Wambui who is a student in the education department in KEMU shared about social life and her choice of university:

Social aspects of university life are very important and elements such as location, facilities and services play significant role in students' time there. The range of social, sports and cultural activities provided by the university need to match your requirements especially if you are living away from home. Although one is at university to study, the most effective students know how to balance their social life well, to ensure that they enjoy their time as well.

## **Conclusion**

For this chapter, I interviewed four KEMU students who are pursuing a degree or diploma in education. Among the four students, only Wangui had qualified to join public universities in Kenya. The other three had failed to attain the minimum requirements for public university admission and they opted to enroll in a private university. I have included the profile of KEMU and interviews and profile of Dr. Jim Baariu, COD-Education at the same university. Additionally, I incorporated the views of Mr. Ken Kanya, who is the career counselor at Kaaga boys' high school and a part-time lecturer at KEMU. From the interviews that I conducted it emerged that before making a decision on the course to undertake at the university, there are a number of factors that the high school students need to consider before choosing the university that they wish to attend.

From the study it emerged that, when considering which university to apply, it is important for the students to examine things such as: are they prepared to study away from home and how far are they prepared to travel to university. Is the course they wish to pursue widely available or does it cover a niche area. Are there specific facilities that they require, such as gym, car parking or technical resources? What are their KCSE grades-do the grade match the minimum qualification for that course? How large or small is the university, is it public or private and how many students study there. Is the university located in a large city or in a rural area? Each individual student will have different requirements of their potential university and so it is important to spend some time on the decision. For the potential teacher education students, they would want to find out if the university looks for an attachment/teaching practice for them or they do it by themselves

## **Chapter 7: Current Teachers: Teachers by choice or by chance?**

### **Introduction**

This chapter illuminates the teaching profession in Kenya. I start with Kaaga primary school profile (one of the sites where I carried out the study) and include information and profile on three current teachers, one primary school head teacher and the two high school principals interviewed.<sup>72</sup> In the chapter, I examine how the teaching profession is perceived by the teachers who are already in the field, parents and the community. I further discuss the teaching profession and how it is affected by gender and I also reflect on the factors that made current teachers choose teaching and why they are still in the profession. I further explore what would make the teachers leave teaching and which professions they would prefer to join after leaving. Finally, the role and limitations of teachers in the Kenyan schools today are highlighted.

### **Kaaga Primary School Profile**

Kaaga primary school is a public day primary school located in Meru municipality in Eastern province of Kenya. The school has a total student population of 533-277 boys and 256 girls. The school includes a pre-primary unit with 60 pre-school children, who are taught by 3 female teachers. The primary sections, i.e. class (grade) 1-8 have a total of 22 teachers, of whom the head teacher-Mr. Kinyua is the only male teacher.

Kaaga primary school is one among the model schools used by Meru Teachers' College for field attachments/teaching practice for their teacher trainees before they

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<sup>72</sup> The term head teacher is mostly used for primary school heads, while principal is mainly used when referring to the high school and teacher training colleges. Head teachers and principals perform administrative duties and teach at the same time-however their teaching loads are lower than the regular teachers.

graduate with a certificate in teacher education. It is an immediate neighbor to Kenya Methodist University, Meru Teachers' College, Kaaga girls' and boys' high schools (the other sites that I collected data).

I interviewed six people from Kaaga primary school, which includes four teacher trainees (I discussed their profile in chapter 5) and two teachers (the head teacher and senior teacher). Kaaga primary school is one of the model schools in the constituency and receives funding from the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) and Free Primary Education (FPE). Together with the aforementioned sources of funds and other donors, Kaaga primary school has been able to put up all the classes as permanent buildings using concrete and stones. Most of the other primary schools in the region are not as developed in the manner Kaaga is, since many have semi-permanent buildings built of timber and with floors not cemented.

Kaaga performs relatively well (compared to the other neighboring schools) and sends more than half of the students who sit KCPE to public high schools and the rest join the day Harambee schools. The school is intending to start a day high school next year (2011).

### **Current Teachers Profile**

In this section, I discuss the current teachers in both primary and high schools. From Kaaga primary school I interviewed Mr. Ben kinyua (Head Teacher) and Ms. Monica Kubai (Senior Teacher). In Kaaga girls' high school I talked to Ms. Maria Marete, who teaches social studies and the school principal Ms. Sarah Kinya. I also went to Kaaga boys' high school, where I interviewed Mr. Ken Kanya-the career counselor and the principal Mr. Victor Mutuma.

I start with the principals whose profiles are shorter (in comparison with ordinary teachers without responsibilities) because of the little time I had with them as a result of their busy schedule; compared with the other teachers who had more time for me.

**Mr. Victor Mutuma.** Mr. Mutuma is the principal of Kaaga boys' high school. He is married with two children-a boy and girl, who are both teenagers in high school. Mr. Mutuma was born in Meru central district in Eastern province of Kenya. His father is a peasant farmer and the mother is a house wife. They are ten in their family-six sisters and three brothers.

Mr. Mutuma went to a public primary school in Meru in Eastern province of Kenya, before joining Kanyakine high school in the same district. He sat for KCSE and was admitted at Moi University for a degree in secondary education.

He has taught high school four over 15 years in different schools in the country. He was promoted to deputy principal in Meru boys' high school and 5 years ago he was elevated and transferred to Kaaga boys' high school as the principal.

Currently, he is enrolled for a M.A in secondary education in KEMU. He chose to study in KEMU, because he argues that as a principal the school demands his presence most of the time and KEMU is just 10 minute drive away from his school. The ministry of education demands as a policy that principals reside in school houses within the school compound to be in touch with what goes on the school, even at night.

**Ms. Sarah Kinya.** Ms. Sarah Kinya was born in Nkuene in Meru central district in Eastern province of Kenya. She is a single mother of three teenage girls in different high schools in Kenya. She was born in a family of eight (three boys and five girls). Her father is a retired veterinary officer and the mother is a retired primary school teacher.

As she grew up, her mom influenced her a great deal, since she also taught them in primary school. Ms. Kinya went to a public primary school in Meru in Eastern province of Kenya, before joining Kangaru high school in neighboring Embu district. After high school she joined Kagumo Teachers' College for a diploma in secondary education.

After completing college she taught high school for ten years before joining KEMU for a degree in secondary education. After graduation she was promoted to be the principal of Kaaga girls' high school. Currently, she is enrolled in Kenyatta University for a M.A in education and hopes to complete the program and pursue a PhD.

Ms. Kinya says that running a big school like Kaaga girls' high school is a big burden and she has to involve the board of governors frequently. The school faces financial problems, because of non-payment of fees by the girls of whom the majority comes from poor backgrounds.

**Mr. Ben Kinyua.** Mr. Ben Kinyua is the head teacher of Kaaga primary school. Kaaga primary school is located in Meru municipality in Eastern province of Kenya. Mr. Kinyua was to retire this year (2010) were it not for the government decision to change retirement age from 55 to 60 years. This translates to him serving 5 more years than he had anticipated.

His dad was a polygamist and had 3 wives. In total, there are 25 children, and Mr. Kinyua is the second among his mom's children. His dad's first wife died when Kinyua was one year old. His mom and the other step mom are still alive.

Mr. Kinyua went to a public primary school between 1965-72, thereafter joining Siakago high school in the neighboring Embu district and graduated in 1976. In high

school, Mr. Kinyua did not qualify to join university. After completing high school at Siakago boys' high school, Kinyua was employed at Nkuene girls' high school as untrained teacher. While teaching at Nkuene, he enrolled as a private candidate for "A" levels and qualified to join Thogoto Teachers' College-Nairobi in 1981. From 1984 when he graduated from Thogoto, he taught at various primary schools until 2004, when he decided to enroll for a degree in education at a university in Nairobi.

I was eager to learn why he enrolled for a degree in the twilight of his career (when he is about to retire).

He quipped:

My wife and I realized we were getting old without achieving one of our life-long dreams of attending university. So, in December 2004 I enrolled for a degree in education at university in Nairobi, while my wife went to another University for the same degree. We graduated together last year (2009) and we are very happy now, because after retirement we can venture into other activities which might require our degrees. I don't have many years to teach-and by the way I would have retired this year if the government had not added 5 more years to make retirement age 60 years for teachers and other civil servants. I am going to enroll for a master's degree which will enable me work with NGOs after retiring from the public sector.<sup>73</sup>

I was interested in knowing where most of the students at Kaaga primary school come from-geographically, and the socio-economic status of their families. Mr. Kinyua explained that many of the children are from around the locality and that teachers in the school did not have their own children in the school:

Education standards in public schools are very low compared to the private schools. There is no single teacher in this school, whose child is a student in this

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<sup>73</sup> With only 6% of Kenyans accessing university education, degree holders (B.A, M.A and PhD) are held in high esteem. Some people just want to attain a university degree for prestige and self-actualization. Unmarried girls and boys dream of being married to university graduates-in the Kenyan situation after undergraduate degree, one is referred as a graduate and after M.A or PhD, and the common term is post-graduate-equivalent of graduate here in the US.

school-including me. The private schools, though their fees are high and the public schools education is free, we still prefer taking our children there (private schools). The reason is simple: the performance is better in private schools than public ones, and no one wants to take chances with their children's' education. We want to give the kids the best education, and this is not found in public schools. Moreover, the competition for good national high schools is very high and private primary schools take almost all the slots in these good schools. We would like to take the kids to the best schools, so that they secure the best courses at the best public universities after performing well in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Exam. Most of the kids in this school and many other public schools are from poor families. The parents given a chance would take their children to private schools, but most of these private schools charge high fees, which are out of reach for the poor parents. We are forced to give lunch to children in school, because we realized if we asked them to go home for lunch or carry food to school, many would have dropped out of school, since some of the parents rely on relief food (food aid from the government or NGOs).

Does it mean then that the teachers in public schools do not have faith in the schools that they teach, and would they teach better if their children were in the schools that they teach? I asked Mr. Kinyua.

Mr. Kinyua:

Well, I guess the way I teach without my children [...] would change if I had my kids in there. I suppose I would teach better, though the salary is low [...] to be honest if my children were in my class I would do my best to make sure they pass exams [...] this is only human nature.

The above statements by the head teacher spoke volumes to me. Many teachers avoid taking their children to the schools that they teach and looking at the learning environment in the schools that I visited, one could understand. The classes are big, with some having between 80-110 students in one class, for one teacher. Poor facilities, like furniture, classrooms, sanitation, and lack of text books (I found 4-6 students sharing one text book) were very common among many public schools that I visited.<sup>74</sup> The big

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<sup>74</sup> There has been tremendous increase in enrollment in both primary and secondary schools after the Kenyan government introduced Free Primary Education in 2003 and Free Secondary Education in 2008.

classes made me reflect on an article I had read in a local newspaper, that there are primary schools in Northern Kenya (which is sandy, windy, dry, hot and arid), where students were learning under trees (trees as classrooms) and the commentator had noted that their (students') "classmates were goats and cows herding around them as the lessons were going on".

High enrollments have made the government, which has been under a lot of pressure from students, parents, teachers, unions and other stake holders to employ more teachers. Through the recommendations of the World Bank and IMF, the government has not recruited teachers for the last 10 years.<sup>75</sup> The government has yielded to this pressure and starting September 2010, new teachers were employed on contract. Through the recommendations of the World Bank and IMF, the new teachers unlike their predecessors who were employed on permanent and pensionable terms, are being recruited on contract basis. Being on contract means; they work for three years on probation and after that duration, they are confirmed as permanent and pensionable. The contract teachers are also paid less salary (compared with the pensionable ones) and one of the conditions of confirmation to permanent and pensionable terms; is that they should stay in the school they are posted for the entire duration of three years without seeking transfer. The arguments has been, the contract teachers will save the government some money which

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Classes are overcrowded and the government had frozen employment of teachers –as part of World Bank and IMF recommendations leading to acute shortage and understaffing. Starting this year-2010, the government has started recruiting teachers again, but on contract basis, which is controversial and the numbers are low.

<sup>75</sup> One would ask the question; "why train as a teacher if there is no guarantee of employment by the government"? Teachers continue to be trained in the hope of being employed by the government one day and look for jobs in private schools. Besides, with a degree or certificate in teaching someone can get employment outside the school.

would be paid as pensions and bigger salaries. This money can be channeled to other uses, like buying of books and provision of facilities.

According to Mr. Kinyua and through my own experience as a teacher trainer in the teachers' colleges, student trainees are supposed to be posted to public primary schools for their teaching practice (internship), but not all the schools are willing to take them in.

Mr. Kinyua explored the issue:

We try to mentor the teacher trainees, because like I mentioned earlier they are not very competent and they are in the process of perfecting their teaching. Some schools might not want the teacher trainees on teaching practice in their school because they (teacher trainees) interfere with running of the timetables, exams, teaching and learning. For us in Kaaga primary school, we don't have much choice because we border Meru Teachers' College and in the spirit of good neighborliness, we can't afford to deny their students a chance to have internship in our school. Besides, Kaaga primary is like an extension of Meru Teachers' College.

Mr. Kinyua seems to be a head teacher who is at ease with his administration and in control of the school. The issue of being the only male among the teaching staff, according to Mr. Kinyua does not bother him. Besides, he said he is used to working with women teachers even in his former schools.

**Ms. Monica Kubai.** Monica was born in Muthara in Meru north district of Eastern province of Kenya. She is from a monogamous family, where they were originally six; but unfortunately one died. Currently, they are five children-2 girls and 3 boys. Although her dad was not educated, he was among the few who seemed enlightened (though he had never been to school) and had passion for education in their village. He made sure both the boys and girls went to school. Her mom too had never been to school, but due to the influence of the church and the neighbors' children (her

neighbors' children had gone to school and landed very good jobs); she greatly appreciated the value of education. Her dad used to work as an attendant in an Indian owned shop in Nairobi and learned how to read all by himself.

She is the fourth born in her family. The first born in her family is a lab technician, the second born is a teacher, the third born passed away, the fifth born is a business man in Meru town while the last born is doing his Master's degree in Kenyatta university.

She attended a public primary school. She did well in her Kenya Certificate of Primary Education exam and was admitted at Kaaga girls' high school in Meru District.

My father was employed and my mother used to do small scale farming, but they never had enough funds to cater for all of us in the family. Reading and homework was only done at school because at home there was so much to do like working in other people's farm for pay, and helping our parents in the shamba (farm). My parents also believed that studying was only done in school, when you get home; one had to help out or work to get food. In school, there were girls who came from rich backgrounds and they did not like to mingle with the others who were from a lower class than them. This made me and other poor girls from my class to work hard so as to come out of that poverty. This really encouraged us to do well in school so as to have better lives than the one they had.

Her options after high school were in nursing, unfortunately after she spotted a vacancy, it needed money (bribe) and she did not have anyone to pay for it. Later she was admitted to Kaimosi Teachers' College, where she trained as a primary school teacher and after graduation she was employed by the government. Monica has taught in various primary schools, but she mentioned that what she earns is not enough for her and the family, and this made her to further her education.

She went to Kenya Methodist University (KEMU) which is a private institution. She chose KEMU because it is near her home, she wanted to complete her studies within

the shortest time possible, and Kemu offers good quality education. As she grew up, her role model was Professor Mutuma Mugambi the former Vice Chancellor of KEMU. She is not satisfied with her bachelor's degree and plans to continue with her education. In fact, she plans on moving from teaching to a career in banking. She would like her children to have a career where they will not struggle as she did.

In Kaaga primary school where she teaches, the children are mainly from poor backgrounds. Most of them are forced to drop out of school by their parents who do not value education. None of the teaching staff members children are in the school because teachers and other well-to-do parents take their children to private schools. Female teachers are posted within their home districts, since they are supposed to take care of their children. She is a member of Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT) and one of the benefits of the union is acting as the middleman between the teachers and the government.

Ms. Monica Kubai has been a teacher for 12 years and enjoys being with children but irrespective of that, she is currently thinking of further education, after which she thinks of leaving the teaching profession for a job she is really interested in.

**Mr. Ken Kanya.** Mr. Kanya is the career counselor and a teacher in Kaaga boys' high school. He joined the staff at Kaaga boys in 2007. He is married and his wife is also a teacher at Meru Teachers' College. He has a young family and he cites this as the reason why he would not like to be transferred far away from his home. He has a bachelor of education degree in English and Literature and a master's degree in guidance and counseling both from Kenyatta University. Currently, he is pursuing a PhD in

education in a local university. He is also a part-time lecturer in the neighboring Kenya Methodist University.

Many high school teachers in Kenya are pursuing post graduate degrees, because the Teachers Service Commission has been giving study leaves and promotions once a teacher attains a higher degree. These promotions are accompanied by financial remunerations, which according to many teachers is the motivation for attaining higher degrees.

He attended a rural high school and it was a real struggle to pass Kenya Certificate of Secondary Exam and attain university entrance. Rural schools are poor and not well staffed. Many teachers prefer teaching in urban schools, because rural schools are in remote areas which are not easily accessible and lack basic necessities like running water, electricity and telephone services.

In high school Mr. Kanya chose forestry as first choice, information technology as second, and teaching as his third choice. During his year in fourth form (12<sup>th</sup> grade), when they sat for the K.C.S.E, there were only two students from his high school who qualified to join public university.

Mr. Kanya has been deputy principal in another school, and explained that being an administrator has never crossed his mind, because he has never liked administrators. He prefers being a classroom teacher and as far as he gets salary increments; he would not aspire to being a principal.

Kaaga boys' high school is a district school, according to Mr. Kanya and cannot be rated the same with bigger and better schools like neighboring Meru boys' high school.<sup>76</sup>

He gave the reasons:

Kaaga boys' high school admit children who have lower grades in their Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (K.C.P.E), while Meru boys' high school admits students with very high grades and therefore at the end of high school, the students perform better in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Examination (K.C.S.E) and are admitted to pursue prestigious courses like medicine at the University. At Kaaga boys' high school we admit second rate students. A national school like Meru boys' high school takes the best students and makes them perform better in K.C.S.E. Teachers in big schools are rated as better teachers than us, without considering the in-put (the students admitted) to the schools.

Mr. Kanya is a member of Kenya Union of Post Primary Teachers (KUPPET). Joining the Union is voluntary and members' pays membership fee of Ksh 200 (\$3) per month. He explained that KUPPET has the benefit of defending teachers when they have discipline cases. KUPPET also negotiates for salary increases and better working conditions for teachers.

**Ms. Maria Marete.** Ms. Maria Marete was born in Meru central district in Eastern province of Kenya. Her father was a high school teacher. Her mother was a primary school teacher. They did a lot of farming, besides their professional jobs. Coffee farming gave her parents most of the income and it was used to pay school fees for her two brothers and three sisters.

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<sup>76</sup> High schools are classified by the Ministry of Education in three clusters; district, provincial and national schools in Kenya. National high schools admit the best students-those who have performed well in Kenya Certificate of Primary Education and then provincial schools admit the remaining ones, with the poorest (academically) going to district schools. It follows therefore the national high schools perform better than the provincial and district schools, and end up taking the biggest share and the best courses at the government sponsored public universities.

Ms. Maria Marete went to high school based on her performance of the Kenya Certificate of primary Examination (KCPE). She attended private boarding primary school and public secondary school, all in Meru.

I asked her about how they were treated by her parents, especially in terms of education. On gender and education she explained:

My two parents were educated and did not favor their sons or daughters when it came to matters of education. However, we were looked down upon by our peers because we did not fit very well among them socially. Most of our friends in school were poor and did not like us at all. I remember, we used to wear shoes at home and remove them before we arrived in school, so that we could not be scorned and seem odd. Everyone in school did not wear shoes (I think the parents of many of children in our school could not afford school uniform and shoes for their children) and we looked out of place with shoes on.

According to Ms. Maria Marete, teachers have problems of funding when they try to pursue higher education (masters, PhDs). This problem of funding stems from the fact that teachers are poorly paid and therefore are not able to pay for further education. Despair is very common among most teachers, as they feel like it is too late to make changes in their careers.

Ms. Maria Marete felt that, if a teacher uses his/her salary to further their education it makes one feel like they are being too selfish when they use family resources to advance their training in order to improve their chances, especially if the children are all grown and require funds for their education. Most teachers who are parents feel that they would rather sacrifice their careers in favor of educating their children.

The administration of the school supports teachers to further studies, through study leaves-paid or unpaid.<sup>77</sup> Most of the teachers go for masters' degrees in education

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<sup>77</sup> Paid or un-paid study leaves are given to teachers, depending on the courses they are taking at the university. Some courses like guidance and counseling have few trained teachers and are deemed very

or counseling. A large percentage of the teachers after graduation go back to the schools they were teaching before and continue teaching there. The government is however, discouraging these study leaves because of understaffing in many schools.

She is a member of Kenya Union of Post Primary Education Teachers (KUPPET), whose members are high school teachers and middle level colleges while, many primary school teachers are in Kenya Nation Union of Teachers (KNUT). These unions do help the teachers in many ways, especially in negotiations with the government for better terms of service and salary increments. The Ministry of Education recommends all teachers to belong to any of these trade unions.

Ms. Maria Marete argues that teaching is lots of work with little pay and no appreciation at all for the hard working teachers who feel demoralized. The poor pay according to her leads to many teachers applying for loans to further their education. But many say that though the pay is little it helps sustain their families.

Ms. Maria Marete suggests that there should be career training where the teachers are trained specifically for career guidance to be able to help the students navigate through the complex process of choosing the right careers. She argues that many career counselors tend to be biased while guiding the students on the careers to choose (science teachers who are career counselors encourage students to pursue careers in the sciences and the arts counselors do the same to their students). On her own career choice, she did not choose teaching but she was admitted at the university to take up the course. She had chosen law, social work, but the Joint Admission Board (JAB)-the university selection

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necessary by the Teachers Service commission and those undertaking the course are given study leave with pay. However, subject areas like History and other Social Sciences are perceived by the government as over-saturated and teachers going to further in those fields are not awarded paid leaves.

board did not admit her to study law, and instead she was admitted for a degree in education. She concluded “I will very quickly grab any available opportunity that presents itself for me to get out of teaching”

Having examined Kaaga primary school and teachers’ profiles, in the next section I will delve into how the teaching profession is perceived. This is the perception of teaching by the community through the “eyes” of the teachers. I did not interview parents and other people in the community and therefore how “other people” perceive teaching was beyond this research. In the previous chapter (4) I have mentioned how high school students perceive teaching as a career.

### **How Teaching as a Profession is perceived**

The teachers interviewed had mixed feelings and perceptions of the teaching profession. All the teachers I interviewed mentioned how teaching is perceived negatively in the community and how this impacts on them.

According to Mr. Kinyua the head teacher at Kaaga primary school, teaching was a dream career for many during the early years of Kenyan independence from the British in 1963:

Teaching as a career immediately after independence in Kenya in 1963 was a very highly valued and respected profession. There were very few educated Africans, and these few were educated by the missionaries to help in the spread of Christianity. They were trained by the missionaries just to read and write, to enable them read the Bible and facilitate the spread of Christianity in Africa. Therefore, the first groups of people to have been educated by the Kenya government immediately after independence were teachers. It was thought that teachers would be instrumental in helping produce professionals for other sectors. That time the teaching profession was highly regarded and revered and the status of the teaching profession was high, in the aftermath of independence and up to the 1980s.

On teaching as a career in the modern Kenya, he compares with older times:

When parents talk ill of the teachers in front of their children, these kids can never respect us (their teachers). It erodes the dignity of the teaching profession, because the society views us teachers as among the lowest cadre of civil servants, and the least paid. Teachers are not respected like doctors or engineers. Back to the 70s and 80s teaching was highly respected, but, look at it today. No wonder no child wants to be a teacher! He exclaimed.

Teaching as a career immediately after independence from the British was characterized by highly disciplined and professional teachers.

Mr Kinyua recounted:

The first people, who the newly independent government turned to, were the Christian missionaries and the few literate Kenyans to teach in the schools. The government's priority at this time was to train teachers to staff the newly established schools. The first professionals to have been educated in Kenya were teachers, who the policy makers thought would help in training the other manpower needed to spur economic development. From the 1990s the status of teaching as a career started declining because of partly; the government's unwillingness to pay teachers better salaries.<sup>78</sup>

On careers choices among the primary school children and how the teaching profession is perceived, Mr. Kinyua expressed his views:

Children in primary schools are well informed about careers. Some of them know what they would want to pursue as early as class 5 (5<sup>th</sup> grade). Most of them do not want to be teachers, because they think teachers are not well paid. They see other professionals driving very nice cars, but the teachers come to school on foot, or riding bicycles. A good car is one of the gauges they use to determine if one is rich or not. The teachers in this country have not been good role models either; we have had many strikes by teachers in this country. The students see their teachers in the streets carrying placards and they do not respect that kind of a professional. I think the teachers' strikes sometimes even encourages students in schools to strike, because the students might argue 'if our teachers can strike, why not us?' The parents are not blameless either. Parents have a share of the blame for the negative perception of the teaching profession by their children (students). When parents talk ill of their children's teachers in front of the kids; these children will definitely look down upon these teachers. I remember one parent who came to my

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<sup>78</sup> During the 1990s the World Bank introduced the Structural Adjustment Programs-SAP and one of the recommendations was cutting down on government expenditure in the education sector and retrenchment of public servants including teachers.

office and started complaining of ‘that ka-mwalimu (derogatory for that poor teacher) who punished my child and even he can’t afford a decent car, yet he is accusing my child of coming to school late’. Such arguments and negative statements about teachers affect the perception of children. However, I am not saying that teachers are the best professionals; some of them are a disgrace to the whole profession. You can find some teachers who are alcoholics and drug abusers, or having illicit sexually relationships with school girls. Such acts lower the dignity and respect of the teaching profession.

Teachers were supposed to be role models in the village. On this Ms. Kinya principal of Kaaga girls’ high school notes:

My mom was also the head teacher of the primary school I attended. As children of a teacher in their school and head teacher’s kids we were supposed to be role models in not only the school but also in the entire village. We were the only kids in school who had neat, clean and new school uniforms. We had shoes, while most of our colleagues did not. We were both the envy and pride of the village. When we were late coming to school or in handing in assignments, the other kids would wait anxiously to see if we would be punished like other children or if we would be favored, since my mom was the head teacher. Teachers were highly respected during my years as a young girl growing up in the village. Teachers and their families were thought to have their children excel in school and go to universities. This exerted a lot of pressure on us in school, because we were expected to lead in the class. At home, we were expected to have the best houses, be well dressed and eat the best food. However, this was not the case all the time because my parents had limited funds to give us all the best in everything.

This study revealed that teaching is perceived negatively by the general public. At the same time teachers are expected to be good role models to their students and in the village. It was evident that the teaching profession’s image has continued to be eroded negatively over time-since independence and immediately after. One of the reasons which the teachers attributed to this declining perception of the teaching profession was the issue of low salaries paid to teachers.

When I put together the perception of high school and college students (who I had interviewed) about teaching and tried to relate it with the arguments put forward by the

teachers as a source of the contempt of the negative perception on the profession; a pattern started to emerge and enlarge-teaching has been seen as a career for the poor and for those who had failed to secure other “better” careers. Relying on the interview questions I had prepared, I wanted to find out, if teaching was not liked and its “prestige as a career” had gone down, then why and how did the teachers land in the profession? The quest to answer the above question, led to the next section-how did the teachers choose their careers in high school?

### **How Current Teachers chose their Careers**

I interviewed both current primary and high school teachers, female and male teachers and I asked them how they chose careers in high school. I wanted to find out if they landed in teaching by chance or choice.

Mr. Kinyua, the head teacher of Kaaga primary school explained:

I remember in high school, we were greatly influenced by a teacher who doubled up as a catholic priest. His name was Father Romano from Italy, who was also in charge of career guidance in the school. He played a great role in directing us in our future careers. I was able to pick very useful career tips e.g. I learnt woodwork technology, which I find very useful to me even today<sup>79</sup>. He explained the different careers available to us in the world of work outside the school. Then there was my elder brother, who was a teacher. He influenced me to become a teacher [...] my brother was my mentor, since my dad was old and illiterate; he acted as a father figure to me. My dad was also very poor and he used to sell tobacco to raise our schools fees and when my brother was employed as a teacher he took over from dad in paying our fees. My other role model was my former principal, Prof Kavesa Mwaniki. Prof Mwaniki, while a principal won a scholarship to Canada, which enabled him go back to school. Currently, he is a prominent professor in Egerton University in Kenya.

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<sup>79</sup> Courses like woodwork were a relic of the British colonial education system found in Kenya before independence. During the colonial period, there were three education systems-one for the whites, Asians and for Africans in Kenya. Education for the Africans was technical and was meant to equip the African children with basic skills to be able to provide cheap labor to the white settlers in their farms and as junior clerks in the government offices. The whites' children were given academic education which could take them to universities and Asians had a hybrid of the two systems because they were supposed to provide middle level workers to the colonial government in Kenya.

Until 10 years ago, the public universities did not give applicants a choice of reversing their degree courses once they made choices. Ms. Maria Marete of Kaaga girls' high school remembered career choice in her high school days.

Ms. Maria Marete of Kaaga girls' high school observed:

In high school 8 out of 10 students, who were closest to me, took up careers they did not want because they were placed there by the Joint Admission Board. They were admitted for a degree in education and they could not do anything about it but comply. When we were making career choices in high school, it was mostly done in form 3 (11<sup>th</sup> grade) when we made choices of what subjects we wanted to do. The students chose the subjects which they were good at; for example some good students who performed well in sciences chose biology, physics and chemistry and one social science subject; these were students who wanted to become doctors or scientists. So basically, students chose subjects according to what they wanted to become in life.

Until recently, many high schools did not have qualified teachers to act as career counselors. Ms. Monica a senior teacher at Kaaga primary school noted:

As a student no one prepared us for career choices but all teachers and the people in the community emphasized on hard work without specific targets related to career choices. I got information on career choice from my peers in class and former students who had excelled in their exams. At the university I had no options since I had been trained in education I had to join teaching with the Ministry of Education.

On how he became a teacher Mr. Kanya, a teacher and career counselor at Kaaga boys' high school stated:

I became a teacher by choice not by default as many people think of teaching in Kenya. My brothers who were both teachers were my role model and highly influenced my career choice. In the village where I was born we did not have many people who were highly educated like doctors, engineers and professors. So, the only role models we had were teachers. We did not have people to guide us in career choices in high school. Besides, there was not much information about career choice during my days in high school. On career choices, we relied mostly on the few people who were educated in our village-the majority were

teachers and they lived a good life. Many of us wanted to be teachers. My father was also a teacher and encouraged me.

On career choice Ms. Monica Kubai the senior teacher at Kaaga primary school added:

I wanted to be a banker when I was in high school, due to the high profile of the job, but I had developed a negative attitude towards mathematics in school. My second choice was to be a lawyer and the third, was to be a nurse. Being a teacher had never crossed my mind since my teachers were not good role models. I did not perform very well in high school and managed only a C plain in the KCSE. I attribute my average performance to FGM, dropping out of school due to lack of school fees and also the Ministry of Education introducing a new syllabus when we were mid-way our high school. The teachers also were not conversant with new syllabus, so this led to my poor performance.

On his part Mr. Mutuma, the principal of Kaaga boys' high school became a teacher through the influence of his father.

He volunteered:

My father was concerned that by the time I left the university, I may not have gotten a job, so he advised me to choose education degree as my first or second choice among the courses to pursue at the university. The reasoning was that, teaching at that time was the only career where one was guaranteed of a job after graduation. Student teachers were being recruited in the university and immediately we graduated I was posted to teach in Miathene boys' high school. The wisdom of my father was that since we were poor, I needed to pursue a degree where a job was guaranteed instead of choosing high sounding courses only to end up "tarmacking" for years without a job.<sup>80</sup> My dad's "wisdom" paid off because I actually got a job as a high school teacher immediately after I graduated. My dad thought if I got a job immediately after graduation, I would help in paying fees for my siblings. Teaching was chosen for me as a path to alleviate our family from poverty. To some extent, it worked because I was able to pay fees for my younger sisters and brothers, but on the other hand it was detrimental to my own advancement and individual development because I spent all my salary and savings on my siblings. My school mates who did not have siblings to pay for, advanced and are better off than me financially, but I don't lament or regret so much, because my siblings were able to go to university and

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<sup>80</sup> There is a high rate of unemployment in Kenya and many people are on the road looking for jobs every day. Tarmacking is the common term used to mean hitting the tarmac road- looking for jobs.

get decent jobs. They look upon me as the bigger brother who rescued them from poverty and they always remind me that; were it not for my intervention they would not have made it to the university.

Ms. Kinya, the principal of Kaaga girls' high school, said that it was trendy and fashionable at that time for women to train as teachers:

My mom was a teacher and I liked the life we had as children. Many of my classmates in high school chose to pursue education as a degree at the university and I thought I do the same, because the course was popular in our school. Many men wanted to marry teachers, especially high school teachers. As I was growing up in the village, the best food, homes, cars, educated children were to be found with teachers. I grew up admiring teachers, especially my mom, and when it came to making career choice; education degree was the natural one for me. Today, when I look back I feel that I should have made another career choice. I think the burden of being a high school principal has made me to dislike teaching, because when I started as a young teacher fresh from university, I used to enjoy and felt proud of being a teacher. However, I guess if got a better job which is not demanding like my current one I would go running out of teaching.

Reflecting on the arguments put forward by current teachers on how and why they landed into teaching, I realized that two out of the six teachers I interviewed never wanted to be teachers. They were forced by different circumstances to train as teachers, and given a chance even the other four apart from Mr. Kinyua would leave teaching. Mr. Kanya, Ms. Kinya, Mr. Mutuma and Mr. Kinyua were influenced by society, their parents, schoolmates or teachers to choose teaching. Ms. Marete, Ms. Kubai said that they landed in teaching, because they did not have a better option. I had a balance of both female and male teachers on purpose, and the interviews were serving as a proof of my argument that teaching is a gendered profession. This view emerged earlier in the literature review and conceptual framework. In the next sub-topic I try to present and support my arguments, based on evidence from the interviews on gender and teaching.

## **Gender and the Teaching Profession**

From the study it emerged that there are more female teachers from the pre-primary, primary and high school levels in most schools I visited. Maybe this trend is replicated in other schools, if we were to go by what this data suggests. This trend starts early in teacher training as I noted in chapter 5 (there are more female teacher trainees in teacher training colleges and departments of education at the universities than their male counterparts).

On this trend Dr. Nira, who is teacher trainer at the department of Education and counseling at Kenya Methodist University observed:

There are more women teachers and teacher trainees than their male counterparts. In the education and counseling department at Kenya Methodist University where I teach, where we train teachers for primary and secondary schools, there are more women than men. In the school based program in the in- service group, 80% of all the teacher trainees are women and in the regular group, pre- service group 60% are women. Therefore, it follows that when these teachers are posted to schools, we will have more female teachers in our schools.

On gender, Ms. Maria Marete of Kaaga girls' high school noted:

At Kaaga girls' high school staffing is tilted towards more female teachers because being a girls' school, the policy makers would like the school to have more female teachers as role models for the girls. For example now there are five new teachers posted and all of them are female teachers. Sometimes the Ministry of Education posts teachers randomly without caring whether they are male or female teachers, but the female teachers request to be posted to girls' schools and vice versa. There are more female teachers than their male counterparts from pre-primary to high school level. The main reason is that many men tend to think that they may be looked down upon if they become teachers, especially the one teaching art subjects. Also, the female teachers are usually given a choice of the schools they want to be posted because of family ties and staying with their husbands and families and male teachers are not given this privilege, hence men get discouraged to choose teaching as a career. The students should be trained in choosing their career choices in form four (12<sup>th</sup> grade), instead of doing it in form two (10<sup>th</sup> grade), which is too early for students to have discovered their true potential, thus many students end up choosing the wrong choices which also affect their career choices.

I was eager to find out some of the reasons why there were more female teachers in the schools, especially in primary schools and whether this was the case with all the primary schools in the region.

Mr. Kinyua the head teacher of Kaaga primary school explained:

Several years ago, the government initiated mass transfers of teachers which brought a lot of controversy. The argument at that time was that there were schools which were understaffed while others were over-staffed. Therefore the government through the Teachers Service Commission transferred teachers without paying any attention to families, geographical region, or marital status of teachers. The Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT) intervened, when female teachers complained that they were being posted far away from their families and husbands. The female teachers argued that, though they had signed an agreement with the TSC, that they were willing to work anywhere in the country, it was unfair to post them far places and even in hardship areas. KNUT on behalf of the teachers pleaded that on humanitarian grounds they (teachers) should be taken back to their former schools or schools nearer their homes.<sup>81</sup> Men teachers, it was argued could be transferred anywhere in Kenya but women should be taken to teach in schools nearer their homes. Many men who are in the public or private sector working in this region or within the Meru municipality and their wives are teachers would want them to teach in the schools within this zone. Therefore, most of the schools within the municipality have majority of their staff as females. There is also a government policy that teachers work in their home districts and since majority of teachers especially in primary schools are women, we find them dominating the teaching staff in many primary schools. Boys and men in Kenya do not want to be teachers, because they perceive the career to be feminine.

I further inquired from Mr. Kinyua whether he feels comfortable working with a staff of women only in the school and how he manages them as the head teacher.

He recollected:

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<sup>81</sup> In the Kenyan traditions women are entrusted with taking care of the children and the family. Many men prefer marrying wives who are teachers, because they think that since schools (unlike in other jobs) are found everywhere-even in the countryside, the wife is in a better position to take care of the children and family.

I have been working in many schools where there are more women than men teachers. In Meru Muslim primary school, where I taught for 8 years, I was the only male teacher among the teaching staff of 28 teachers in the school. I think I am used to working with lady teachers and I view them as colleagues, more than just female teachers. Actually in all the schools within the Meru Municipality, there is no single school, where you will find more male teachers than females.

According to Mr. Kinyua boys need to have men teachers in schools to act as their role models and vice versa. I probed further wanting to know whether women can or can't be good role models to the boys.

Mr. Kinyua:

Actually as the chairman of the Sports Association in Meru District, I have taken up that matter with the Ministry of Education officials. Many of the teachers in our schools are ageing and our students do not have young teachers to take them out for sports and other co-curricular activities like music and drama. The government froze the recruitment of teachers, and over the last 10 years we have not had new teachers employed. This problem is further compounded by the fact that the boys don't have role models, because the majority are female teachers. I think the emphasis on the girl child is also having its impact by investing more on the education of girls at the expense of boys. Female teachers are not able to effectively handle discipline of boys in schools and when they go for sports and other out-door activities. In some homes, boys are treated with more respect than girls and in some families the sons have more authority than the mothers and sisters. This kind of behavior is carried over to schools, where boys do not respect female teachers. Boys in the Kenyan/African traditional set-up would have identified more with male teachers in schools than with females. The boys can even confide in male teachers, when they have problems than to female teachers. Even the teacher trainees we get from Meru Teachers' College, more are female than male .e.g. this term we have 18 teacher trainees and out of these only 5 are male.

Women and men have different working styles at their work stations. I asked Mr. Kinyua how women teachers work compared to the male teachers.

He volunteered:

Female teachers, I am happy to say are as good to work with if not better than the male counterparts. However, we have problems of having their replacements when they go for maternity leave. Kaaga primary school is fortunate to be

attached to Meru Teachers' College, as a teaching practice school. Every term we get teacher trainees on teaching practice (TP) and these help when some of our female teachers go for maternity leaves. However, we normally do not assign the TP teachers to the upper primary classes which are preparing for national exams (we don't want to interfere with candidates' class, so we let the regular teachers continue teaching them until they do their exams). You see, teacher trainees on teaching practice are not as competent as our regular teachers, besides we are training them, so we assign them lower classes.

I had revised my selection of sample to include the views and perceptions of the principals of schools and I interviewed two of them-a male and a female. After failing to get an appointment with the principal of Kaaga girls' high school for three days in a row, I was fortunate to get one on the fourth day very late in the evening. Principals of high schools and teachers' colleges are very busy and scheduling an appointment with them was one of the challenges of this study.

After a long wait, I was able to interview the principal of Kaaga girls' high school and indeed the waiting was worth, because she added a new twist and dimension of gender and school administrators or administration.

Ms. Kinya principal of Kaaga girls' high school:

Being a principal is a very demanding job. I had to sacrifice the time I spend with my family and I think this contributed to the divorce with my former husband. I didn't have enough time with my husband and the children, though they are grown now I would have liked to spend more time with them when they were younger. Many of the female principals are single parents because of the time they devote to their jobs as opposed to ordinary female teachers who do not have responsibilities in their schools. I think also, when a lady is in charge of a large school; where she exerts her authority on men teachers and other male workers in the school, may make her extend this kind of domineering attitude to her husband leading to him feeling like his authority has been challenged and eroded in the family. I found myself making decisions at home and over ruling my husband. If I get married again, I will be very careful how I treat my husband, because I feel I have learned my lesson. African men have a very big bloated fragile ego, which we African ladies have to be very careful how we treat them. My advice to young female principals is to balance between school and their families, if they want to maintain their families and husbands.

On teaching and gender Ms. Maria a teacher at Kaaga girls' high school, expressed her views:

Female teachers are more affected by lack of career progression because family matters pins them down. Teachers are posted to the stations mainly near their home and it's their husbands who will advance their career as the lady teacher takes care of the children and the entire family. Many a times the husbands take family savings and go to school, leaving the wife stranded in one job group. I have seen a man who together with the wife took a loan to go to school, but instead, he took a second wife.<sup>82</sup>

Gender is one issue which cuts across all the areas that I discuss in this study, ranging from high school students, college and university students, current teachers and former teachers. In the pre-primary section of Kaaga primary school all the 3 teachers were female and in the primary section there are 22 teachers, among whom only the head teacher is a man. In Meru Teachers' College teaching staff of 80 only 25 are male. In the same college the total population is 968 students, and female students are 613 and male 355. In Kaaga girls' there are 30 female teachers and 13 male teachers, with a total of 43. In Kaaga boys' high school, out of the total teaching staff of 30, 20 are male and 10 are female. It was only in Kaaga boys' high school where there were more male teachers and maybe this can be explained by the fact that it is a boys' school. Through this study, it stood out that teaching as a profession just like a few other careers like nursing is highly gendered.

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<sup>82</sup> There is discrimination against women in the labor force in other sectors, especially those that are dominated by men. The male dominated professions like engineering and medicine push female aspirants away, by the conditions of work and other factors like long hours of work. These kinds of factors endear teaching (which has three months holiday in a year) to women, making it a favorite career choice for many.

I now turn attention to the role of teachers and the way they (teachers) view these roles.

## **Role of Teachers**

From the study, it emerged that teachers perform many roles and functions which to some of them are not appreciated and recognized by the employer and the community.

According to the teachers I interviewed, some of the work they do cannot even be paid in monetary value. They likened the work of teaching with that of a charitable institution, medical doctors or the United Nations; for instance they gave the example of how teachers are woken up even at night to take students to hospitals.

Ms. Kinya, the principal of Kaaga girls' high school described some of the important things they do as teachers:

We have to outline the curriculum, defining the curriculum content, translating curriculum objectives into instructional activities, selecting appropriate instructional materials, recommending curriculum changes and innovation, and building a timetable. We have to select appropriate teaching methodology, testing and examinations, arrange class assignments, enhance teacher-student relationship, maintain classroom discipline, performing instrumental tasks (e.g. collecting chalk, checking the class register for student attendance). We also supervise learning activities (e.g. prep times even at night) and keep students' records. As I mentioned earlier some of the principals and other teachers (both male and female) with heavy responsibilities have even separated or divorced with their spouses because they have not time to spend with them (spouses) and their children. This is a big sacrifice that one can make to society, which seems not to appreciate the work we do.

Ms. Monica Kubai a senior teacher at Kaaga primary school further explained about the many duties of teachers:

Teachers have to arrange instructional programs in the school, by determining size and composition of class, promoting and placing students by class, allocating instructional materials and resources, supervising and evaluating pupils' progress. We have also to oversee the general school organization by allocating teaching load by subject area and/or class, promoting parental visits to school, enforcing

school rules and regulations, collecting school fees, writing up requisition forms, supervising games, clubs, lunch, hostels (if any), offering guidance and counseling services to pupils, act as deputy head teachers, or senior teachers like me and other such appointments. The same teachers have to implement out of school activities, for instance enhancing school-community relationships, designing extra-curricular activities, organizing and supervising recreational activities for pupils, arranging for educational and other tours and visits.

There were factors which have a considerable influence on the teacher's role drawn from the interviews which included; the society or community in which the teacher works; for example, rural versus urban. The students in the classroom and level at which one teaches; for example, lower (grade/standards 1-3), intermediate (grade/standards 4-6), or upper primary (grade/standards 7-8).

There were issues beyond the classroom that arose from the interviews; for example, previous teaching experiences in other schools, religious and political inclinations and influences of college and university lecturers on the teacher during pre-service teacher education. The performance of the teacher in their duties was found to be influenced by the head teachers, school committees and parents' associations, informal relationship with other teachers, expectation of other educational experts, e.g. inspectors and supervisors and other government officials. Teachers' performance is affected by objectives of the school and the teacher himself or herself (self-expectation/self-concept)

The impact of these factors on the teacher's role are determined more by ethical, social and moral assumptions underlying teaching as a profession than by a financial or material rewards attached to the role. In other words, the very nature of successful teaching, unlike successful administration, derives more from the intrinsic motivation and conduct of the teacher than from the pay, normally low, for the numerous tasks they perform.

It is therefore important that a teacher becomes aware of some of the ethical/moral assumptions or principles that underlie teaching as a profession and that enhance his/her effectiveness apart from what s/he acquired through formal selection and training for the profession.

Talking to the principal of Kaaga Boys' high school about ethical and moral issues in the teaching profession, he quoted heavily from the code of ethics for teachers, as he explained.<sup>83</sup>

Teaching is a highly complex endeavor, involving techniques and knowledge of the highest order. Teaching assumes the necessity of involving teachers in establishing their own patterns of self-improvement and professional development. Teaching assumes the need to have a supportive staff of inspectors and supervisors, especially from the inspectorate. Teaching assumes a good relationship between the condition under which the students learn and the competence of the teacher. Teaching assumes that a good teacher is not only a communicator of knowledge but a model of competence. S/he imparts certain attitudes and skills to his pupils and the society as a whole which may either invite other reference to him or create open defiance. A teacher cannot gain public esteem by demanding it. What matters is that s/he creates a good image among the reference groups whose respect and approval s/he desires. Such an image will depend on the degree to which he is perceived to be competent. [Mr. Mutuma]

On moral and ethical assumptions, Mr. Mutuma, the principal of Kaaga boys' high school emphasized:

If the important aim of the school is to civilize students, then teachers must cultivate civility not servility. Civility is the attitude, normally positive, of the self-respecting person towards persons they respect. Servility is the attitude, normally negative, of a person lacking in self-respect towards a person he hates. To choose the first one is to express a desire to be civilized, to choose the second is to choose barbarism which is the will to live in strife and to exercise power over others. The school is an organization of values. The outcome of the value judgments of the staff, when translated, result in the values of the school's

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<sup>83</sup> This is a document written by the Ministry of Education on the code of conduct of all teachers in the country.

corporate life. The ethos or climate of a school depends on the nature of personal relationship. These relationships should be founded on self-respect as well as the respect between the headmaster and staff, between teachers and pupils, among teachers and among pupils. Such relationships should be based on the motto that is in a good school community “everybody in it respects everybody in it”. This condition will not be felt unless it is first evident among the adults in the school community, especially the headmaster and the teachers. The teachers of a school must operate as a team with common purpose and common principles. The first duty of the headmaster is to create this team feeling. Within the team, there should, however, be plenty of scope for individual expression of personality and opinion. Authority in the school should be known to exist as a source of security, stability, encouragement and motivation and not as a source of resentment and strife. Teachers should be as interested in the means by which their pupils get results as in the results themselves. What a teacher believes is worth teaching will be deeply incorporated in his every attitude, act and plan. To enable his students to want what is worth wanting, a teacher must himself want what is worth wanting.

After examining the role of teachers, I try to explore what makes the teachers to perform their duties or not. To this direction I look at the factors makes the teachers satisfied or unsatisfied with their job and what can make them leave the profession in the next section.

### **Job (Dis) satisfaction and why Current Teachers would leave or stay in Teaching**

Apart from the head teacher of Kaaga primary school, and Mr. Kanya of Kaaga boys’ high school, all the other 4 teachers in the schools that I visited responded that if they got a better job they would leave teaching. M r. Ben Kinyua the head teacher of Kaaga primary school was about to retire and he indicated that he wouldn’t be willing to change jobs when he had only 5 years remaining before he retires. Mr. Ken Kanya of Kaaga boys’ high school explained that he could leave teaching if he got a job closer to his

home and where he can live with his young family; however, he was reluctant to change jobs if the new one would take him away from his family.

The other two teachers, Ms. Monica Kubai and Ms. Maria Marete stated up-front that they would take any chance presenting itself to leave teaching. The principal of Kaaga girls' high school Ms. Sarah Kinya informed me that being a principal was very demanding and if she had got a less demanding job, she would leave teaching. The principal of Kaaga boys' high school, Mr. Victor Mutuma was doing further studies-M.A and said he would think about what to do after his studies, having been influenced by his dad to choose teaching. He argued that since he had paid for all his siblings' education, he decided to go back to school and would take another job of his dreams after further studies.

A closer examination of the teaching profession in Kenya reveals the fact that teaching is bedeviled by a myriad of problems which makes it very unattractive to potential teachers, primary and high schools students and teacher trainees, current and even former teachers. I was therefore interested in finding out why this attitude was common especially among the current teachers. Throughout the literature review in this study, I have illuminated the problems facing teachers in Africa generally, and here I try to tie them down to the Kenyan teacher after interviews that I conducted.

The Assistant Minister for Higher Education Science and Technology, Prof Mwiria, argued that teachers do not want to be posted to places far away from their home districts. All other civil servants serve in any part of the country, but teachers through their trade unions have strongly resisted this move, sometimes resulting to national strikes and boycotts. Some of the teachers who are posted in their home districts, may

choose to remain in teaching-though the pay is small, because they can supplement their meager salaries with participating in other small business ventures like small scale farming in their farms and run taxi business.

Prof Mwiria, (I profiled him in chapter 4):

We will not get very far by merely targeting students in primary or high school, especially if they are to be taught by teachers from the local school's areas. So the issue of delocalizing school management and the teaching force in general has to first be addressed. The TSC had indicated school management was to be delocalized three years ago, but up to now there is little evidence that we are headed in that direction. One can guess why the TSC is handicapped. First, there are the teachers who prefer to work closer to home because of family and property ties. But so would other civil servants who are posted nationally. 'If we deploy all other government employees nationally, why not teachers' In any case, Kenyans are free to buy property, marry and settle in any part of the country, where they would have fewer headaches from relatives and other community members. Two, teachers are protected by the Kenya National Union Teachers officials who fight against transfers of their known supporters even when such teachers have been associated with serious misconduct. Other obstacles to delocalization are politicians and school sponsors. Unfortunately, the main interest of many politicians and sponsors has more to do with attachments to specific personalities and not necessarily quality education. Thus, they will protect heads of schools and school teachers who have overstayed in some stations or recommend appointing someone whose record of performance is below par. It is high time we boldly asked sponsors (sponsors of many schools are religious organizations) what it is that they bring to schools to deserve nominating school heads. In any case, the trend in the rest of the world (where they have attained higher standards than us) is to detach education business from religion. Some politicians are also the first to insist on local recruitment of teachers irrespective of the quality these teachers bring. In fact, there are those who are even asking for a lowering of the grade of admission to teacher training colleges for their constituents. Yet they complain of marginalization in admission to training institutions and employment. The complexity of the matter of delocalization, especially for teachers already in employment, requires national consensus by relevant groups namely, teachers, sponsors, TSC, parents and politicians. The deployment modalities discussed should among other things address the issue of married couples. In the meantime, all newly recruited teachers should henceforth be deployed nationally; TSC does not need any one's permission to do that. This can be done while ensuring that recruitment from districts reflect shortages in those districts while those teachers so recruited are posted away from their home regions.

One can only imagine if an Assistant Minister feels there is need for change and he alone cannot or is not in a position to effect those changes, how helpless then, would an ordinary teacher be feeling? Related to the above argument, many teachers I talked to felt that some of their colleagues are favored by the TSC or politicians in promotions and transfers, making those who merit such to feel demoralized and want to leave teaching. There are so many dynamics and politics involved in the teacher education sector and this was one of the underlying factors for this study.

Ms. Maria Marete of Kaaga girls' high school had this to say about her experience of school administrators and job satisfaction among teachers:

Poor school policy and administration is very common in many schools I have worked, for example, leadership styles of the head teacher. The leadership behavior of educational administrators (headmasters being the key) can initiate structure (concerned with emphasizing organized group functions and activities in order to achieve organizational goals and enhance productivity). The head teachers should show consideration (concerned with welfare of teachers and showing trust, warmth and respect in relation to members of staff and students). Some principals are completely detached from their teachers, and some even feel threatened by the teachers who have higher academic qualifications than them. Some of these principals corrupted their way into leadership positions without merit and will do anything to safeguard these ill-acquired powerful headships. Some principals will not hesitate to transfer or interdict any teacher seen as a threat to their leadership.

The teachers' perceptions of the extent to which their head teachers exercise transactional leadership are usually significantly correlated with their own satisfaction, as well as their effectiveness on their job.

Mr. Kinyua, the head teacher of Kaaga primary school shared with me about his predicaments in his station of work:

There is lack of achievements due to low profile teaching entertains in society, particularly primary school teaching. Unfavorable working conditions; for example, poor houses, lack of telephones or very limited transportation, electricity, health care and other essential facilities, especially in rural primary schools. Adverse effects of the job on one's personal life is a common feature to

many; for example, married couple may be separated by placement in different schools, districts or provinces or a female teacher may feel guilty of ignoring her family by spending most of her time in school preparing lessons on supervising games.

Ms. Monica of Kaaga primary school further explored about teaching and what can make her leave teaching:

There is insecurity on the job due to an increasing number of better qualified teachers and contract teachers e.g. a majority of us are complete illiterates in computers and the young teachers are computer wizards. Some of the young teachers have B.A and M.A degrees. We feel threatened by the young teachers who also relate better to the students, because the difference between their ages is not as big as the one between our students and us. We have low and inadequate salary and teachers are at the lower ends of the scale and enjoy very limited salary increases. Moreover, there are limited promotional opportunities due to competition from other teachers who have to bribe their way up. Very few openings exist in universities and other institutions of higher learning for primary school teachers unlike those for their counterparts in secondary schools. Poor human relations with co-workers (other teachers and the head teacher) are common phenomena in our schools. Sometimes there is rejection by peers and formation of informal groups based on age, sex, qualifications, subject area specialization, junior versus senior staff rooms, arts versus science teachers, social class, ethnic and racial groups, status of institution of training etc. There is favoritism in some schools by some head teachers towards certain teachers in the staff. Some teachers may be 'spies' or watch-dogs for the headmaster, while other teachers' efforts are being undermined and often ignored.

Mr. Kanya, the career counselor at Kaaga boys' high school noted that people and teachers themselves generally have a negative opinion about teachers' salaries and he attributes this to a fixated mind set. He further explains:

Some teachers have a fixed mind set, that they are not paid well. However, comparing teachers and other civil servants, teachers are well paid. So, many of my colleagues will always argue we are not paid well but just look at the parking garage: there are all types of new modern cars. This is a sign that teachers are well paid and are doing well in their lives. Most of the teachers operate from their own homes. However, many teachers would like to leave teaching hoping for better paying jobs.

All these elements of dissatisfaction and conflict bear negatively on the teacher's role and students' achievement. The community expects a teacher to be prepared for ambiguous situations for which s/he was not trained in emotion and physical conflicts which arise from discrepancies between initial aspirations and expectations on the one hand, and work situations on the other.

I further probed Mr. Kanya of Kaaga boys' high school, about staying or leaving the teaching profession:

Given a chance of moving out of the teaching profession, I would do so without any hesitation, but it would depend on where the job will be located. My family is very young and I would think twice before moving far away from them. Many people especially female teachers stay as teachers because of their families. They like teaching because, it offers three months holiday in a year. The many holidays are useful to many women who have young children. Financial considerations also would make me leave the teaching profession. If teachers were well paid, I would complete my PhD and still continue 'eating chalk' (teaching) in high school [Mr. Kanya].

I asked Dr. Nira, a lecturer in Kenya Methodist University (I have her profile in chapter 8) what can be done to retain qualified teachers in the profession, she opined:

In my opinion teaching is a noble profession, but they should recruit those who would love to teach and have performed well. Teachers should be motivated e.g. have better salaries, systems of promotion and motivation. Teachers should be promoted on merit and head teachers should be trained in school management.

Ms. Marete of Kaaga girls' high school does not like teaching though she is a teacher now. She laid down her plans:

I have taken extra courses to further my education in Masters of Arts degree-project planning and management. These classes are not educational but connected to the subject that I teach. I am always searching for a job with better pay and satisfaction of exploring my best ability. I like social work particularly conflict management and I would leave teaching because of the work conditions in the school. When you are in school teaching and leave after your lessons, they (school administration) get the feeling that you are running away from work.

There is a feeling that you will get better than the school administrators especially the principals and their deputies, and this makes them give you extra work. The government pays little money; progression to career advancement is very slow e.g. in my 14 years of teaching I have never been promoted even a single time, irrespective of my qualification (Master's degree). I am in this job for now because I lack enough money to advance in education and appropriate jobs are scarce to come by at this time. I will leave as soon as I get another suitable and better paying job.

In this sub-section I have discussed about teachers' (dis)satisfaction and examined what can make them leave teaching.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter, the profiles and role of the teacher has been discussed within the framework of curriculum planning and adoption; classroom management; arrangements of instructional program; general school organization; and out-of-school activities.

Out of the 6 teachers interviewed, 4 stated that they would take the best opportunity available to move out of teaching. One of the teachers, at Kaaga Boys' high school Mr. Kanya argued that he would hesitate to move out of teaching, especially if the new job would take him away from his young family. Mr. Kinyua, the head teacher of Kaaga primary school reasoned that since he was retiring, there was no need to change jobs, but hastened to add that he would work with NGOS, when he retired.

The various activities that represent each one of these areas have been generated with specific examples. The findings of this research have revealed, however, that teachers tend to concentrate their efforts in the task area of classroom management and that they have very limited decision-making powers in the other areas. Teaching has been analyzed as involving professional and moral principles upon which the teacher must

base his/her expectations apart from the remuneration. I have explored how the teaching profession is perceived by teachers themselves, the students and the community.

I have examined the problems current teachers face in discharging their duties and why they may leave teaching. Among the problems that face school teachers, poor school policy and the leadership styles of head teachers have been discussed. Teachers also tend to be affected by low motivation, poor working conditions, and insecurity on the job, inadequate salary and poor working relationships with co-workers and administrators.

## **Chapter 8: Former Teachers: Greener Pastures or just ‘Quitters’?**

### **Introduction**

In this chapter, I start with the profiles and opinions of the four former teachers who left teaching for other jobs.<sup>84</sup> I then turn to their career choices in high school and their families as well as who influenced them in choosing careers early in their lives in school. Further, I reflect on former teachers and why they left the teaching profession. The chapter illuminates the issue of job (dis)satisfaction and gender in relation to those who leave the teaching profession. There is information on what the former teachers think is the problem with the teaching profession in Kenya and their recommendations on what can be done.

It is worth noting that all the four former teachers interviewed are currently employed in jobs related to teaching. Mr. Japhet Kaberia is a dean of students in KEMU, Dr Maci Nira is a professor in the same university, Ms. Lucia Ngai is an Area Education Officer (AEO) and Ms. Faith Makena is also an AEO. The main reason is that with a degree in education, many people can only land jobs in the education sector. I have explored how and why they chose to train as teachers and why they left teaching in the classroom and how the profession can be improved. Perhaps, it would be safer to note that these former teachers wanted up-ward mobility in their careers and they told me that this was lacking in the classroom. The former teachers were tired of teaching in the classroom and admitted that they would not have minded any other job, even within the teaching profession or related to the profession, as far as it moved them from the

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<sup>84</sup> It is worth noting that, there are former teachers who left teaching and landed jobs in other sectors like banks, but the ones I was able to get for interviews had jobs in educational institutions.

classroom. Therefore, though I have used the term ‘quitters’ it denotes that they aspired to quit teaching in the classroom and look for greener pastures, elsewhere (including any other job within the education system but not as teachers in the classroom).

### **Former Teachers Profiles**

**Ms. Lucia Ngai.** Ms. Lucia Ngai is the Area Education Officer (AEO)-and the district coordinator of special education in Meru central district. She was born in Meru north district in a family of 2 brothers and three sisters. The dad was monogamous and is a retired medical officer while her mom (deceased) was a housewife. She is married to a high school teacher in Meru central district. They have two teenage children-a boy and a girl who are both in high school.

Ms. Ngai went to a public primary and secondary school. In high school they did not have much guidance in career choices and they were influenced by family and friends in choosing careers. After high school she was admitted to a teacher training college for a certificate in teacher education.

Ms. Ngai taught for 12 years in various primary schools before she left to pursue a bachelor’s degree in special education. She holds a certificate in primary education, a bachelor’s degree in special education and a master’s degree in the same field.

Ms. Ngai was formerly a primary school teacher at Kaaga School for the mentally challenged. She was a teacher for 20 years until 2008, when she decided to change from being a classroom teacher.

After teaching at the school for the mentally challenged, Lucia felt she was not satisfied with teaching and started looking for openings to move out. She got a government advertisement for a coordinator of special needs education and applied. She

got the job and currently she is the Area Education Officer and serves as the district coordinator of special education in Meru central district. Her job description includes identification of children with special needs at the primary school and the local community. She is supposed to sensitize the community on the types of disabilities, their causes and how they can be managed. She is also supervises classroom teachers who handle children with disabilities.

Today she has job satisfaction unlike when she was a teacher. The salary is good; there is self-esteem and the job is respected in the community. The community and the schools she works with appreciate what she does for them and this has greatly influenced her positively. Ms. Ngai has been impressed by the work she is currently doing and thinks of continuing with it after retirement. However, before she retires she would like to complete a PhD degree in special education, preferably from a university outside the country.

**Dr. Maci Nira.** Dr. Nira was born in Meru central district of Eastern province of Kenya. She is a university professor at Kenya Methodist University in the department of education and counseling. Her dad was monogamous and there are 10 in the family. The father studied up to primary level and mother had no education at all. On her parent's education level, Dr. Nira recalled that her dad had passion for education and always urged them and even the neighbors' children to excel in school. Her dad was determined to educate all the children up to the highest level one could make. He never discriminated between girls and boys and gave his children equal opportunities. When her dad passed away in 1978, her older siblings contributed in educating her and other siblings. Dr. Nira is married with two teenage children and her husband is also a university professor.

Dr. Nira attended a public primary and secondary school in Meru and Nyeri districts respectively.<sup>85</sup> After high school, she was admitted at Kenyatta University-Kenya, for bachelor's degree in secondary education. She confided that she never wanted a degree in education, but she had no option but to take it, because she had not qualified for a commerce degree, which had always been her dream course at the university.

After graduating, Dr. Nira was employed by the TSC and posted to teach at Isiolo boys' high, where she taught for 10 years before being transferred to Meru high school to join her husband who had also been transferred to Meru TTC-which neighbors Meru high school. After teaching in Meru boys' high school for 6 years, she felt like changing careers. Since she had not wanted to be a teacher, she thought that with a graduate degree, she would apply for a faculty position in a university. She therefore enrolled for a M.A and PhD in counseling psychology at Egerton University and graduated with a PhD in 2006.

She was employed at KEMU as a lecturer in education and counseling. I talked to her on the role of career counselors in high schools.

According to Dr. Nira, the role of career counselor should be:

To guide students on choosing careers, informing students on the careers available and requirements and assisting students to understand themselves. However, the career masters in secondary schools are not knowledgeable enough to offer these services.

I wanted to know about the student teachers she teaches in KEMU. She summarized:

The caliber of the students in the university is average. They are not very good in the field because of lack of experience. The in-service teachers are poor, since most of them are certificate primary school teachers who did not perform well in

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<sup>85</sup> In this study, I use the terms high school and secondary school interchangeably.

form 4. However they teach well due to experience. Most of the students training as teachers did not want to be teachers; they lacked something better to do.

I have incorporated views and opinions of Dr. Nira in a number of topics in this study. Having examined her profile, she was very useful to my study because of her experience as a high school teacher, and teacher trainer at the university level.

**Mr. Japhet Kaberia.** Mr. Kaberia was born in Maua town in Meru north district of Eastern province in Kenya. His father was a polygamist, and had three wives and a total of 32 children. Mr. Kaberia is the last born among 8 sisters and the only son in his mother's house. All the elder sisters were taken to school by his dad, who though illiterate valued education. His mom always reminds Mr. Kaberia how his step brothers used to mock her, before he was born because in the African traditions, if his mom did not have a son, the step sons would have inherited all the property of his dad. Girls and women are not allowed to inherit property because once they are married; it is thought they would take the property to their husbands' homes. Besides, girls are considered to be a source of wealth; bride price is supposed to be paid by the groom to the girl's family and many families feel that the more educated a girl is, the more the bride price, hence many parents want to educate their girls to be able to get a higher bride price.

Mr. Kaberia went to a public primary school in Maua, Meru north district and was admitted at Burieruri boys' high school in the same district and Isiolo boys' high school in the neighboring district.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Most of the high schools in Kenya are single sex boarding schools. Parents prefer them over day mixed schools, because the students are able to concentrate in boarding single sex school e.g. in boys' school it is believed that they (boys) can concentrate more and perform well in exams without the girls to distract them and vice versa.

Mr. Kaberia explains that though students were not guided much for careers during this time, they were supposed to choose three courses to undertake at the university-he chose law as first choice, followed by information science and then journalism. After high school he joined Kenyatta University for a degree in secondary education, graduating in 1993. He taught high school up to 2005 when he transferred to Meru TTC.

While at Meru TTC he went back to Kenyatta University for his M.A in psychology and graduated in 2007. Mr. Kaberia then thought that he needed to change jobs, from being a classroom teacher to education administration or university lecturer.

After enjoying and adapting to teaching, I thought Mr. Kaberia would have continued being a teacher, but he left the profession after ten years in the classroom. Currently, he is employed at Kenya Methodist University as a dean of students.

**Ms. Faith Makena.** Ms. Makena was born in Kianjai-Tigania west constituency in Meru north district in Eastern Province in Kenya. She is the first born in a family of 5 (4 girls and 1 boy). Her dad was a high school principal and her mom was a primary school teacher. Her mom was elected as a councilor in the local governing council after her retirement and her dad opened a private school.

She shared about her family:

My parents being educated wanted us to believe that we were all treated equally, but I noticed when our last born brother was born, and he being the only boy in our family was treated better than any of us girls. Also, as a first born I was always called upon to do most of the work, especially when it came to doing domestic chores at home and being a role model for my siblings.

Ms. Makena was educated in private primary and high schools. After high school, she did not qualify to join university and asked her parents to allow her to teach in their

private school. After teaching for a year, Ms. Makena realized teaching was not a bad profession after all. Therefore, she applied for admission in a teacher training college. After graduation from college she was posted to teach in a primary school in Meru. In 2002, she left together with her husband to England, where she studied for a bachelor's and master's degree in special education.

Ms. Makena taught for 11 years in primary school and Kaaga School for the mentally handicapped. She said that she was tired being a classroom teacher and wanted a better paying job and applied for a job with the ministry of education as an Area Education Officer (AEO).

### **Career Choices for Former Teachers**

All the former teachers I talked to, apart from Ms. Makena had one thing in common; that they never wanted to be teachers in the first case and went into teaching because they had failed to secure their first choices of courses at the university.

In the following discussion former teachers give the reasons why they found themselves in teaching when their hearts and dreams were elsewhere.

In school, Ms. Makena explains that their teachers did not guide them about career choices:

She complained:

Our teachers did not give us any career guidance. For me I thought being a teacher was okay, may be because both of my parents were teachers, but now when I reflect on it I doubt whether I wanted to be a teacher at all. Actually, I think having taught at my parent's private school made me go into teaching. In form four we were just streamed into either humanities or science class depending on one's performance in those subjects. I wanted to be a social worker but I was put in the science class but I thought I could have done better in the humanities.

On his career choices in high Mr. Kaberia the dean of students in Kenya

Methodist University commented:

In high school, I chose law, information science, and journalism in that order. After the exams results were out, I did not attain the points for any of the choices I had made but I was admitted for a bachelor of education degree, which to my surprise I had not even applied for. Teaching had never crossed my mind while in school, but since I was admitted and there was no chance of changing it, I embraced it with all my heart. I realized that it was pure denial not to accept it and I was not able to change anything. When I started teaching I found out that the career was not bad after all, especially looking at the innocent students. I was taken by the confidence and hope the students have in the teacher; they look upon you as the source of inspiration and their success in life. The students view the teacher as the one person who can make them either fail or pass exams. Exams in Kenya are the sole determinant of someone's future life and here we were dealing with human life. I realized that I was dealing with the students' dreams and aspirations and hence started loving and embracing teaching. I felt the responsibility of shaping the students future and I imagined myself in the early years in school and how our teachers struggled to make us see the sense of going to school and doing well in exams.

On career choices Ms. Ngai-the AEO and the district coordinator of special education in Meru central district elaborated:

My father who was a medical officer had a big impact on me. From very early when I was a young girl I wanted to be a nurse. I really admired the nurses in their neat smart uniforms. My second career was to be a secretary and then the third one was teaching. My brother was a teacher and influenced me to want to be a teacher. After high school, I got a job as a secretary in an insurance firm, where I worked for six months. I later applied to join a teachers' college under the influence of my brother and my boyfriend (then) who is currently my husband. My husband wanted me to be a teacher, though personally I did not want to. If it were my choice I would have chosen to be a nurse. My boyfriend insisted and since I wanted to make him happy and not lose him I went to train as a teacher. Actually, my boyfriend did not want me to be a nurse. His sister in-law was a nurse and he did not like the life she and her husband lived. My boyfriend (husband now) explained to me that his sister in-law would go to work at night and leave the children with the maid (house-help) and her husband. The children were young and needed the attention of the mom, but most of the times they were with the maid. He (my boyfriend) wanted a wife who was a teacher arguing that teachers have three months holiday in year and they are there for their children and husbands at night and more times than if they were in any other career. To be honest, having chosen to train as a teacher against my will is the main reason I

changed professions-from being a classroom teacher to an education officer. I felt that I chose a career for my husband and I learnt later in life that it was actually African male chauvinism, where the men dictated to their wives on what to do, even choose careers for them.

Dr. Nira of Kenya Methodist University discussed about her career choice in high school:

My family expected me to go to the university which was not easy for me. Gender has never been an issue in my life. I attended public schools and I was not prepared for career choice; in fact I never received any information on career choice. I wanted to do bachelor of commerce degree and work in the bank because my elder sister was working there and I admired her and I also loved mathematics.

After the interviews it was evidently clear one of the main reasons why all the former teachers might have been compelled to leave teaching was that they had not wanted to be teachers in the first case. I discuss other reasons for leaving teaching in the section that follows.

### **Family and Role Models**

On role models among the former teachers I interviewed, boys were influenced mostly by men and girls seemed to be influenced by fellow women as exemplified by Mr. Kaberia, the dean of students at KEMU:

During our days in high school, career choices for students were left to God. We did not have any career guidance teacher; we just observed what was going on around us. In Isiolo boys' high school there was a lot of the military influence (Isiolo is a "military" city, surrounded by over ten military camps, including foreign ones-British and US military training camps). Naturally, as a boy I aspired to be a soldier due to the influence of the soldiers I saw daily in town. I loved the men in uniform and the kind of life they led. They were loaded with money, drove flashy expensive sports cars and would party the whole weekend. Many of the armed forces personnel had gone for peace keeping missions abroad and came back with "tones" of cash. They bought new cars, built magnificent houses and took their siblings and kids to the best schools. I was also a Scout in school and

we used to hold parades together with these soldiers on public holiday celebrations and I loved it.

Dr. Nira of Kenya Methodist University had this to say about role models and her early mentors:

My mentor was my primary school teacher Ms. Mwongera who taught us history- she was kind and very polite, so when I could not get to my dream career of being a banker I decided I will be a teacher like Ms. Mwongera. There were no chances of changing courses in the university and we only studied what we were offered. I never thought of changing the career even after university. I only thought of advancing and teach in the university. My children do not like teaching- but I could not mind if they become lecturers.

Ms. Makena mentions that in the African traditions boys are highly valued more than girls. She opines:

My parents had four girls and for a long time they had tried getting a boy. In the Meru traditions, if a man does not have a son, he is not considered a complete one. Boys are considered to be superior to girls, because they (boys) are said to be able to continue the family lineage, while girls are seen as “visitors”, because once they are married off they leave their parents and henceforth belong to their husband’s family. Besides, girls are perceived as a source of wealth, in terms of dowry paid to her parents after marriage. Although my parents are educated and Christians who do not believe so much in the African traditions, when our last born (a son) was born, they were very relieved. You could see the happiness in our parents when my younger brother was born, which also radiated even in us; the girls. We felt that as girls; we needed a brother; we were disadvantaged especially in school, and we were always teased by other kids, that we were only girls in the family and sometimes we would fight with other kids and we would not get a brother to help us. Being the first born in the African traditional set up, is a big challenge. My parents expected me to be a role model to my siblings. My dad was a graduate and a high school principal and my mom having been a teacher set very high standards and exerted a lot of pressure on us and especially me as the first born. My parents and the community at large expected me and all of us to excel in school and proceed to the university. My real role model is Martha Karua (former Minister for Justice and Constitutional Affairs) I have always admired her and the way she is “a no nonsense woman” in male dominated world of politics. She is determined to make changes in society. I also admire Njoki Ndun’gu, who is Member of Parliament, an advocate of the high court and a gender activist. These two, together with the environmentalist Prof Wangari Maathai give voice to the voiceless, especially to women.

Ms. Makena attended a public boarding primary school in Meru district. Boarding schools are thought to be good to take children especially for the girls and boys from the rich and affluent families who can afford it.

On families and socio-economic status Ms. Makena commented:

My mom thought we would be more secure in a girls' boarding school. She felt that we were vulnerable to negative peer pressure if we attended a local day primary school. She argued that if we attended a public day primary school, we would intermingle with the other kids from the poor neighborhood. My family was considered well-up by the local standards. Most of the people in the village were peasant farmers and poor. Our family was therefore a model one and we were expected to go to the best schools. Boarding schools were also considered as "safety nets" for girls to avoid teenage pregnancies and early marriages, which were (are) very common in our village. The conventional wisdom was that the girls would be away from the boys for most part of the year in girls' boarding school.<sup>87</sup> The boarding school was a way of making sure the girls completed school without getting early pregnancies and unnecessary early marriages. However, the boarding schools charged exorbitant fees, which were prohibitive to the poor families. This locks out the children of the poor from the good boarding schools and in-turn from a having best tests scores. The private boarding schools dominates "A" list in KCSE, which means the top courses like medicine, engineering and law area preserve of the children from affluent families. Personally, I don't like the private schools; I would rather take my children to public schools. I like the day schools because parents are able to be with their children most of the times, unlike boarding schools where they spend only three months in a year together. Many parents in this country have no time for their children; hence they want them away from home most of the time of the year. The young parents today, view children as a burden, which should be transferred to the teacher in school. For instance, my neighbor always complains when her children come home for vacations, and longs for the time when they will go back to school. Besides, in boarding schools, there are many vices like homosexuality and lesbianism, devil worshipping and cults. When children of the same sex who are adolescents, are put together in a boarding school, they are tempted to experiment with their bodies and sexuality. Though I don't like boarding schools, societal expectations and schools force me to take my children there. The society expects that because I am an education officer and my husband is a professor, I should take my kids to private schools, where other well-to-do parents have their children. The school administration also forces children to board when they approach candidate class. The administrators in schools argue that the students concentrate more when they board unlike at home where they have many detractors.

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<sup>87</sup> There is only three months holiday the whole year-these holidays are spaced; one in April, August and December.

I reflected on the above and realized that the education system was partially responsible for the reproduction of inequality in Kenya. The poor cannot afford the private schools which takes the best slots in the government sponsored degree programs at the public universities.<sup>88</sup>

### **Why Former Teachers left the Teaching Profession**

The four former teachers gave varied reasons for leaving teaching. Among the common reasons to all of them was the issue of poor pay for teachers.

Dr. Nira, a lecturer in the education department at Kenya Methodist University, admitted she did not aspire to be a teacher even as a child:

I didn't want to become a teacher but I did not qualify to study bachelor of commerce degree, so I decided to make the best out of the course and career I was admitted to pursue at the university. In my teaching career in high school, I did not like the work load and the poor pay, so I decided to go back and study a M.A degree in counseling. Four teachers have left my former teaching station because of the poor pay and dictatorial administration and leadership displayed by the principals.

Ms. Ngai, the district coordinator of special education in Meru central district, shed some light why she left the teaching profession:

First, I left teaching because like I mentioned earlier I had not wanted to be a teacher. Being a teacher was my husband's choice for me. My husband wanted a teacher for a wife and I did not want to lose him. When I went to train and eventually became a teacher I was not satisfied and wanted to change and take a career I was really into. Subconsciously, I think I chose to train as a special education teacher because I had always wanted to be a nurse when I was a little girl. In the schools that I taught, we would we have many teachers taking one class in different subjects. This kind of collaborative working did not recognize individual efforts, because if a class failed all the teachers were blamed or condemned. Besides, a teacher can be posted to a school where all the students fail their exams, because they are poor academically. In Kenya, the test scores are

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<sup>88</sup> Public universities are more prestigious than the private ones in Kenya and even the rich parents take their children there, hence taking away the vacancies which could have been taken by the children of the poor. Those admitted at the public universities are sponsored by the government.

very important to teachers, parents and students, because they determine who takes which course at the university. Another reason I left teaching, is because some head teachers and school inspectors are constantly fault finding and harassing teachers. Besides, there is a lot of work load and little pay for teachers.

Mr. Kaberia, the dean of students at Kenya Methodist University explained why

he left teaching:

By the time I was moving out of the profession, teaching had become part of my life. I moved out of teaching because of a number of factors. To start with, the pay in teaching was very poor; secondly, there was very little room for career advancement. For a teacher to be promoted, he/she had to know someone, somewhere or bribe their way up. In the case of lady teachers; some even had to give sexual favors to men in authority to promote them! The school inspectors were also constantly harassing teachers in the name of quality assurance. Another factor was peer influence, especially those that we had been to school together for training as teachers. Some had already left the teaching career and joined other professions, and they seemed to be doing very well. In fact, I felt very demoralized stagnating in one job group after ten years of dedicated service to the government. Some of my students who had graduated from high school were even doing better than me! I remember one incident when I met some of my former students in high school and as they left, they did not realize that I was overhearing what they were saying, “Mr. Kaberia is still walking to school-he has not bought any car yet? They asked each other; he is even in some of his old brown suits. They laughed loudly as they got into their new cars”. Imagine the kind of embarrassment I felt. From that day I went and enrolled for a M.A in psychology, which was a different path from teaching. I wanted to take a course which would give me a different career altogether. After my M.A in Kenyatta University, I applied for many jobs and I was fortunate to get one in KEMU as a dean of students. I feel this is a good job for me. It is well paying, satisfying, there are prospects of career growth, and the job is not boring as it challenges me. Finally, I have the chance of travelling outside the country, which gives me exposure to other cultures.

I further probed him and wanted to know his advice to current teachers. Mr.

Kaberia was very sincere and volunteered:

I would advise current teachers to further their studies for career advancements but still urge the government to increase the salaries of teachers to retain them in schools. I have a son and I would not like all the best teachers to leave teaching [...] who will teach my son then? I would like the best teachers for my son. In my home area, we grow “miraa”-Khat, for commercial purposes and young people do

not attend school.<sup>89</sup> They are engaged in the lucrative miraa business. The young people especially boys do not value education and they make fun of teachers and the money they make. It is common to hear boys saying that there is no need of going to school, if they will be paid like the teachers. They argue they can pay a teacher's monthly salary with their one day's wage! I also had left school in primary school for a year to go to miraa business. My dad had to literally come for me from the market center where I was employed as a young boy to pack miraa into trucks. Some teachers have left the teaching profession to start buying and selling miraa. Education standards are really plummeting in this district because children are not attending school, due to this business.

In many other parts of Kenya, there are incidences of child labor notwithstanding the government directive of compulsory free primary, secondary education and the recent passing of a new constitution on August 2010. In the new Constitution, education is a fundamental human right.

Ms. Makena, the Area Education Officer of Mulathakari division in Meru district; left teaching after going for further studies in England and working for a year as a primary school teacher.<sup>90</sup>

She sheds some light on why she left the teaching profession:

After teaching for 11 years, I felt dissatisfaction with my job and started looking for openings to change my career. I realized to change careers I needed further education, and when I got chance in 2002 (my husband got a scholarship for his PhD in England) I grabbed it immediately. I pursued an undergraduate and master's degrees in special education in Lancaster University. When we came back to Kenya in 2007, I got a job with the government to teach in Kaaga School for mentally challenged. I worked there until 2009 when I applied and got a job as Area Education Officer (AEO) in Mulathakari division in Meru central district. Teaching had become very boring to me and though I had wanted initially to work

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<sup>89</sup> "Miraa" or Khat is an intoxicating herb which is grown for commercial purposes in Meru north district and consumed locally and also exported to neighboring Somalia, Ethiopia, Canada and London.

<sup>90</sup> Many of the primary school teachers are holders of a teaching certificate and those who have a bachelor's degree or a master's degree feel underemployed teaching in a primary school-although the TSC pays all teachers with Bachelor's degrees the same salary many feel they should be teaching in high schools or Teachers' colleges. This is has to do with attitude and perception of primary school teachers, who are not perceived positively by the community or even by high school teachers (high school teachers do not hold the primary school teachers with a lot of regard or respect due to their lower salary, job esteem and status)

with the disabled children, dealing with the mentally challenged was actually very challenging to me. I was also not comfortable with the salary we were being paid as teachers by the government. I was working too much, for too little. I realized in teaching, I would stagnate in one job group without any promotion at all. The Ministry of Education is one of the most corrupt government institutions in this country and I did not want to bribe anyone for a job I feel I am qualified to hold. However, I think human beings are never satisfied; I am already fed up with my current job. I am looking for a better job because being an Area Education Officer is keeping me very busy that I can't get enough time with my family.

The common reasons for leaving teaching identified by former teachers was low salaries, attaining advanced degrees, negative perception and low esteem of teachers. All of the former teachers apart from Ms. Makena also talked of having never wanted to be teachers and being forced by circumstances to take on teaching without their hearts there. All the four former teachers admitted that they failed to secure the courses of their dreams because of lower university qualifications in their KCSE.

Perhaps this story published by a former teacher Mr. Ted Mulanda in the Standard Newspaper (a leading Kenyan Newspaper on 10/01/10) captures and summarizes the conditions under which many teachers live, state of some schools in Kenya, how the teaching profession is perceived by many and why teachers cannot wait to leave the job.

Mr. Mulanda:

In my teaching days, I came from my village hideout by night bus to Nairobi for an interview. But while we were all teachers with similar qualifications, we were not equal. Two men stood out because they were the only ones with briefcases. They had this sleek, confident look about them, probably the reason they enquired where the rest of us were from. After we squeamishly mouthed off the forgettable village names of the places where we taught, they proudly announced, "Alliance", "Maseno [...]"<sup>91</sup> The mere mention of those names made us quake in our boots. In fact, that is where we lost our interview. Alliance? Wow! While we caned idiocy out of village louts, these two chaps were managing intellectual property! I have always wondered why they had frightened us so much, yet we were

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<sup>91</sup> These are the top National schools in the country and only the best students attend them and they are taught by the best teachers.

professionals just like they were. I got the answer last week from a friend who has since quit teaching and moved on to other things. Her letter of posting from the Teachers' Service Commission announced that she has been deployed to a school in Thika district. But when she asked touts at the terminus for directions, none of them had ever heard of that school. After long consultations, involving an old cobbler who had been there since the days of Jomo Kenyatta, she was shown a rickety 'matatu' with a tarpaulin in which passengers sit face to face.<sup>92</sup> It took an hour for the darned thing to fill up, probably because it carried ten passengers on the roof while seven more had to hang precariously near the door. To her shock, she couldn't see a school in the vicinity when the matatu pulled to a stop an hour later. "My daughter; walk down this footpath till you get to a river, and then climb up-up! You see those trees? Yes, there is a road there. Ask there. It's not far [...]" an old woman that she sought directions from said. Going down and up the hill was a grueling six-kilometer trek while the school turned out to be two mud walled buildings deep in the interior. Now, my friend was a fresh university graduate clad in a miniskirt with lofty ideas about competing with her friends who went to law school and marrying a handsome, financially stable man. And now this! Had she stuck, (continued being a teacher) she would have married a local brave man, given birth to six tots (children) and became a matronly lady long before her time. But the humdrum village life so shattered her dreams that she quit and today earns money that would make a chief principal's head spin<sup>93</sup>. Had she been posted to a big school, though, the gated compound of her official residence and the peerless quality of her students would have blinded her to opportunities beyond the school fence. She would still be thumping chalk (wasting in teaching). But you see that undernourished red-lipped male school teacher who drinks illicit brew like a fish? Had he been posted to an Alliance, the resulting self-worth and pride of belonging would have placed him socially at par with his classmate who became a doctor (The Standard Newspaper, 2010, p.23).<sup>94</sup>

The above story tells a profession bedeviled by a myriad of problems, ranging from poor image of the teacher in the community 'undernourished red-lipped male school teacher who drinks illicit brew like a fish' is statement that describes some of the

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<sup>92</sup> Jomo Kenyatta was the first president of Kenya, from 1963 to 1978 when he died and Matatus are small minivans or trucks used as a means of public transport.

<sup>93</sup> Chief Principal is the highest job group/rank a teacher can ever attain in the teaching profession in Kenya.

<sup>94</sup> "The uncertain path of a teacher" The Standard Newspaper. Retrieved on 10/1/10 from <http://www.standardmedia.co.ke/mag/InsidePage.php?id=2000019164&cid=349&>

teachers. The salary is so low that they can't afford decent meals, hence malnourished and can't afford decent alcohol, instead going for the cheap illegal brew. Schools lack basic facilities, they are inaccessible and some are in very remote locations. Many teachers presented with the slightest chance would leave teaching without a second thought.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter I discussed the interviews with the four former teachers working in different professions. They all agreed that they failed to attain the minimum qualifications for the degrees that they wanted. The four former teachers; Dr. Maci Nira a professor in KEMU wanted to be a banker, Ms. Lucia Ngai the coordinator of special education in Meru central district had an ambition of being a nurse, Mr. Japhet Kaberia the dean of students at KEMU had a dream of being a lawyer and Ms. Faith Makena the Area Education Officer (AEO) Mulathakari division of Meru central district, had always had an ambition of being a social worker, although she never minded being a teacher (when she was starting her career and while teaching in her parent's private school).

Some of the reasons which led the four former teachers interviewed leave the classroom include: poor or negative perception of teaching by the community, attaining advanced degrees, low salaries, undisciplined students, overworking, stagnation in one job group and lack of promotion, poor leadership by the head teachers, influence of some of their classmates or colleagues who had left the profession and lack of motivation e.g. teachers' efforts are not recognized.

## **Chapter 9: Conclusions and Recommendations**

### **Introduction**

This study is on the perspectives on teacher profession in Kenya. The study aims at exploring how the teaching profession is perceived by the students, teacher trainees, teachers, former teachers and the community generally. I further try to look at teacher training at both the two year teacher training colleges and university and also strive to unearth what makes trained teachers stay or leave teaching and how teacher education can be improved in the country. This qualitative study draws on interviews and seeks to illuminate how and why these students choose and reject some careers.

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. How is the teaching profession perceived?
2. What influences students to choose or not choose teaching as career?
3. What makes teachers stay or leave the profession?

In this chapter I summarize the findings. I also come up with recommendations on how career choices in high schools and the negative perceptions of the teaching profession in Kenya might be improved. These conclusions and recommendations are based on the findings from this study.

## **Findings and Summary**

Revisiting the conceptual framework I earlier developed for this study, the research shows the relationship between family, school, university or college training and the job that one takes in their professional life. This study has explored a conceptual framework of human resource development in the education sector for supporting of teacher policies and systems. The research examines key issues facing teacher education trying to design and redefine teacher policies for the development of sustainable quality training of teachers in Kenya. In the study I have examined several crosscutting issues influencing the career that one takes in Kenya; these include ethnicity, geographical locality where the students come from and where schools are located, and gender. In order to understand teacher education programs and the teaching profession, in literature review I have retraced the trajectory of teacher training, ethnicity and gender issues in Kenya.

Going by the conceptual framework envisioned earlier on in chapter 2, I trace the academic journey of students from their families, to school and how they choose subjects and careers, to colleges and universities and later to the job market as teachers and why some decide to leave the profession. I have examined perceptions, attitudes, and experiences of students at different times in the training process, after they graduate and become teachers. The emphasis was on those who choose teaching, trying to understand the underlying factors for the choices they make. I have also examined why some of those who had taken teaching change jobs later in their professional life.

Through the interviews with high school students, teacher trainees, teachers, former teachers, head teachers and education administrators in Kenya, I probed

propositions and elaborated issues identified in the literature review and further illuminated through the study on teacher education and how the teaching profession is perceived. The results from the field study highlight several salient issues in the teaching profession in Kenya.

From the four high school students interviewed, it emerged that none of them considered taking a bachelor of education degree at the university as first choice. The students indicated that they would not like being teachers and gave varied reasons. Among those reasons were poor pay to teachers, bad role models by their teachers, and parents who were teachers and peer influence.

Through the study, I found out that the type of family determined the school one attended and subsequently the performance in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Exam (KCSE) and the careers that the high school students undertook later at the university or college. Those students from poor families went to poor schools with scarce resources and did not perform very well. They ended in middle level colleges like teachers' colleges, where they undertook courses leading to "low esteemed careers" (as perceived by the society) like teaching and nursing. The students from affluent families attended good high schools and performed well. The good performance in KCSE led to good courses e.g. medicine and engineering at the public sponsored universities, locking out the children from the low socio-economic backgrounds.

It emerged from the study those students whose parents had college education had a head-start in learning. Some of the students interviewed from educated parents talked of their moms or dads teaching them to read even before going to pre-school. The college educated parents influenced their children in career choices (some even wanted their

children to pursue careers they (children) did not like). On the other hand, students from the illiterate parents did not have their parents involved in their academic life

Recruitment of teacher trainees does not draw on the best students to the profession because students with average grades in KCSE are recruited to join the teachers' colleges. Two male teacher trainees said that they never chose teaching in the fourth form (12<sup>th</sup> grade). They joined the teachers' colleges because they failed to qualify for courses of their choices in the public universities. It was also evident from the study that all the students interviewed from Meru Teachers' College and Kenya Methodist University wanted to do other courses than teacher education. The main reason given by students in this study for not pursuing their initial choice of career was weak grades, which did not qualify them to pursue the course they wanted at the university level in public universities.

Methods for recruiting potential trainees for colleges of teacher education from high school leavers are mired in corruption. Two of the four teacher trainees in Meru Teachers' College said that their admission letters to the college were "bought" (this means that the teacher trainees or their parents/guardians bribed corrupt officials before getting admission letters to the colleges).

Training of teachers in the teachers' colleges was found to be quite rigorous going by the preparations made by the teacher trainees and the supervision done by their supervisors. However, cases of ethical and moral issues were reported of female students' sexual favors/relationships with tutors in exchange for good test scores and teaching practice grades.

Some of the teacher trainers themselves (commonly referred as tutors or lecturers) at the TTCs were found to be inappropriate to teach at that level. Looking at their areas of specialization, majority were not qualified to teach at the teachers' colleges. In Meru Teachers' College for instance; only five tutors out of teaching staff of eighty had the right qualification of bachelor of education-primary option degree and the rest had bachelor of education-secondary option.<sup>95</sup>

Teacher training at the university level was also explored through the study, and it was evident that there are more female teacher trainees at the teachers' colleges and the universities. Three out of the four university students and the same number among the teachers' colleges students interviewed, admitted that they are training to be teachers, to use it as a stepping stone or spring board (the teaching job) and later move to another career.

Through the study, it was clear that the teaching profession is a gendered one in Kenya. The high numbers of female teacher trainees at both the teachers' colleges and the universities, translates into high proportion of female teachers in the schools especially at the primary level. There are very fewer female teachers at the managerial level, e.g. in all the schools and colleges I visited all the principals, heads of departments and head teachers were male apart from the principal of Kaaga girls' high school. Starting from Kaaga primary school, the head teacher is the only male in the staff of 22 teachers. In Kaaga Boys' high school, the principal is also male as well as the principal and the deputy of Meru Teachers' College. The chairman of department of education at KEMU

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<sup>95</sup> Bachelor of education-secondary option is more appropriate to teach in high school and the three year diploma teacher training colleges than the primary teachers' colleges.

was male and the Minister for Education, Science and Technology and his two Assistants. Females are found at the lower echelons of teaching hierarchy especially in primary schools, but as one moves up, there are more males who dominate the administrative positions. These administrative positions are seen as more powerful and this reproduces the gender inequality witnessed in the country. This is not only in teaching, but also in other sectors of the job market there are patriarchic patterns of senior managers being men.

After graduation from teachers' colleges, teachers were previously being posted by the government in public schools, but for the last five years teachers have had to apply for vacancies, whereby recruitment has been done on competitive basis and contract basis. The contract teachers are paid lower salaries and feel inferior to the older permanent and pensionable teachers. On the other hand the older regular teachers feel threatened by the young computer literate more qualified teachers

Among the current teachers interviewed, 4 out of 6 clearly and categorically stated that they would leave the teaching profession if they got better jobs. The major factors that made teachers not satisfied and think of leaving the profession were their low salary relative to their experience and their allowances such as medical, traveling, house and hardship. The major satisfiers were being close to their families, many holidays, helping the students pass exams and two female teacher trainees talked of loving being with children.

Among the major factors given by those teachers who left teaching was job insecurity, low esteem and salaries, which they argued contributes positively to job

satisfaction, followed by staff relationships and principals (they argued that some principals had been irregularly promoted and they favored some teachers).

Lack of promotion was a major factor that mostly contributed to job dissatisfaction among the respondents and made current teachers want to leave teaching and also made former teachers leave. Many current and former teachers talked about stagnation in one job group for many years; for instance, one of the former teachers gave an example of a teacher in the school she taught, who retired without a single promotion in her entire working life.

Related closely to lack of promotion was the issue of corruption. Many teachers talked of bribery and other forms of corruption to be promoted, transferred or even to attend seminars and workshops.

Poor remuneration and low status of the teaching profession and lack of appreciation were major factors identified as cause of their dissatisfaction by all the former teachers who left teaching. The former teachers also talked of undisciplined children, overworking, large classes, and referred to teaching as having long working hours, repetitive and boring.

### **Policy Recommendations**

This study is on the perspectives on teacher education in Kenya; status, perceptions and the quality of teacher training. Based on the findings of this study, I offer recommendations on the choice of careers by high school students and perceptions of the teaching career.

The quota system of admission to secondary schools should be abolished to promote unity. Through the quota system, secondary schools admit 85 per cent of students from their district and 15 per cent from others in the province. This system should be denounced because it contributes in perpetuating segregation by ethnicity in the country. This must be done away with and the government should revert to the old system to bond Kenyans. Under the old system, students were admitted to schools away from their homes to enable them to mingle at an early age, which in effect reduced negative ethnicity.

Career counselors/teachers should be trained specifically to ensure unbiased information is given to high school students. Students should be guided as early as possible but be allowed to choose their career subject once they have practically known their capabilities after several exams possibly at the end of form 3 (11<sup>th</sup> grade). Choice of subjects in form 2 (10<sup>th</sup> grade) does not reflect student ability and interest due to adolescence interference and unrealistic perception of life. Career counselors should encourage students to take broad curricula so that they can be exposed generally to different careers and then be able to make informed choices. Parents should be informed so that they can guide their children without exerting pressure on them (children) to pursue courses that they might be interested in and qualified.

Recruitment of teacher trainees does not happen in a systematic way that will draw a sufficient number of potential teachers to the profession and meet the growing demand of the student population in Kenya. High school leavers with high KCSE grades should be admitted to TTCS and universities. Through the study I realized that majority of teacher trainees at the TTCs had a mean grade C+ and in KEMU had mean grade of B.

I would suggest that recruiting good students (academically) to become teachers is the best way to change the downward spiral of any education system in the country. Further, I think paying teacher good salaries would attract the profession to high school students with good grades to want to train as teachers.

Therefore, the government should design ways of ensuring that school leavers with higher grades are recruited to join teachers' colleges and the private and public universities. Universities should be encouraged to have even the A students to train as teachers, because all other professionals pass through the hands of teachers in schools. Methods for recruiting potential trainees for colleges of teacher education from secondary school leavers need to be considered, as do mechanisms for mentoring current teachers to become principals (female teachers should be considered in promotion to managerial posts).

Teachers' colleges recruitment should be based on merit to avoid corruption, which was cited by three of the four teacher trainees in Meru Teachers' College. The teacher trainees disclosed to me that they "bought" their admission letters to college. The government needs to take action against the corrupt officials to deter potential corrupt practices.

Teachers' colleges should recruit lecturers with the right qualification of bachelor of education-primary option degree and relocate those that have bachelor of education-secondary option to the appropriate work stations.

The hiring of contract teachers introduced by the government this year (2010), is a response to inefficient deployment practices. Contract teachers are paid lower salaries i.e. they are being paid less than the permanent teachers. This issue (contract teachers) is

causing concern and need to be examined with a view of harmonizing and reconciling the two (contract and permanent and pensionable teachers). The government should explore the possibility of posting teachers outside their home areas to ease understaffing in some schools while others are overstaffed in some areas like urban centres. Teachers should be ready to work in any part of the country like other public servants.

The promotion methods of teachers from one job group to another and to leadership positions should be based on merit. This can go a long way to discourage corruption, which was identified as one of the factors which made some teachers leave the profession. They argued that it was very difficult to be promoted unless someone corrupted his/her way up the ladder.

Teachers' salaries should be increased and also harmonized with those of their counterparts within the civil service. In addition, their allowances should be increased especially medical and hardship allowances. There should be opportunities for growth and advancement such as in-service courses, study leave with pay, seminars, workshops etc. The issue of salaries was a big one among high school students, teacher trainees, current teachers, and former teachers.

The teachers' workload should be considered to make the lessons per week and classes manageable. In addition, the number of pupils in each classroom should not be beyond 45. In the schools I visited, especially primary schools some classes had 100 students in one class for one teacher. More permanent and pensionable teachers can be employed to reduce the number of students in one class (contract teachers are being hired this year (2010) but this is very controversial right now and the teachers' unions are totally against the idea). The government can allocate more of its revenue to education (to

employ more teachers and reduce teacher/student ration) if effective learning is to take place and vision 2030 realized.

Teachers' opinion should be sought when the allocation of teaching subjects is being done by the head teachers. Related to the issue of work load, the TSC should try to balance staffing of teachers, so that some schools are not over staffed, while others are understaffed. The government should put up ways of appreciation of the teachers' efforts as well as motivating them and come up with better terms for the retired teachers.

The research was carried out with an aim of making meaning of how and why high school students make certain career choices, examining how the teaching profession is perceived, and why teachers leave teaching and pointing out areas where the teaching profession needs to be improved. Therefore, though the government of Kenya has a clearly defined policy for teacher education and training, implementation has been strongly influenced by donor agencies like the World Bank and IMF. This has created tensions between Ministry administrators and the donor agencies as a result of divergent value systems and legacies embedded in the old order and relics left by the British colonial government. Those charged with implementing reforms (like recruitment of teachers on contract) at all levels appear to be predominantly in favor of the *status quo* and so the successful implementation of the government and donor agency reforms is impeded.

The World Bank recommended through the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) the retrenchment of teachers and the freezing of their recruitment. The policy makers want to implement these changes but they still care about jobs for the citizenry. We need a change in the culture and mindset of administrators and teachers, for the

ambitious targets of the government plan of “vision 2030” to be met otherwise a significant improvement in the quality of educational provision will remain a mirage.

Also, due to stress and unhappiness caused by factors related to their job, teachers’ interpersonal relations both at home and on their job may suffer. This creates stress and again impact on their performance. The government should try to find out how teachers can be helped to explore their potential, not only through extrinsic gains (financial rewards) but how to draw intrinsic rewards from the job itself. Knowledge of what teachers perceive as causes of job satisfaction and dissatisfaction is therefore very important for school boards, policy makers and Teachers Service Commission.

As I reviewed more literature related to this study I came across a report titled “How the World's Best Performing School Systems Come Out on Top” which had suggestions in line with my research findings (Daily Nation, 2010, p.46). The report indicates that low quality teachers especially at the primary school level are to blame for the sorry state of affairs in our education system. According to the report, poor performers recruited into the teaching profession; coupled with poor training is inflicting permanent damage on young learners in schools. "The quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers," asserted the report (Daily Nation, p.47, 07/25/2010).

There is need for the Kenyan government to borrow a leaf from other countries on what seems to have worked there and try to implement such in the country. The importance of looking at other countries is underscored by the report that reveals the best education systems in the world recruit their teachers from the top of the class, whereas candidates with as low as D- grades still make it into teaching in Kenya. The Kenyan

situation is further compounded by a flawed teacher-training curriculum that according to education experts has not been reviewed for several decades. Education researchers like Dr Andrew Riechi of Kenyatta University-Kenya agrees: recruiting poor performers into the teaching profession, more so in our primary schools is our main problem. "Some of them (primary school teachers) have failed in English and Mathematics, and are posted to teach the same subjects in our schools, if you expect them to deliver, forget it!" says the Kenyatta University lecturer (Daily Nation, p.46, 07/25/2010).

Even former tutors in primary school teachers colleges admit that the quality of their products is wanting. According to Dr. Sarah Ruto of Uwezo, the group which put out findings that class eight pupils cannot solve class two mathematical problems, very few, if any, primary school TTCs in Kenya prepares teachers to teach. "I taught English grammar in a TTC, and today, I can admit that I was not teaching my students how to teach English grammar," says Dr. Ruto (CIES, March, 2010).<sup>96</sup>

What can the policy makers and those charged with implementing these policies learn from such findings?

A closer look at the school practices in Kenya indicates what the country needs is not just an overhaul of the school curriculum, but a complete review of teacher training college recruitment criteria as well as TTC curriculum. Either this or no amount of Free

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<sup>96</sup> Dr. Sarah Ruto of Uwezo is a professor of international education at Kenyatta University-Kenya and founder of Uwezo (Uwezo an NGO-is Swahili word for capability), was a presenter at the Comparative and International Education Society (CIES) Conference in Chicago-March-2010. I had the opportunity to attend her session, which was very informative and an eye opener into the teaching profession and current status of education in Kenya

Primary Education cash or new constitution will make students stop repeating classes and poor performance in most of the public schools.

The Kenyan government plans to spend Sh131 billion on basic education in 2010, up from Sh117 billion in 2009. Kenya Colleges Principals' association proposes that students pay Sh10, 960 more, citing high living costs and dilapidated infrastructure. Students training to become primary school teachers may soon pay Sh10,960 more if a proposal by heads of teacher training institutions is approved. The government of Kenya in Vision 2030 (I have discussed this in chapter 1) has committed to provide globally competitive education, training and research to her citizens for development and individual wellbeing. One of the flagship projects in this vision is to modernize teacher training and ensure teachers' colleges produce adequate, qualified, competent, and motivated teachers to meet the demands in all schools in the country. The infrastructures in the teachers' colleges are old, inadequate and dilapidated and they have not been receiving enough funding for rehabilitation and maintenance of the facilities (Daily Nation, 07/25/2010).

The proposal, presented by the Kenya Teachers College Principals' Association, wants the fees to be increased from the current Sh29, 375 to Sh40, 335 to cater for inflation and maintain the facilities. According to the association secretary, Mr. David Nyakaru principal of Meru Teachers' College, the increase has been necessitated by the rising cost of living. "The current fees structure has been in place for the last 15 years. Unless the proposals are passed, there will be difficulties in implementing training

programs, adversely affecting quality," said Mr. Nyakaru. He said that most of the 18 public teacher training colleges needed massive repairs.<sup>97</sup>

A significant proportion of the student teacher trainees both at the teachers' colleges and universities, according to the study did not plan to stay in, or even enter teaching. This situation in Kenya signals the need to re-examine the recruitment policy, the process of teacher training and the reasons for leaving teaching. Not only is there concern at the cost to the government of training people for alternative employment (some teachers, especially in sciences and math are leaving for other countries for better salaries), but there is also concern about teachers and the loss caused by such an exodus. At the same time, it must be recognized that reforms in the recruitment and training of teachers alone will not lead to improvements in the classroom. Attention must also be paid to the conditions of service and the social welfare of teachers to avoid brain drain.<sup>98</sup>

Radical measures and changes are needed to improve on the poor image of teaching in Kenya so that it may attract and retain the best high school leavers. This is particularly important in the case of women teachers who, as role models, play an important role in increasing the enrolment and retention of girls and women at all levels

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<sup>97</sup> Daily Nation, p.46, Colleges may raise fees, retrieved on 07/25/2010 from

[http://dn.nationmedia.com/DN/DN/2010/07/25/PagePrint/25\\_07\\_2010](http://dn.nationmedia.com/DN/DN/2010/07/25/PagePrint/25_07_2010)

<sup>98</sup> The emphasis should be the government to train teachers and improve their conditions, to avoid them leaving the profession. Some of the trained teachers are leaving the country to Rwanda, S. Sudan, Europe and the USA. This brain drain is seen as a loss to the Kenyan government having spent millions in training this manpower for other countries.

of the education system, especially in science subjects in secondary schools and universities.

## **Further Research**

I would like to make the following recommendations for further research:

1. Further research should be carried out in more colleges and universities in other parts of the country.

I conducted research in one teachers' college and one private university. More research in public universities and other teachers' colleges, especially those training secondary school teachers are necessary. The country is big and different and there is need to look at all geographical regions, colleges in different ethnic regions and those located in marginal areas.

2. Further research should be done among the parents and the staff of the Teachers' Service Commission and Ministry of Education.

The policy makers most of the times are the ones who initiate studies and research. They hire researchers to investigate different areas of concern. My concern is that they (policy makers and implementers) also need to be studied. The policy makers like Teachers' Service Commission, the Ministry of Education, Parents-Teachers Associations and Boards of Governors need to be examined to make meaning of their role in making the teaching profession the way it is today. The main issue here is that reforms are needed in the public sector dealing with education and before reforms are

done more research is needed to pin-point where that research is going to be done and from their then reforms can be carried out.

### 3. Contract Teachers.

More research needs to be done on contract teachers. I earlier briefly alluded to the issue of contract teachers in the previous chapters. That was just a scratch on the surface and this being a new phenomenon in Kenya needs more studies to be carried out to find out its feasibility and the assumed benefits. Many poor African governments have been forced by the donors, especially the World Bank and the IMF, without consulting the local experts to implement some policies which might be harmful to the citizenry. The main problem with contract teachers is the opposition the idea is facing, especially from the trade unions. Some of the issues which have been raised concerning contract teachers is the salaries which they are being paid-it is lower than the other older regular teachers and that they are not permanent and pensionable employees. Further research is needed to find out whether this opposition has any valid reasons.

## Appendix

Page 1 of 2

### Parent/Guardian Consent Form

<b>Project Title</b>	Perspectives on the Teaching Profession in Kenya.
<b>Why is this research being done?</b>	This is a research project being conducted by Dr. Steve Klees and Simon Thurania Taaliu at the University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland, USA. We are asking you to allow your child to participate in this study because you are currently a parent or guardian to a high school student. The purpose of this research project is capturing the conception of how students make career choices and why some choose to stay or leave their profession after employment.
<b>What will I be asked to do?</b>	Your child is being asked to take part in an interview that will last about one hour. The questions may explore their career expectations, family background, challenges in school and their peers and anyone else who influences them. It may be necessary to ask them to take part in a further and shorter interview follow-up after the initial report has been written up.
<b>What about confidentiality?</b>	<p>Your child's confidentiality will be maintained at all times. We are going to use pseudonyms to protect the identity of your child. Any recording of the interview with your child will be kept under lock and key and be accessed by the researchers only and will be destroyed at the end of the research.</p> <p>Your child's information may be shared with representatives of the University of Maryland, College Park or governmental authorities if you or someone else is in danger or if we are required to do so by law. In accordance with legal requirements and/or professional standards, we will disclose to the appropriate individuals and/or authorities information that comes to our attention concerning child abuse or neglect or potential harm to you or others.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>I agree for my child to be audio-recorded during the participation in this study.</b>  <input type="checkbox"/> <b>I do not agree to for my child to be audio-recorded during the participation in this study.</b> </p>
<b>What are the risks of this research?</b>	You child may feel frustrated or uncomfortable discussing some aspects of their personal socio-economic situation or background. They may choose not to answer particular questions or to terminate the interview at any time.

*Parent/Guardian form*

<b>Project Title</b>	Perspectives on the Teaching Profession in Kenya.	
<b>What are the benefits of this research?</b>	This research may help to make meaning of how high school students make career choices and how teaching profession is perceived in Kenya.	
<b>Do I have to be in this research? May I stop participating at any time?</b>	Your child's participation in this research is voluntary, you can choose for him/her to stop any time and you will not be penalized in any way.	
<b>What if I have questions?</b>	<p>This research is being conducted by Dr. Steve Klees and Simon Thurania Taaliu in the Department of Education Leadership, Higher Education, and International Education, College of Education at the University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland, USA. If you have any questions about the research study itself, please contact Dr. Steve Klees, EDHI, Room 3112E, Benjamin Building, University of Maryland-College Park, Maryland, USA. Telephone: 301-405-2212. Email: <a href="mailto:sklees@umd.edu">sklees@umd.edu</a>.</p> <p>If you have questions about your rights as a research subject or wish to report a research-related injury, please contact: <b>Institutional Review Board Office, University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland, 20742; (e-mail) <a href="mailto:irb@deans.umd.edu">irb@deans.umd.edu</a>; (telephone) 301-405-0678</b></p> <p>This research has been reviewed according to the University of Maryland, College Park IRB procedures for research involving human subjects.</p>	
<b>Statement of Age of Subject and Consent</b>	<p><i>Your signature indicates that:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>you are at least 18 years of age;</i></li> <li>▪ <i>the research has been explained to you;</i></li> <li>▪ <i>your questions have been fully answered; and</i></li> <li>▪ <i>You freely and voluntarily choose for your child to participate in this research project.</i></li> </ul>	
<b>Signature and Date</b>	<b>NAME OF PARENT/GUARDIAN OF THE PARTICIPANT</b>	
	<b>SIGNATURE OF THE PARENT/GUARDIAN</b>	
	<b>DATE</b>	

## Current and former Teachers Consent Form

<b>Project Title</b>	Perspectives on the Teaching Profession in Kenya
<b>Why is this research being done?</b>	This is a research project being conducted by Dr. Steve Klees and Simon Thurania Taaliu at the University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland, USA. We are inviting you to participate in this research project because you are currently a teacher or a formerly a teacher. The purpose of this research project is capturing the conception of how students make career choices and why some teachers choose to stay or leave the teaching profession.
<b>What will I be asked to do?</b>	The procedure involves an in-depth interviewing that will last approximately 60 minutes. This will be an oral interview with questions aimed at making meaning of why some teachers leave their profession and what might be done to improve teaching. As a respondent, you may terminate the interview at any time.
<b>What about confidentiality?</b>	<p>Your confidentiality will be maintained at all times. We are going to use pseudonyms to protect your identity. Any recording of the interview will be kept under lock and key and be accessed by the researchers only and will be destroyed at the end of the research.</p> <p>Your information may be shared with representatives of the University of Maryland, College Park or governmental authorities if you are, or someone else is, in danger or if we are required to do so by law. In accordance with legal requirements and/or professional standards, we will disclose to the appropriate individuals and/or authorities information that comes to our attention concerning child abuse or neglect or potential harm to them or others.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>I agree to allow the student researcher to interview students of my school for the stated purpose of this study.</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>I do not agree to allow the student researcher to interview students of my school for the stated purpose of this study.</b></p>
<b>What are the risks of this research?</b>	You may feel frustrated or uncomfortable discussing some aspects of your counseling experience in this school. You may choose not to answer particular questions or to terminate the interview at any time.

<b>Project Title</b>	Perspectives on the Teaching Profession in Kenya.	
<b>What are the benefits of this research?</b>	This research may help to make meaning of why some teachers leave their profession and what might be done to improve teaching.	
<b>Do I have to be in this research? May I stop participating at any time?</b>	Your participation in this research is voluntary, you can choose to stop any time and you will not be penalized in any way.	
<b>What if I have questions?</b>	<p>This research is being conducted by Dr. Steve Klees and Simon Thurania Taaliu in the Department of Education Leadership, Higher Education, and International Education, College of Education at the University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland, USA. If you have any questions about the research study itself, please contact Dr. Steve Klees, EDHI, Room 3112E, Benjamin Building, University of Maryland-College Park, Maryland, USA. Telephone: 301-405-2212. Email: sklees@umd.edu.</p> <p>If you have questions about your rights as a research subject or wish to report a research-related injury, please contact: <b>Institutional Review Board Office, University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland, 20742; (e-mail) <a href="mailto:irb@deans.umd.edu">irb@deans.umd.edu</a>; (telephone) 301-405-0678</b>          This research has been reviewed according to the University of Maryland, College Park IRB procedures for research involving human subjects.</p>	
<b>Statement of Age of Subject and Consent</b>	<p><i>Your signature indicates that:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>you are at least 18 years of age;</i></li> <li>▪ <i>the research has been explained to you;</i></li> <li>▪ <i>your questions have been fully answered; and</i></li> <li>▪ <i>You freely and voluntarily choose to participate in this research project.</i></li> </ul>	
<b>Signature and Date</b>	<b>NAME OF PARTICIPANT</b>	
	<b>SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT</b>	
	<b>DATE</b>	

## Student Assent and Consent Form for Interview

<b>Project Title</b>	Perspectives on the Teaching Profession in Kenya.
<b>Why is this research being done?</b>	This is a research project being conducted by Dr. Steve Klees and Simon Thuranira Taaliu at the University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland, USA. We are inviting you to participate in this research project because you are currently a high school student. The purpose of this research project is capturing the conception of how students make career choices and why some teachers choose to stay or leave the teaching profession.
<b>What will I be asked to do?</b>	We are inviting you to participate in a 60 minute interview on how you choose courses and careers in school. You may stop the interview at any time for any reason. Your parent or guardian will not be present during the interview. The school administration has been informed and this interview is authorized.
<b>What about confidentiality?</b>	<p>Your confidentiality will be maintained at all times. We are going to use pseudonyms to protect your identity. Any recording of the interview will be kept under lock and key and be accessed by the researchers only and will be destroyed at the end of the research.</p> <p>Your information may be shared with representatives of the University of Maryland, College Park or governmental authorities if you or someone else is in danger or if we are required to do so by law. In accordance with legal requirements and/or professional standards, we will disclose to the appropriate individuals and/or authorities information that comes to our attention concerning child abuse or neglect or potential harm to you or others.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>I agree to be audio-recorded during my participation in this study.</b>  <input type="checkbox"/> <b>I do not agree to be audio-recorded during my participation in this study.</b> </p>
<b>What are the risks of this research?</b>	You may feel frustrated or uncomfortable discussing some aspects of your personal socio-economic situation. You may choose not to answer particular questions or to stop the interview at any time.

*Student Interview Consent Form*

<b>Project Title</b>	Perspectives on the Teaching Profession in Kenya.	
<b>What are the benefits of this research?</b>	This research may help to make meaning of how high school students make career choices and how teaching profession is perceived in Kenya.	
<b>Do I have to be in this research? May I stop participating at any time?</b>	Your participation in this research is voluntary, you can choose to stop any time and you will not be penalized in any way.	
<b>What if I have questions?</b>	<p>This research is being conducted by Dr. Steve Klees and Simon Thurania Taaliu in the Department of Education Leadership, Higher Education, and International Education, College of Education at the University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland, USA. If you have any questions about the research study itself, please contact Dr. Steve Klees, EDHI, Room 3112E, Benjamin Building, University of Maryland-College Park, Maryland, USA. Telephone: 301-405-2212. Email: sklees@umd.edu.</p> <p>If you have questions about your rights as a research subject or wish to report a research-related injury, please contact: <b>Institutional Review Board Office, University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland, 20742; (e-mail) <a href="mailto:irb@deans.umd.edu">irb@deans.umd.edu</a>; (telephone) 301-405-0678</b>          This research has been reviewed according to the University of Maryland, College Park IRB procedures for research involving human subjects.</p>	
	<p><i>Your signature indicates that:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>the research has been explained to you;</i></li> <li>▪ <i>your questions have been fully answered; and</i></li> <li>▪ <i>you freely and voluntarily choose to participate in this interview</i></li> </ul>	
<b>Signature and Date</b>	<b>NAME OF STUDENT</b>	
	<b>SIGNATURE OF STUDENT</b>	
	<b>DATE</b>	

## **Interview Guide for College/University Teacher Trainees Respondents**

**Project Title:** Perspectives on the Teaching Profession in Kenya.

### **Introductions**

This is a research project being conducted by Prof. Steve Klees and me (Simon Thurania Taaliu) from the University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland, USA. We are inviting you to participate in this research project because you are currently a teacher trainee. The purpose of this research project is capturing the conception of how students make career choices and why some teachers choose to stay or leave the teaching profession. The results may help the investigator to better understand the conception of how high school students make career choices and how teaching profession is perceived in Kenya and may help inform policies in future. Please tell me briefly about yourself e.g. name?

### **Family**

1. Where were born?
2. What do your parents expect of you about your future career?
3. Do you think you are under pressure to meet these expectations?
4. Do you feel advantaged or disadvantaged by your gender in the way you are brought up to believe in what you can do at home, in school and after college?
5. What is your parents' level of education?

### **School**

6. What type of school did you attend for your primary and secondary education (public/private)?
7. What grade did you attain?

8. Do you think as a student you were well prepared for career choices and doing well in the national examinations (KCSE)?
9. Can you describe the role of the teacher career counselors in helping you choose your career in high school?
10. Do you face problems in school fees payment?

### **College/University**

11. Why did you join teacher training?
12. What factors did you consider in choosing the course and college/university?
13. Did your parents persuade you to join this course, please explain why?
14. If your family could afford for you to change the course you are taking, would you change and if yes; which course would you undertake in the university?
15. Do you have any close friends in college? How about outside this college? If yes, are their educational aspirations similar to yours and did they influence your choices?
16. What preparations do you make for your teaching practice?
17. What is micro-teaching?
18. In getting ready for teaching, what preparations or documents do you make? Please explain each of them.
19. Does the teaching practice prepare you enough for the teaching profession ahead of you?
20. How did you choose your friends? Do you expect them to become teachers after training?
21. Is there anybody you admire and why?

### **Career Choice**

22. What factors do you consider when choosing your career?

23. Why did you choose to train as a teacher in this college/university?
24. What other careers had you considered?
25. What prevented you from following those careers?
26. Do you intend to become a school teacher on completing your training?
27. Who has influenced you in your career choice?
28. Do you feel proud of being a teacher in future? Does being a teacher advantage or disadvantage you in your career progression and promotions in future. Give me examples?

## **Interview Guide for High School Students**

**Project Title:** Perspectives on the Teaching Profession in Kenya.

### **Introductions**

This is a research project being conducted by Prof. Steve Klees and me (Simon Thurunira Taaliu) from the University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland, USA. We are inviting you to participate in this research project because you are currently a high school student.

The purpose of this research project is capturing the conception of how students make career choices and why some teachers choose to stay or leave the teaching profession.

The results may help the investigator to better understand the conception of how high school students make career choices and how teaching profession is perceived in Kenya and may help inform policies in future. Please tell me briefly about yourself e.g. name?

### **Family**

1. Where were you born?
2. What do your parents expect of you about your future career?
3. Do you think you are under pressure to meet these expectations?
4. What is your parents' level of education?
5. Do your parents influence you on what subjects to choose in school?

### **School**

6. What type of school did you attend for your primary education?
7. What grade did you attain in the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE)?
8. Is there anybody you admire and why?
9. Do you have problems in fees payment?
10. Do your parents have any preferences in paying fees e.g. between boys and girls?

## **Career Choice**

11. Which is your first and last degree choice and why?
12. What are your immediate and long term plans after high school?
13. Do teachers give you enough guidance on what courses to do in university?
14. Why do you think you need university education?
15. What factors do you consider when choosing universities?
16. In the event you attain university admission requirements, what course will you do, and if you don't make it, what are your options?

## **Interview Questions for Current Teachers**

**Project Title:** Perspectives on the Teaching Profession in Kenya.

### **Introductions**

This is a research project being conducted by Prof. Steve Klees and me (Simon Thurania Taaliu) from the University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland, USA. We are inviting you to participate in this research project because you are currently a teacher. The purpose of this research project is capturing the conception of how students make career choices and why some teachers choose to stay or leave the teaching profession. The results may help the investigator to better understand the conception of how high school students make career choices and how teaching profession is perceived in Kenya and may help inform policies in future. Please tell me briefly about yourself e.g. name?

### **Family**

1. Where you born?
2. Tell me about your family's socio-economic status.
3. Did the issue of money influence the high school and college you went?
4. In your family, do you prefer boys or girls to further their education? Did your parents prefer any of your siblings over the other in attending school?

### **School**

5. What type of school did you attend for your primary and secondary education (public/private)?
6. Do you think as a student you were well prepared for career choices and doing well in the national examinations (KCSE)?
7. Where did you as a student in high school get information about Career choice?

8. How many students have joined university from your high school and were trained in the career of their choice?

### **College/University**

9. What were your options after completing college/university?
10. What are some of the challenges that teachers face in trying to change careers?
11. For the students you attended high school with, how do you rate their level of readiness for the careers they chose?
12. In your opinion, what motivates high school students towards choosing certain careers?  
Please explain?

### **Career Choice**

13. What factors caused you to choose teaching as career in the first case?
14. What other careers had you considered?
15. What prevented you from following those careers?
16. What factors would make you to leave teaching?
17. What factors might prevent more people from applying for teacher training courses?
18. Given a choice now, what career would you take?
19. Do you take classes to further your education? Are these classes in education?

### **Working Conditions**

20. In getting ready for your work, what preparations or documents do you make? Please explain each of them.
21. Are there more male teachers or female ones in your school? Explain why there is more of one of the genders?
22. Do you have any kind of support from the administration of the school?

23. Are you satisfied with your job?
24. What might encourage you to stay in the job?
25. How long do you intend to stay in teaching?
26. What might make you leave teaching?
27. Which job would you look for?
28. Do you think children are advantaged or disadvantaged in the competition for university admission by studying in your school?
29. Do you belong to Kenya Nation Union of Teachers (KNUT)?
30. Is it voluntary or mandatory to join the union?
31. What are the benefits of being a union member?

## **Interview Guide for Former Teachers**

**Project Title:** Perspectives on the Teaching Profession in Kenya.

### **Introductions**

This is a research project being conducted by Prof. Steve Klees and me (Simon Thurania Taaliu) from the University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland, USA. We are inviting you to participate in this research project because you are currently a former teacher. The purpose of this research project is capturing the conception of how students make career choices and why some teachers choose to stay or leave the teaching profession. The results may help the investigator to better understand the conception of how high school students make career choices and how teaching profession is perceived in Kenya and may help inform policies in future. Please tell me briefly about yourself e.g. name?

### **Family**

1. Where were you born?
2. What expectations did your family have for you about college/university?
3. What have your family done or are doing to help you meet the expectations? Give examples.
4. Did you feel that you were under pressure to meet these expectations? Please explain
5. Did you feel advantaged or disadvantaged by your gender in the way you were brought up to believe in what you can do in school and after college?
6. What is your parents' level of education?

### **School**

7. What type of school did you attend for your primary and secondary education (public/private)?
8. Do you think as a student you were well prepared for career choices and doing well in the national examinations (KCSE)?
9. Can you describe the role of the teacher career counselors in helping you choose your career in high school? How did they support you as students towards academic achievement? Give examples.

### **College/university**

10. What were your options after completing university?
11. Where did you as student in high school get information about university education?
12. In your opinion, what do you think is the most important thing to do as a student aspiring for university education?
13. In your opinion, what motivates high school students towards choosing certain careers? Please explain?
14. How many students have joined university in your former high school and were trained in the career of their choice?

### **Career Choice**

15. Did the education degree prepare you enough in other fields?
16. What made you want to be a trained as a teacher?
17. For the students you attended high school with, how do you rate their level of readiness for the careers they chose?

18. How do you describe the attitude of college students towards teaching as career? Would you encourage your siblings or children to pursue teaching as a career in their university education? If not why and which careers would you encourage them to undertake?
19. In what ways would you motivate high schools students towards choosing the right career in schools before they make wrong choices?
20. What factors might prevent more people from applying for teacher training courses?
21. How many former teachers work with you in your current place of work?

**Working conditions**

22. Are you satisfied with your job now?
23. How long have you been a teacher?
24. How was the experience like for you as a school teacher?
25. What factors caused you to leave teaching?
26. What is your current position now?
27. What are the prospects of promotions in your current job?
28. Do you have anything else you will like to share?

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