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HØGSKOLEN I BERGEN

Children with disabilities at a boarding school in Tanzania

How do children in a boarding school for children with physical disabilities negotiate enabling and constraining factors that have an impact on their academic attainment and future life possibilities?

Master Thesis in Community Work

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Acknowledgements

Abstract

Masters thesis in Community Work: How children in a boarding school for children with physical disabilities negotiate enabling and constraining factors that have an impact on their academic attainment and future life possibilities,
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Background: Children with disabilities in Tanzania have fewer possibilities for education due to poverty, lack of accessibility and the long distances from their homes to suitable schools. This condition has left them behind in their communities without an education. The majority of those who have reached school age face considerable challenges in securing an education at government or private owned schools compared to their non-disabled peers. **The aim** of this study is to inquire into how children in a boarding school for children with physical disabilities negotiate enabling and constraining factors that have an impact on their academic attainment and future life possibilities.

Theoretical underpinning: The foundation for this thesis lies in the community work assumptions that people have knowledge, competence and the ability to improve their life situation and influence their surroundings. The theories which were selected to serve as torches in illuminating the empirical materials gathered for this study are UNESCO's Education For All (EFA) and Lifelong Learning strategy, WHO's international classification of functioning, disability and health, the Children and youth version (ICF-CY), participation and agency.

Key themes: agency, social interaction and participation, friendship, community, future and *being* and *becoming*.

The study site is Mafanikio boarding school offering primary education for boys and girls between the ages of 7-20 years. In August 2011, the total of children attending amounted to 206, with the staff split as follows: 11 teachers; 1 nurse, 2 orthopaedics, 1 matron, 1 social service secretary, 1 school director and 10 caretakers.

Method: The empirical material for the study was gathered through the ethnographic approach, involving observation, formal/informal individual and group interviews with pupils and staff, and participation in everyday living (teaching and tutoring).

Findings/knowledge proposals

The study found that, through interactions which were influenced by the condition of living together, the children developed different skills and mechanisms that contributed to the enhancement of their everyday lives and learning while at boarding school. Through cooperation and helping each other in activities such as self care and learning, the children discovered their strengths and found ways to help themselves, all important skills for independent living in the future. Also, it was discovered that as the children grew older they tended to perceive education not only as a source of knowledge but also as means to a brighter future.

Further research

As the condition of living together, the children developed strong feelings of interdependence and togetherness. However, there is a need to find out how this condition may influence the development of common identity such as that of 'we are disabled', leading to self segregation.

CHAPTER 1- Presentation of background and area of study

Background of the study

A recent WHO (2011) report estimates that the number of children aged 0-14 living with disabilities worldwide ranges between 93 and 150 million. The report claims that many children and adults with disabilities have historically been excluded from mainstream education opportunities across the world, and that children with disabilities are less likely to start school and that they have lower rates of staying and working successfully through their schooling levels compared to their non-disabled peers (WHO 2011:205). In most countries around the world, early efforts to provide education or training to children with disabilities generally occurs through separate special schools, or residential institutions, usually targeting specific types of impairment such as blindness or deafness. However, these institutions reach only a small proportion of those in need, and are found mostly in urban areas. It is claimed that the situation changed after governments and different stakeholders made some legislation requiring the inclusion of disabled children in educational systems (WHO 2011). Contemporary evidence shows that in developing countries young people with disabilities are less likely to be in school than their peers without disabilities: however, the enrolment rates differ in relation to impairment type, whereby children with physical impairments fare better than those with intellectual or sensory impairments (UNICEF 2007; WHO 2011).

With reference to the disability statistics published in 2002 by the National Bureau of Statics (NBS), the total population of people with disability makes up (2%) of the total population of 33,461,849 in Mainland Tanzania (Zanzibar not included) (NBS 2002). In 2009 the NBS survey showed that in 2008, approximately 2.4 million people (or 8% of the population) in Tanzania experienced some type of activity limitation (Aldersey and Turnbull 2011). However, there has been a big discrepancy between the number of disabilities which are reported and the actual number of people with disabilities in the country. The challenge is even bigger in terms of getting the accurate statistics of children with disabilities. Mkumbo (2008) argues that there is a shortage of data on

children with disabilities and other special needs in Tanzania, which therefore makes it difficult to establish their accessibility to different services such as education.

When it comes to education, disabled children face even more challenges compared to their fellow non-disabled children. Mkumbo (2008) argues that by June 2008, there were about 34,661 children, 19,998 boys and 14,663 girls with disabilities enrolled in primary schools in the country. This number however, doesn't give the real picture of the enrolment ratio of children with disabilities as we can't establish from this how many disabled children were of school age but not enrolled, The statistics by the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (MOEVT) indicates that by 2007 there were 24,003 children with disabilities in Tanzania enrolled in different schools, which is less than (1%) of the total enrolment of primary school children (Mkumbo 2008). However, in 2008, the Tanzania Disability Survey (TDS) launched the country's first national survey on disability and found that only 38.4% of children aged 7-13 years with disabilities in Mainland Tanzania were attending primary school (REPOA 2012:82). The first round of the National Panel Survey (NPS) 2008/09 found that 57.6% of disabled children of primary school age were enrolled as compared with 82.3% of Tanzanian children who are not reported as disabled. Generally, these results indicate a big gap in access to education for disabled children compared to their non-disabled student peers. The 2008 survey further indicated that 41.7% of persons with disabilities aged five years and above had no formal education compared with 23.5% of individuals without disabilities (REPOA 2012:82-83). This means that in 2008, the illiteracy rate among disabled persons was almost double that of non-disabled persons.

Therefore, by considering the observable education gap between disabled children compared to those who are non-disabled, I found it pertinent to narrow down my area of focus and cast a light on those children with physical disabilities in a boarding school setting. With reference to what is observed in the studies presented above, concerning educational attainment for children with disabilities, I have found it interesting to explore specifically how the children in this boarding school are able to negotiate the enabling

and constraining factors that do impact on their educational attainment and future life possibilities.

Statement of the problem

Support to people with disabilities has been a long term national effort since Tanzania's independence in 1961 and the strategy has involved local and national organizations such as the Tanzania Association for the Disabled, the Tanzania Association for Mentally Handicapped, religious based organizations, private individuals, groups and international stakeholders such as WHO and UNICEF. The Tanzanian government like many other countries in the world does make some effort to ensure inclusive education for all and promote the rights for persons with disabilities. In November 2011, the Tanzanian government signed the Salamanca statement and ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) (Wilson 2011:16). The stated purpose of the CRPD is "to promote, protect, and ensure full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedom by all persons with disabilities, and promote respect for their inherent dignity" (United Nations 2006). At the national level there have been several programs, projects and organizations trying to improve the situation facing children with disabilities at family, school, community and national level. Among other strategies, the national Primary Education Development Plan II (PEDP) (2007-2012) adopted the inclusive education approach for children with special needs. Some strategies identified in the plan included developing Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) for students, monitoring the attendance and performance of male and female disabled students, improving the school infrastructure and turning existing special schools into resource centers for mainstream schools (Wilson 2011:16). Also in 2004, the government developed the National Policy on Disability as a tool to safeguard the rights, dignity and development of people with disabilities in Tanzania. The discussion about policy will be expanded in the next chapter.

However, despite the efforts made so far by governmental and non-governmental stakeholders, the educational attainment of children with disabilities has remained a big challenge to the majority of these children, as has been previously discussed. The report

by Mwakyusa (2009) as cited by Aldersey and Turnbull (2011:2) also indicated that more than (44%) of children with disabilities aged 15 years and above had not attended school at all. Only five percent had attended secondary school and less than one percent had finished tertiary school. As previously claimed, this is a big gap in educational attainment for disabled children. It is for these reasons therefore I found it important to conduct this study and explore *how children in a boarding school for children with physical disabilities negotiate enabling and constraining factors that have an impact on their educational attainment and future life possibilities.* To be able to inquire into factors that affect their educational attainment will have a fundamental contribution to the body of knowledge in this particular field of study. The study will also provide room for the researcher and the readers of this work to learn more about different possibilities and constraints related to children with disabilities in this particular boarding school.

Objectives of the study

Main objective

The main objective of the study is to explore how children in a boarding school for children with physical disabilities[1] negotiate enabling and constraining factors that have an impact on their academic attainment and future life possibilities.

Specific objectives

- To explore how the children themselves contribute to enhance their learning outcomes with respect to everyday living, learning and academic achievements.
- To explore how the boarding school itself is enabling or constraining the children's learning outcomes and future academic achievement.

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[1] In this study the words 'children with disabilities' or 'disabled children' will be used interchangeably but both will be referring to the physically disabled children at this particular boarding school

The field of study: A boarding school in Dar es Salaam

The school chosen for this study is located in Dar es Salaam, which is the biggest city in Tanzania. The city is famous for its industrial and commercial activities, and there is a major port located here. Dar es Salaam is comprised of three districts/municipals which are Ilala, Temeke and Kinondoni. The District's boundaries are also the same as the Municipal Councils. The Districts are divided into 10 Divisions, which are subdivided into 93 Wards, 448 Mitaa and 8 Constituencies. The Region lies along the Western Coast of the Indian Ocean. The City is located between latitudes 6.36 degrees and 7.0 degrees to the south of Equator and longitudes 39.0 and 33.33 to the east of Greenwich. It is bounded by the Indian Ocean on the east and by the Coast Region on the other sides. The total surface area of Dar es Salaam City is 1,800 square kilometers, comprising of 1,393 square kilometers of land mass with eight offshore islands, which is about 0.19% of the entire mainland area of Tanzania (Tanzania 2004). Based on the 2002 Population and Housing Census, Dar es Salaam had 2,487,288 inhabitants, but in 2012 the population is estimated to be closer to five million and it keeps on increasing day after day as the consequence of rural-urban influx. People migrate from their local communities and regions to Dar es Salaam in searching for employment, education or business.

Figure 1: Map of Tanzania

Source: http://www.lonelyplanet.com/maps/africa/tanzania/

On the map above, the arrow indicates the Dar es Salaam region, which is the place where the school is located. However, the children are originally from different regions and districts across the country. For example, there some children from Songea, Iringa, Singida, Mwanza, Mara, Lindi, Tabora, and other places, as well as Dar es Salaam, to name just a few. All these regions and districts are culturally, economically, socially and geographically different from one another.

School profile and the administration structure

The school is owned by a Christian faith based organization and works in collaboration with the government. The government is required to provide teaching staff, while the rest of the services including books, desks, food, accommodation and rehabilitation services for the children are provided by the church organization with support from donors. The organization takes the responsibility for running the school while teachers take a teaching responsibility. Their tasks are specifically on the academic side i.e. curriculum activities, teaching and following up the children's academic progress. The school follows the normal primary school curriculum set by the Ministry of Education. In their school brochure, they state their goal statement which says that "the school aim [is] *to educate, encourage, and mobilize children with disabilities to a better way of living and help them experience normal life like any other children"*. The school includes boys and girls from the age of 7 to 20 years old. The classes range from standard (class) one to standard seven. The children's education usually takes seven years to complete, whereby each year between July and August standard (class) seven completes its primary education. In August 2011, the total number of pupils in the school was 206.

The school has 11 teachers including the head teacher. On the administration side, there is a nurse, orthopaedics, matron, social service secretary, and school director. Also, there are about 10 caretakers hired by the organization who have the responsibility for caring the children, cleaning the dormitories during the week days, preparing food for the children and providing security during the night. The school director, social service secretary and matron are also pastors in the church, while the rest are normal employees

who belong to different Christian dominations. The target group for this particular school is children with physical disabilities. The procedures for admission involve filling in admission forms which require medical documentation about the child's condition. Children who fulfil the basic conditions for enrolment in relation to the school's set criteria gain admission.

How a regular day is organized at the school

The children have to wake up at 5.00am during week days. The early start is because they need to queue for showers. When they have finished with their personal preparations they have to make their beds and vacate their rooms. At 7.00am, the children are supposed to be out of their dormitories to start cleaning their surroundings before the assembly time of 07.30. At 7.30am on week days, the bell rings for the children to ascend to the assembly. Here, the children start by singing the national anthem followed by the school song. After the songs, the children listen to morning talks; any of the pupils can raise a hand to give a talk or offer some wise words. Afterwards, the teachers take the lead by giving out different announcements to the pupils. Mostly, the teachers talk about personal cleanliness, cleaning of their surroundings, discipline, observing silence in the classrooms and the need for the children to stay in their classes during class hours.

At 8.00am the sessions start and therefore all the children are supposed to ascend to their classrooms. The class sessions go up to 10.00am and then the children have to break for breakfast. At 10.30am the children go back to their classes to continue with sessions until 2.00pm, the end of the day's sessions and a break for lunch. After 3.00pm it's free time. The pupils attend to their own business until 6.00pm, which is the time for dinner. After dinner the children can stay in their dormitories or go to classes for self study until 9.00pm which is the time for bed.

During the weekends and national days the caretakers are free from work. Therefore, it is the children's responsibility to clean their dormitories and surroundings. After they are done with the cleaning, they can engage with some personal care tasks including washing

their own clothes. When they finish these tasks, they can engage in sports, watch the TV or undertake some individual study. During the weekends, breakfast is at 11.00am, lunch at 2.00pm and dinner at 6.30pm. On Sunday all the children are supposed to attend the church service at 8.00am regardless of their religious beliefs. After Sunday prayers the children can keep on with their own business as usual.

Relevance of the study to community work

Community work is built around the assumptions that people have about knowledge and competence, their will and ability to influence their surroundings and their commitment to improve their life situation. In working within communities, community workers perceive people as agentic, creative and competent actors who can develop their own communities through common effort and collective action. In addition, community workers conceive societies as social structures, which are created, transformed, and changed through human action. This enables and creates possibilities for change, as well as constraining individual and collective action (Sudman and Henriksbø 2008). In community work, we believe that education stimulates critical consciousness and that good critical consciousness stimulates learning (Freire 1996). Also Tesoriero (2010:73) considers education and critical consciousness raising to be among the processes for equipping people to increase their power, understand their society and give them the vocabulary and skills to work towards changing their situations. That is, providing education to children with disabilities can be one way of equipping them with the knowledge which may enable them understand their situation and the social structure which surrounds them, and thus take some steps towards improving their situations. Therefore, understanding how the children at this school negotiate the possibilities and constraints that impact on their educational attainment and future life possibilities, can be one step towards understanding children's agency in creating and shaping their futures. We need to understand how children can take action and make decisions in different situations and circumstances. Children as *beings* and *becomings* are creators and shapers of their future based on the existing or arising possibilities and circumstances. Indeed, this study is pertinent to community work as it provides the room for community workers

to first learn from the children before taking any further action to facilitate change, by either stimulating critical reflection on what the children try to do for themselves or by working with them to stimulate autonomous actions about their situation.

Ledwith (2005:32) asserts that, "the beginning of the process of community development lies in listening, valuing and understanding people's particular experiences". In other words, to be able to understand how the disabled children at this boarding school negotiate enabling and constraining factors that have an impact on their educational attainment and future life possibilities, it is important to first learn and understand their actions and experiences. Freire (1996) claims that "it's not our role to speak to the people about our own view of the world, nor to attempt to impose that view to them, but rather to dialogue with the people about their view and ours (Freire 1996:77)". That is, to make a difference to children with disabilities' education requires engaging in dialogue and activities with them in order to get to know their situation. Dialogue provides room to learn why people take actions and decisions the way they do, and hence gives us reasons to respect their decisions as rational choices. In any course of action, there are costs and rewards and people always choose to take action after they have examined what is best for them. Therefore, people as rational beings always make decisions based on what they consider to be the most effective means to access their goals (Wallace and Wolf 2006:303). In this case, community workers need to be filled with this knowledge before interpreting people's actions and decisions. Additionally, like other children, those, children with disabilities have their own choices to make, and community workers need to recognize this ability, facilitating the situation so the children can make rational choices, particularly in the realms of education and future life plans.

Therefore, by recognizing the importance of education and the usefulness of applying dialogue in understanding people's actions and decisions, community work directs its interest to this particular group of children to explore how they negotiate the enabling and constraining factors that have an impact on their educational attainment and future life possibilities , using that knowledge as the building blocks in the process of understanding

how disabled children enact their own sense of agency during the learning and educational attainment process.

General significance of the study

Academically, the experiences which will be drawn from this study may contribute to the current body of knowledge in the field of disability, particularly education for children with disabilities. Children with disabilities' agency might be among the most interesting issues to be found in this study, emerging as the reflection of different actions and decisions taken by them in forging their everyday lives at this school, and negotiating with the possibilities and constraints found in learning and education. Therefore, the results from this study can contribute to the existing body of knowledge, especially on education, participation, critical consciousness and empowerment as the key concepts in community development in the contemporary world.

In the coming chapter I shall broadly explore the disability issue, and education and poverty in Tanzania. I find the coming chapter to be an important backdrop for this study, enabling readers to get a glimpse as to what disability is, how education is organized in Tanzania, and lastly, the implication of poverty on educational attainment and future life possibilities of children with disabilities.

Organization of the thesis

This thesis is made up of nine chapters. Chapter one includes an introduction, which consists of aspects like the background of the study, the school's geographical location, transport in the city, climate, a map of Dar es Salaam city, school profile, how a regular day is organized at the school, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, relevance of the study in community work, and the general significance of the study.
The second chapter covers topics termed as: mapping the terrain; and disabled children, education and poverty in Tanzania. Chapter three covers the theoretical framework of the study. Chapter four is about the research methodology. Chapter five to eight present the findings and analysis. Chapter nine offers the summing up of the key findings and suggestions for further studies

CHAPTER 2- Mapping the terrain: Disabled children, education and poverty in Tanzania

In this chapter I'm going to present and discuss disabled children, education and poverty. Specifically, I shall discuss disability as a concept and a social phenomenon, by looking at how it is understood and framed at different levels, be it at the family, community, national or international level. The discussion will also shed light on the educational situation in Tanzania to see how education is organized and structured at different levels in the country. The discussion about education will help us figure out the position given to children with disabilities in the education system of Tanzania. Then, poverty as a major economic challenge in the country will be discussed and explored to see how it impacts children's education in general, and in particular, disabled children's educational attainment and their future life possibilities.

What is Disability in Tanzania?

UNICEF (2009) claims that disability is experienced differently depending on the norms of a particular society, and that the concept as such does not have a universal character. Across different cultures and languages, the understanding and conceptualization of disability can have different forms and connotations depending on class, gender, age, religious view, social differences and the contextual conditions of a particular place. Having any limitation in bodily function or structure such as loss of limbs, loss of sight, cerebral palsy or epilepsy affects both the child, his/her family and the community around them. However, the impact or the consequences which result from any of these limitations are highly dependent on different factors. Studies which have been conducted in the country concerning disability and disability conditions claim to lack a clear definition of what disability is, as the meaning tends to be influenced by cultural, social and contextual conditions (Kisanji 1995; Karakoski and Ström 2005; Krohn-Nydal 2008; Aldersey and Turnbull 2011).

In 2008, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) in Tanzania conducted a National Survey on disability with the major objective of determining the prevalence of *disability* (measured as 'difficulties') in the country. The NBS stated that due to the existing

confusion of the term *disability* the survey report refers to people with difficulties as being people with disabilities/disabled people or people with activity limitations. The 2008 survey was conducted with the aim of capturing disability prevalence broadly, as they considered the previous survey, conducted in 2002, as capturing only severe disabilities. This was due to the questionnaire it included, which asked questions such as; "Is (name of a person) disabled?" and if the answer was "yes", the respondent was asked the type of disability. Thus, the 2008 survey considered those questions to be too general and that they most likely captured only severe disabilities. In that case, the result of 2%, which was reported as the population with disabilities based on the 2002 survey was surely under reported (National Bureau of Statistics 2008:41). Therefore, in order to capture the broad prevalence of disability in Tanzania, the 2008 survey employed six questions asking about the difficulties people have in doing various basic everyday life activities, as shown in the table below.

Table 1: Questions on basic activities used to determine disability status

Disability type		Level of difficulty			
		No difficult	Some difficult	A lot of difficult	Unable
A.	Seeing	1 → c	2	3	4
B.	Seeing, even if wearing glasses	1	2	3	4
C.	Hearing	1 → e	2	3	4
D.	Hearing, even if using a hearing aid	1	2	3	4
E.	Walking or climbing steps	1	2	3	4
F.	Remembering or concentrating	1	2	3	4
G.	Self-care	1	2	3	4
H.	Communicating	1	2	3	4

Borrowed from (National Bureau of Statistics 2008:42)

Based on this table, respondents were asked if they experienced any difficulties, in order to detect disabilities. For each specific difficulty mentioned, respondents were asked to state if they had "some difficulty", "a lot of difficulty" or "unable to undertake activity at all" (National Bureau of Statistics 2008:47).

The NBS argues that these questions have been found to provide an inclusive and nuanced measure of the number of people in a population that experience difficulties as a

consequence of a physical, mental or emotional problem. However, the survey observed that these questions are limited in their ability to identify people with emotional difficulties (e.g. anxiety, depression and other mild to moderate psychiatric illnesses), as it is very difficult to find a single suitable question to ask about these domains of functioning. Therefore, NBS insists that this should be taken into consideration when reading the survey results. Furthermore, the survey also intended to determine the living conditions among people with activity limitations, and it was anticipated that the results from the survey could contribute to the improvement of living conditions among people with activity limitations in Tanzania; that is, it could initiate a discussion on the concepts and understanding of the term *disability* and monitor the impact of government policies, programmes and donor support on the wellbeing of the population experiencing activity limitations (National Bureau of Statistics 2008:4).

With respect to what was reported, it appears that the concept and understanding of *disability* was not made clear, even in this 2008 survey, and that the NBS expected these results to be used to stimulate a discussion about disability understanding. Likewise, the survey acknowledges that defining disability based on activity limitations only is not enough, and that disability has to be determined by analyzing it in relation to a series of socio-economic variables, such as employment, education, access to services and social inclusion (National Bureau of Statistics 2008:4). Therefore, the NBS identified disability in adults and children based on a activity limitation criteria and measured the type and degree of difficulties experienced during activity execution on various aspects of people's live such as education, employment, household characteristics, access to services and social inclusion. Nevertheless, the survey doesn't mention the issue of HIV/AIDS and albinism as types of disability or not, although albinism is likely to be considered in the question related to vision. In this case, what is disability based on this survey is not explicit, giving us a reason to explore how disability is understood with regard to the National Policy on Disability (NPD).

What is disability based on the Tanzania National Policy on Disability?

It is stated in the Tanzanian policy document for people with disability that, since 1961, the government has been providing services to people with disabilities through the social welfare department, without any specific policy to guide these services (Tanzania 2004). The policy was finally drafted in 2004 with the aim of addressing disability issues. The policy defines disability as *the loss or limitation of opportunities to take part in the normal life of the community on an equal level with others due to temporary or permanent physical, mental or social barriers.* Such a loss or limitation could be aggravated by a community's perception of disabled people. The policy also defines *a person with disability as an individual whose prospects of obtaining and retaining employment are greatly reduced due to known physical, mental or social factors* (Tanzania 2004:1). Thus the policy considers disability as the reason behind the deprivation of opportunities such as employment and education to people with disabilities in the country, and that the situation could be exaggerated by the community's perception of disability. Therefore, the policy is aimed at improving the life situation of people with disabilities through its stated objectives, which are: to encourage the development of people with disabilities, empower families of people with disabilities, review/amend legislations that are not disability friendly, improve service delivery, allow the participation of people with disabilities in decision making, implement important activities in the society, and enable families of people with disabilities and the society at large to participate in decisions and implementation of important disability friendly activities (Tanzania 2004:10-11).

Generally, the policy targets all types of disability, and acquired disability such as an accident originated type of disability. With regard to service delivery, the policy identifies three groups as priority groups: women with disabilities, children with disabilities and older people with disabilities (Tanzania 2004:11 sec 2.2). However, the policy doesn't mention explicitly how disability can be measured or detected based on this policy. Instead, the policy considers people with disability to be facing different challenges and barriers to education, health services, care, participation and employment due to various factors such as environmental barriers, lack of assistive devices, negative

attitudes and poverty (Tanzania 2004). On top of that, the policy mentions the lack of information and awareness creation about HIV/AIDS to people with disabilities as among the conditions which cause disabled people to be at risk of contracting this disease. In this case, the policy doesn't mention HIV/AIDS to be among disability type or as causative of disability. Likewise, the policy doesn't mention albinism to be a type of disability, but instead refers to disability based on the categories "physically impaired", "visually impaired", "hearing impaired", "intellectually impaired" "multiply impaired" and others (Tanzania 2004:3). However, even though the policy mentions some strategies and plans in addressing disability issues, it is considered as failing to capture the social meaning of disability. On top of that, the policy is criticized for lacking a clear elaboration of administrative core principles, regulations, guidelines, explicit concrete steps or solutions to advance the policy statements, and measures for determining outcomes. Similarly, there are no clearly stated judicial measures to make the government answerable once it violates the policy (Aldersey and Turnbull 2011).

Therefore, with respect to what is presented by the Tanzania National Policy on disability and the 2008 National Survey on disability, it is clear that, neither the National Policy nor the National Survey are sufficient in explaining the definition of disability in Tanzania. Disability is a highly situated phenomenon. The phenomenon tends to be highly influenced by other factors such as gender, age, religion, economic class, physical environment and culture. Tanzania is a big country with about 26 tribes, each having its own mother tongue, social organization, cultural beliefs, practices and backgrounds. All these factors make the people of this country very heterogeneous when it comes to how we perceive, react or respond to impairment and disability. The demands of everyday life, our social settings and contexts and our expectations for the future all enable or constrain us in some way. In that case, to be able to understand, define or frame disability phenomenon in the context of Tanzania, someone has to understand and consider all the factors which cut across this concept, as they have some implications as to how human functioning is enabled or constrained in everyday activities and participation. Bengtsson and Greve (2004:175) put forward that the really meaning of disability relates more to

social organization, and not only the formal aspects, but also the informal and the everyday relations and interactions between people.

In the following, the discussion will try to cast light on how disability is perceived or handled across families and communities in general

Disability at the family and community level

Adults and children with different kinds of disabilities, particularly in developing countries, are often identified as the victims of negative social attitudes and are subjected to neglect, discrimination, stigma and exclusion within their families and communities (Elwan 1999; Mkumbo 2008; Mbwilo, Smide et al. 2010; Wilson 2011). The influence of contextual factors such as transportation, accessibility of schools and health care, culturally-based beliefs and attitudes about people with disabilities, institutional factors, and the social stigma associated with disability are mentioned as among the impediments faced by people/children with disabilities, inhibiting them from experiencing the normal lives experienced by their non-disabled peers (Elwan 1999; Yeo and Moore 2003; UNICEF 2009). Sen and Yurtsever (2007) contend that the birth of a disabled child or the impairment of a previously nondisabled child is often received with mixed emotions by the parents, which may include the feelings of shock, anger, denial, depression, shame and so on as they find their expectations being turned upside down. The varied reactions happen as the way of expressing unpreparedness, denial, regret, guilt or feelings of helplessness for the unwanted and unexpected situation, and the costs accompanied by it.

It is the fact that life can never remain the same once there is a new disabled child or person in the family. There are always some costs which have to be incurred by the parents and family members of the disabled person, in terms of time, material support, social relations or financial expenses. Findings claim that disability leads to costs and demands which can be in terms of time, personal care, food, clothes, medications etc. Additionally, the demands tend to change considerably throughout the life span of the disabled (Yeo 2001; UNICEF 2007; Mbwilo, Smide et al. 2010; Mitra, Posarac et al. 2011). As the consequence of poverty and the extra costs that result from disability,

parents and families of the disabled find themselves in a position where they have to weigh and choose in relation to the available resources and opportunities. In this case, it is easier to prioritize the non-disabled child in terms of any limited resources and opportunities such as education. Yeo and Moore (2003) assert that where there are limited resources it may be seen as economically irresponsible to give an equal share to a disabled child who is perceived as unlikely to be able to provide for the family in the future.

Moreover, having a disabled child may affect the social and community relations of the family and that of the disabled. The study conducted in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania by (Mbwilo, Smide et al. 2010) showed that parents of mentally disabled children were discriminated against and stigmatized by their neighbors and fellow community members due to their children's condition. As well, there some beliefs which persist in many parts of the world whereby disability is associated with evil, witchcraft, bad omens or infidelity (Yeo and Moore 2003). As the result of these kinds of attitudes, disabled children and their families may experience stigma, discrimination and exclusion in different social, economic and political institutions. In some places, the disabled and their families get banned from their villages and communities as they are considered to bring misfortune on the community. Also, in some families the disabled experience suffocating overprotection and exclusion from everyday challenges. This happens as the result of the attitudes and low expectations that are held by the disabled themselves, their parents and those around them (Driedger 1991; Yeo and Moore 2003). However, these kinds of attitudes expose the disabled to the risk of poverty, as they restrict them from using different opportunities to contribute to their households and communities.

However, the actions which result from attitudes and beliefs may differ with type and severity of disability, culture, ethnicity, gender, class and social organization at family, community, society and national level. For example, a person from the Maasai tribe in Tanzania who lives a nomadic kind of life can have varied perceptions on physical disability, compared to a petty trader or an office worker, as the result of how their ways of life and means of production are organized. Different forms of social and cultural life pose different demands and obligations on the bodily or mental capacities of people, i.e.

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working with cattle, or working in the agricultural fields demand a certain bodily condition which could not be necessary for a trader or an office worker. Thus, what is disabling for a nomad might not make such a big difference for a trader or office worker and vice versa. The point is that it is worse to lose a body part or have a certain deficit at the time or place where that part is most needed. Hence, disability is not just a physical/mental impairment; rather, it includes the inability of a person to live up to social and cultural expectations (Ogechi and Ruto 2002).

Education in Tanzania

In this part let's take a glimpse at the education situation in Tanzania and the position given to disabled children in the education sector. This position and how the children's education is organized can tell us a lot about the everyday life possibilities and future expectations of disabled children. According to (Barton and Oliver 1997), the educational system is one of the most important means by which societies reproduce themselves. School can be considered as a socializing agency which is involved in the shaping of identities, and the distribution of particular forms of knowledge and skills, as well as the transmission of dominant values and beliefs. In Delors' report, education is recognized as a passport to life which everyone is entitled to hold (Burnett 2008). Similarly, UNESCO considers education as lifelong learning which is part and parcel of everyday life from childhood onwards. Thus, education is also a social experience through which children learn about themselves, develop interpersonal skills and acquire basic knowledge and skills (Nan-Zhao 2006; Burnett 2008). I will expand more on UNESCO's pillar of education and UNICEF's Education for All approach in the coming chapter. In the following, let us explore the situation of education in Tanzania.

Specifically, in the last six years, the Tanzanian government has made significant efforts towards ensuring the availability of universal primary education so as to achieve the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 2 which stresses universal primary education for all school age children. Among other things, the government has eradicated all the fees in primary schools owned by the government, and at least one primary school is being built

in every Ward.[2] According to a UN report, the eradication of school fees and the increase in the number of schools have led to a big increase of children enrolled in different primary schools in Tanzania. It is reported that in 2001 only 59% of school aged children (7-13 years old) were enrolled in primary schools, while in 2010 it was 95% (Tanzania 2010). Despite this progress, however, there are still challenges involved as most of the schools lack enough and qualified teachers, as well as learning facilities like books, desks, sufficient number of classrooms, water, safety etc., and the quality of education has declined markedly, contrary to enrolment rates (Wedgwood 2005).

However, there are a number of schools ranging from pre-primary to university level which are privately owned by different organizations and individuals. Due to poor economic conditions in Tanzania, and the challenges facing the education sector, the government has made it possible for different voluntary organizations and individuals to support access to education at different levels. Several schools, ranging from day based to residential/boarding schools, have been established by different faith based organizations and private individuals. Some of these schools provide primary education, while the majority exist for secondary level pupils; more than 40% of the secondary students are in private schools. The big number of students in private schools at secondary level is caused, in part, by the lack of enough government schools. This is due to the fact that the increase in number of primary schools at Ward level was not done parallel with the increased number of secondary schools. As a result, a large number of pupils finish primary education but miss the opportunity to join a secondary school that is owned by the government (Chediel, Sekwao et al. 2000; Wedgwood 2005; Wedgwood 2007).

Thus, private schools provide an educational alternative for those who either missed the opportunity in government schools due to qualification deficits, inaccessibility, or private reasons such as their parents opting for private schools after considering the quality of education provided by these schools compared to that provided by the government or that

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[2] Wards in Tanzania are derived from districts whereby the district is divided into local wards then wards divided into streets for urban areas, and villages for rural. These divisions are for management purposes.

a private school is located more accessibly in their neighborhood in comparison to one of the government schools (Chediel, Sekwao et al. 2000). Unfortunately, these schools do not provide alternatives to education for many disabled children as most of them are business oriented and thus exist to be affordable only to those children coming from certain economic status groups. As well, except for some of the religious based schools, the rest of the private schools do not target disabled children and therefore, lack most of the facilities and support required by children with special needs (Chediel, Sekwao et al. 2000; Karakoski and Ström 2005).

On the other hand, majority of the Tanzanians are not able to send their children to private secondary schools as they are considered expensive and affordable only for children coming from families with good economic conditions. Thus most of the pupils and students who study in government schools are those coming from families with moderate or poor economic conditions (Wedgwood 2005). However, even the chance of studying in a government school is not that big for those who can't afford private schools. The government schools take on only a certain number of those who did well in their final exams to join different levels of the educational process. This has to do with the ability and available education resources in government schools. So if a child comes from a poor family and was not selected for secondary education or to study at university level, then the chance to continue with education is almost negligible.

Education for disabled children

On the other hand, challenges to obtain an education are even bigger to children with disabilities as they struggle not only to get a quality education, but also to gain access to education. This is due to the fact that education for disabled children is faced with a number of constraints, as briefly discussed in the first chapter. These range from the inaccessibility and poor physical environment of most schools, teachers having little knowledge of disability issues, rigid curricula which do not incorporate the needs of the disabled, attitudinal barriers from people's perceptions of disability, lack of commitment by the government in supporting education for disabled children, to poverty at the family

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and community level (Tanzania 2004; Mkumbo 2008; Mbwilo, Smide et al. 2010; Wilson 2011). As a result, only a small number of children with disabilities are able to access education compared to the number in need. Recent MKUKUTA[3], Annual Implementation Report 2008/2009 shows that there has been a slight decrease in the number of children with disabilities enrolled for primary school, dropping from 34,661 in 2008 to 27,422 in 2009. Also, school attendance among children with disabilities has been much lower than the national school enrollment ratio of 57.3 for all children (Khijjah 2009:38; Aldersey and Turnbull 2011).

Generally, the enrolment rate and attendance of children with disabilities in different schools (either special schools or local schools) are low compared to their non-disabled peers, as was previously highlighted in the first chapter. As well, most of the schools for children with disabilities are either charity based, owned by religious institutions, donor organizations or private individuals the condition which makes it impossible to create a comprehensive system of educational and other related services for disabled children as that they lack uniformity (Karakoski and Ström 2005). The reasons behind the education disparities between disabled and non disabled children are diverse, and there is a need to look at poverty from different vantage points since it has been a serious social problem in the country for decades. Karakoski and Ström (2005) claim that disability issues are in many ways linked to the more general issues of poverty, vulnerability and equity, and often also to specific problems like HIV/AIDS,

The poverty situation in Tanzania

In economic terms, Tanzania is one of the poorest countries in the world, ranked 169th on the 2001 Human Development Index, and is below the average for Sub-Saharan Africa (Tanzania 2004). Based on the Household Budget Survey for 2001/02, 12.6 million Tanzanians, which is 36% of the population, live under the basic needs poverty line, with about one in five living in abject poverty. About 87% of the population in Tanzania lives in a rural area, sustaining their lives through small farming activities (Tanzania 2004:12).

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[3] MKUKUTA Mkakati wa kukuza uchumi na kupunguza umasikini Tanzania The Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty (SGRP).

However, over the last decades, the country has been making some efforts to get out of poverty and promote rapid economic growth, though the returns have never been significant. An assessment conducted via a Poverty and Human Development Report (PHDR) in 2009, concerning the status of economic growth and poverty reduction in Tanzania, indicated that there were no significant changes in the process of poverty eradication between the years 2000 and 2008 (REPOA 2005:5). The number of the poor has instead been increasing day by day, with a great income poverty disparity between the rural and urban populations. According to (REPOA 2005), the poor people who live in the rural areas make 37.6% of the rural household income, and it is claimed they live below the poverty line. This is in comparison with 24.1% of households in urban areas and 16.4% in the city of Dar es Salaam. However, although MKUKUTA (SGRP) targeted the reduction of poverty by 2010, the results have been contrary to their expectations. Instead, the percentage of households in mainland Tanzania living below the basic needs poverty line declined by only 2%, from 35.7% to 33.6%, between 2000/01 and 2007 (REPOA 2005:11). The long persistence of poverty, in spite of the efforts made, has caused a number of repercussions to national development generally, and to different groups of people in particular.

The implications of poverty on education for disabled children

As we have seen, poverty in Tanzania remains a big challenge which cuts across different aspects of everyday life for the majority of Tanzanians. It has implications for different levels of their life such as service accessibilities, education, infrastructures, health, and so forth. However, people with disabilities are claimed to experience even tougher challenges related to poverty on top of their functional conditions. Some scholars on disability claim that there is a close and well established link between disability and poverty in both developing and developed countries (Beresford 1996; Elwan 1999; Yeo 2001; Yeo and Moore 2003; UNICEF 2007; Mitra, Posarac et al. 2011). However, the linkage is claimed to be multifaceted and has been constantly changing over time, in relation to industrialization, and varies in different parts of the world (Elwan 1999). A 2011 study by the WHO (2011:39) put forward that the empirical evidence on the relationship between disability and poverty in its various dimensions (income and non-

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income) differs greatly between developed and developing countries, with most of the evidence coming from developed countries. This has to do with the availability of data as in developed countries disability is well reported and recorded compared to in developing countries (Elwan 1999; WHO 2011). Despite the absence of a clear and well stipulated causal relationship between disability and poverty, anecdotal evidence indicates that poverty and disability do influence each other.

A study in Tanzania conducted by Krohn-Nydal (2008) indicated that there has been an increase in disability resulting from poor nutrition and diseases implicated by poverty. Likewise, harmful traditions and practices resulting from poverty and ignorance are claimed to contribute to the situation of the poor, for example, discrimination and exclusion relating to children with disabilities as they are perceived as a burden or curse (Krohn-Nydal 2008). Poverty is not just about rates of income or the consequence of lack of resources, it is also about social exclusion and powerlessness (Elwan 1999; Yeo 2001). Poverty has led to discrimination and segregation in service delivery to some groups of people and divided the basic services and goods to residual and universal based. It has led to the provision of charity based kind of services, which in some way puts the recipient in the marginalized and inferior group. Simon Maxwell (1998) as cited by (Yeo 2001:9) writes that people become poor because they are excluded from social institutions where access is based on status, privilege, race and gender. Exclusion leads to lack of resources, lower expectations, poor health and poor education. However, education is considered to be one of the non-monetary indicators used mostly to measure the poverty and well being of a certain population or community. It has many returns on poverty reduction because an educated person is able to work more effectively and efficiently by application of the knowledge and skills gained in an educational setting and is capable of gaining more knowledge and skills compared with those who have or no formal education (Kayunze, Mashindano et al. 2011). Thus, the inaccessibility of education to the disabled child as a consequence of poverty, at the family or national level, leads to perpetuation of poverty in the future life of that child. Likewise, poverty and a low literacy rate amongst disabled people may be the result of exclusion implicated by the condition of disability as they are denied the opportunities available to their non-disabled peers.

Moreover, research findings reveal that a disability may lead to the perpetuation of poverty as it tends to put an additional burden on the family of the individuals involved, and impact their economic development. It may also create some constraints in attaining education, earnings and employment to the individual with disabilities (Miller 2007; Mitra, Posarac et al. 2011). Yeo and Moore (2003) claim that disabled people have higher possibilities for experiencing poverty because of the environmental, institutional and attitudinal discrimination which they face from birth or the moment of disablement onwards. By considering the poverty situation facing the country generally, it becomes clear that this situation also has implications for the educational attainment of disabled children. However, how, when and to what extent it affects them can also be highly dependent on other factors such as culture, gender, religion etc.

 Closing remarks

With reference to the discussion above, we have seen that within a Tanzanian context, disability meanings and perceptions vary across cultures and localities. As the result of these variations, the situation facing children with disabilities and their families varies as well across communities and cultures. We have also seen that despite the existing national policy on disability and good national education plans, children with disabilities still face considerable challenges in securing an education compared to their non-disabled child peers. However, the discussion also reveals that there is a strong correlation between poverty and disability which has a direct influence on educational achievement. Poverty may hamper the educational attainment process and opportunities and expose a person to disability risks or disability may limit educational accessibility and expose a person to poverty. Therefore, the discussion in this chapter is necessary for laying the foundation for the coming chapters, enabling us to understand how children in a boarding school for children with physical disabilities negotiate enabling and constraining factors that have an impact on their future life possibilities.

CHAPTER 3- Theoretical perspectives on learning, disability, and participation

The present study intends to explore how children in a boarding school for children with physical disabilities negotiate enabling and constraining factors that have an impact on their future life possibilities. Based on the topic under study, this chapter will present and discuss the key perspectives of education, disability, and participation departing from frameworks and conceptualisations offered by UNESCO, UNICEF and WHO and relevant research on the same topics. UNESCO's Education For All (EFA) and lifelong learning strategy, WHO's international classification of functioning, disability and health, child and youth version, and UNICEF's participation and agency theories will serve as a point of departure for understanding how children in a boarding school for children with physical disabilities negotiate enabling and constraining factors that have an impact on their future life possibilities.

Education For All (EFA) and Life-long Learning

In this global era, education is regarded as a fundamental human right for every child. UNICEF mentions education as being critical to our development as individuals and as societies, and that it helps pave the way to a successful and productive future. Further, UNICEF regards education to be an essential means of ending generational cycles of poverty and disease, and providing a foundation for sustainable development. Education enhances lives and quality basic education equips girls and boys with the knowledge and skills necessary to adopt healthy lifestyles, helping them to take an active role in social, economic and political decision-making as they transition to adolescence and adulthood (UNICEF 2010). Among the fundamental educational strategies taking place in this global society is that of ensuring education for all children, youth and adults by the year 2015. The movement was first launched in Jomtien, Thailand, in 1990, as a way to bring the benefits of education to every citizen in every society (UNICEF 1998). In order to realize this aim, a broad coalition of national governments, civil society groups, and development agencies such as UNESCO and the World Bank committed to achieving six specific education goals. These are;

- Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.

- Ensuring that by 2015, all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to, and complete, free and compulsory primary education of good quality.

- Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programmes.

- Achieving a 50% improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults.

- Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality.

- Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills (Bank 2009)[4].

Apart from working hard to ensure educational achievement that meets all these goals, UNICEF works hard in ensuring conducive and child friendly learning environments. They argue that school is not always a positive experience for many children. Some school environments are difficult, for example, extremely hot or cold temperatures in the classroom or primitive sanitation. Others lack competent teachers and appropriate curricula. As well, other children may be forced to contend with discrimination, harassment and even violence. These conditions are not conducive to learning or development, and no child should have to experience them. Thus, UNICEF works tirelessly to secure safe, rights based and quality education for each and every child

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[4] Bank, W. (2009, 01/03/2009). "Education For All (EFA)." Retrieved 01/03, 2009, from
http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTEDUCATION/0,,contentMDK:20374062~
menuPK:540090~pagePK:148956~piPK:216618~theSitePK:282386,00.html.

regardless of his her circumstances. Children have varied needs and therefore, a child-friendly framework insists on safety, healthy and protective educational environments which operate in the best interest of the child. Schools should also involve qualified trained teachers, have adequate resources and provide appropriate physical, emotional and social conditions for learning (UNICEF 2010). Thus, UNICEF stresses that learning environments must ensure children's rights are protected and their voices being heard, and that all social systems and agencies which affect children should be based on the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).

Concurrent with UNICEF perspectives on education, UNESCO considers education to be a process of lifelong learning which can be structured based on four pillars. These are; *learning to know*, *learning to do, learning to live together,* and *learning to be.*

Learning to know

This type of learning emphasizes mastery of learning tools rather than acquisition of structured knowledge. It provides the appropriate cognitive tools required for a general knowledge that understands the world and its complexities and provides the right and adequate foundation for future learning. This also means learning to learn, by developing one's concentration, memory skills and ability to think so as to benefit from the opportunities education provides throughout life (formally or non-formally). Therefore, learning to know may be regarded as both a means and an end of human existence. As a means, it enables people to learn and understand the world around them, including nature, human kind and its history, as well as their everyday life environment and societies at large. As an end, it enables the learner to experience the pleasure of knowing, understanding and discovering as a process (UNESCO ; Nan-Zhao 2006).

Learning to do

This kind of learning implies the application of what learners have learned. Learning to do encompasses acquiring competence to deal with many situations that call for varied

types of skills far from the occupational or intellectually based. It also means learning to do in the context of young peoples' various social and work experiences, which may be informal as a result of the local or national context, or formal, involving courses, alternating study and work (UNESCO). Nan-Zhao (2006:2) argues that "learning to do" means, among other things, the ability to communicate effectively with others; an aptitude for team work; the implementation of social skills in building meaningful interpersonal relations; adaptability to change in the world of work and in social life; competency in transforming knowledge into innovations and job-creation; and a readiness to take risks and resolve or manage conflicts.

Learning to live together

In the context of globalization, learning to live together has become an important pillar in the creation of an environment of interdependence and shared goals. UNESCO argues that among the tasks of education is that of teaching pupils and students about human diversities based on culture, religion, race etc and the need to make them aware of the existing similarities and interdependence between all people in everyday life. This kind of learning provides room to understand self and others, appreciate interdependence and enables learners to develop competence in working towards common goals (UNESCO ; Nan-Zhao 2006).

Learning to be

UNESCO stresses that all people should receive an education in their childhood and youth that equips them to develop independent, and critical way of thinking and to make the best judgment and decisions in the different circumstances they encounter in life. The report about *learning to be* submitted to UNESCO (1972) expressed the fear of the world regarding the dehumanization associated with technical progress. Therefore, the challenge was how education could ensure that everyone always has the personal resources and the necessary intellectual tools to understand the world, and to behave as a fair minded, responsible human being. Hence, education should enable each person to be

able to solve his own problems, make his own decisions and shoulder his own responsibilities. According to Nan-Zhao (Nan-Zhao 2006), learning to be may therefore, be interpreted in one way as learning to be *human*, through acquisition of the knowledge, skills and values conducive to personality development in its intellectual, moral, cultural and physical dimensions.

The emphasis made by UNESCO is that people should conceive education in a broad and more encompassing manner rather than solely stressing the acquisition of knowledge, ignoring other types of learning. Education should enable learners to respond to the contemporary demands of knowledge and technical know-how in the knowledge driven world. At the same time, it should enable learners to remain confident in the process of learning and information sharing while keeping focused on personal and social development as the end point in the learning process. The four pillars relate and interconnect with one another and can be applied as basic principles in all phases and areas of education. It is important to note that these pillars concern all learners regardless of their backgrounds, race, culture or any other personal characteristics. Therefore, EFA and the lifelong learning approaches can be utilized to frame education in this study, and provide important grounds for understanding participation and the experience of agency of the children with disabilities. Learning involves the learning environment, learning tools, students and teachers. In this sense, there must be some formal or non-formal interaction between teachers and students, students and students or teachers and teachers. These interactions may form conditions for individual or group participation within the school or non-school environment. Training and education is intended to enable children not only to acquire knowledge and skills, but also equip them with the necessary tools for participation and thus the possibility of becoming agents of social change. It is through learning that children learn to do things differently or do things that they didn't do before. Additionally, education is an important context in which the capacity for self expression and other skills and behaviours required for participation are learned (UNICEF 1998:13).

With consideration to the subject matter of the study, children, education and disability, I find it pertinent to present the ICF/ICF-CY classifications as featuring among the theories of departure in understanding the everyday life participation of disabled children,

particularly in an educational setting, and how that may impact their experience of agency and future life possibilities. The ICF-CY framework being a specific version for children and youth, gives special attention to children's participation by considering the differences which exist between the nature and settings of their life situations compared with that of adults, and looking at the influence of adults on their participation opportunities. Adolfsson (2011) asserts that conditions for participation in everyday life situations differ between children with and without disabilities. Similarly, within the group of children with disabilities, participation may vary due to the type of impairment and abilities involved, and also due to the kind of activity, interest and contextual condition (Adolfsson 2011:39). In this respect, participation can be regarded as a means and an end to understand functioning, disability and the everyday life of the children, particularly in education and Lifelong Learning. Thus, the participation aspect will be touched upon now and then in the rest of the discussion in this chapter since it is highly interconnected with the remaining discussions.

ICF/ICF-CY conceptual frameworks

The International Classification for Functioning, Disability and Health, commonly known as ICF, is a conceptual framework of functioning, health and disability. It was developed by the WHO as a response to the need for a universal tool which could provide a common language for various organizations, users, and caregivers to communicate people's functional states and life situations (WHO 2001; WHO 2007; Adolfsson 2011). The ICF and its version for children and youth, ICF-CY, both regard functioning and disability as dynamic interactions between health conditions and contextual factors both personal and environmental. Here, disability results from the negative aspect of functioning (Dahl 2002; WHO 2007). The important thing with the children and youth version, ICF-CY, is that the framework includes the documentation of child characteristics from infancy through adolescence, and provides a holistic view of children's functioning while focusing on children's everyday life participation instead of on the body (Simeonsson 2009; Adolfsson 2011). Thus, the ICF-CY provides multiple perspectives of functioning, which can be utilized to understand children's situations such

as the mental functions of attention, memory and perception as well as activities of play, learning, family life, and education (Adolfsson 2011).

The ICF classification provides a unified and standard language and framework for the description of health and health-related states. The domains contained in ICF can, therefore, be seen as *health domains* and *health-related domains*. These domains are described from the perspectives of the body, the individual and society through two basic lists: a list of bodily functions and structure, and a list of activities and participation (WHO 2001:3). The ICF also includes a list of environmental factors by stressing that individuals' functioning and disability occurs in a context (WHO 2007; WHO 2011). Moreover, the framework is meant to apply to all of us and not just to people with disabilities. The following is the ICF/ICF-CY model which includes six interactive dimensions of functioning and disability. The model is adopted from the WHO as the conceptual framework upon which this thesis will be built (WHO 2001).

Figure 2: The International Classification of Functioning, Health and Disabilities (ICF) 2001 framework.
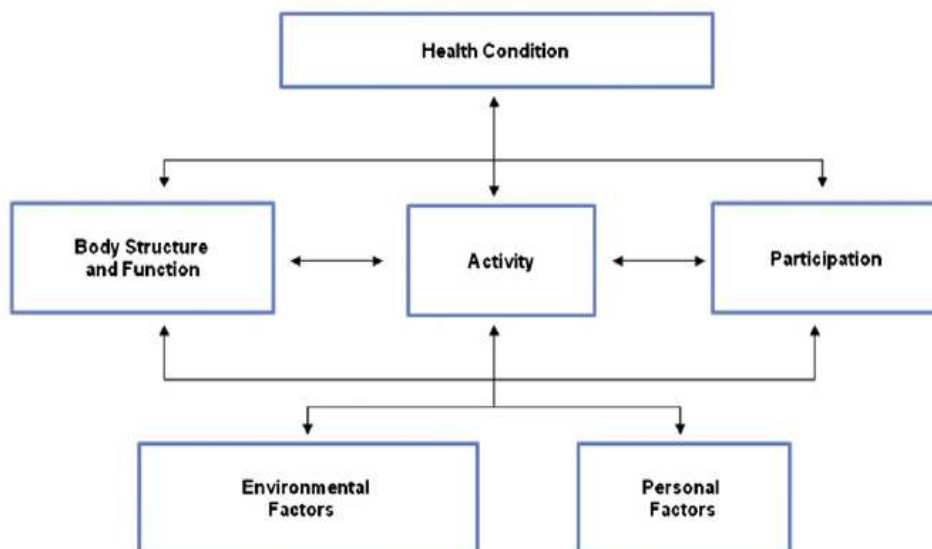
As can be seen, the ICF/ICF-CY framework connects a number of ideas about health and health related states in a special way. Together, the concepts in the six boxes provide an

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exhaustive understanding and classification of functioning and disability without any hierarchy of implied importance (Rosenbaum and Gorter 2011). Apart from participation, which is the social dimension of functioning, the ICF-CY model includes three individual dimensions: bodily functions i.e. mental and physiological functions; bodily structure, i.e. anatomical parts; and activities, i.e. the execution of tasks or actions. The model also includes the two contextual dimensions of 'personal factors' and 'environmental factors' (Adolfsson 2011:12).

By recognizing the existing contemporary changes in thinking about disability, particularly in the field of childhood disability, Rosenbaum and Gorter (2011) tried to package a set of ideas which they termed 'F-words', grounding them in an ICF framework to stimulate thinking and reflection about functioning and disability as indicated in the figure below:.

Figure 3: The International Classification of Functioning, Health and Disabilities framework: the interconnection among elements (Rosenbaum and Gorter 2011:461)
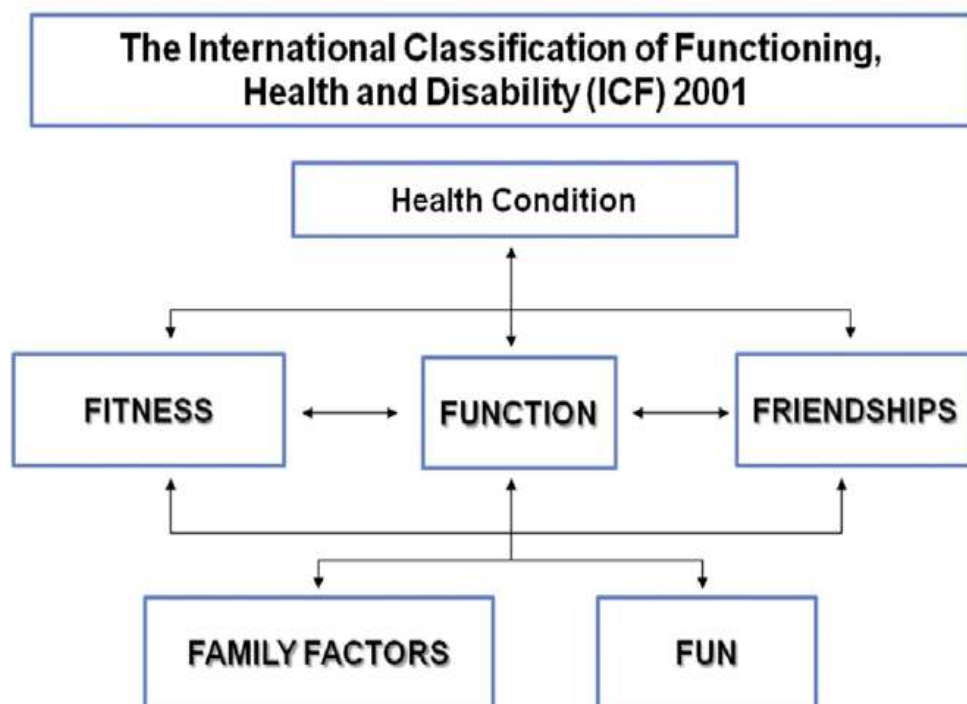
The 'F-words' which are function, family, fitness, fun, friends and future are connected to the everyday life of the child through participation or activity execution. Thus, the following conceptualization will build on the ICF-CY classification, F-words, and other relevant research so as to link the discussion with education and Lifelong Learning, participation and environmental factors to map their interconnectedness in understanding disability, functioning, education and participation in the everyday life situation of the child.

ICF-CY conceptual framework

The ICF-CY framework considers the experience of disability and health conditions in children and youth to be different in nature, intensity and impact from that experienced by adults. Thus, the children and youth version, the ICF-CY, expands the coverage of the main ICF volume by providing specific content and additional details to more fully cover the bodily functions and structures, activities and participation, and environment that is of particular relevance to infants, toddlers, children and adolescents (WHO 2007; Adolfsson 2011). With its functional emphasis, the ICF-CY uses a common language that can be applied across disciplines as well as national boundaries to advance services, policy and research, on behalf of children and youth (WHO 2007:xiv-xviii). Simeonsson (2009) argues that the existing variability of approaches to define disability has contributed to problems of service integration, policy, and informatics related to individuals with disabilities. Thus, the emergence of the ICF/ICF-CY classification to provide a comprehensive framework in defining disability and the associated taxonomy which encompasses dimensions of human functioning is posited (Simeonsson 2009:70-71). The framework regards functioning as an umbrella term encompassing all bodily functions, activities and participation and similarly, disability is regarded as an umbrella term for impairment, activity limitations or participation restrictions (WHO 2001; WHO 2007; WHO 2011).

Rosenbaum and Gorter (2001) refer function to what people do. The synonyms of function include role, job or occupation. They relate play to the work of the children. Functioning in the ICF-CY belongs to the category of activities and participation.

Rosenbaum and Gorter use the perspective of play as one of the children's tasks for stimulating thinking about how children's capacity improves with practice. Capacity is what we can do at our best, while performance is what we ordinarily do. They argue that performance improves with practice and practice occurs through activity execution. They emphasize giving children the opportunity to learn to do things on their own since it is through practice that they can develop good skills through those activities (Rosenbaum and Gorter 2011). This way of thinking is also consistent with participation, which is to be discussed later. It is through activity performance and participation that children demonstrate their capabilities, develop competence and experience their agency.

Environmental conditions, participation and disability

The ICF-CY framework also pays special attention to the impact of environmental factors in creating disability, particularly to children with impairments. The framework defines environmental factors as the physical, social and attitudinal environment in which people live and conduct their lives (WHO 2007). In this case, environment can be referred to as the settings where activities and participation take place (King, Rigby et al. 2013). For example, home, school, and community environments are all different settings which may provide varied possibilities and opportunities for participation to children and youth with disabilities. In this respect, different settings provide different impacts on disability and participation. For example, the home environment is made up of many varied activity settings i.e. kitchen, living room, backyard etc whereby each setting can bring about varied experiences of participation, depending on the activity taking place within that particular setting, others around, quality of the setting etc. King, Rigby et al. (2013) contend that activity settings reflect the role of the environment in participation, and the meaning attached to places, people and activities. They also add that environmental qualities have specific effects on participation experience, though this is considered as a wide spread assumption with very little actual evidence (King, Rigby et al. 2013:3-4).

On the other hand, Rosenbaum and Gorter (2011) consider family as the essential environment for all children, and in the ICF parents are termed as central contextual

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factors in their children's lives. The fact is, children depend on their parents and families for their growth and development. They depend on them for personal and health care, food, clothes, security, safety and sanitary settings as well as psychological and social support. That means, in describing the influence of the environmental settings in causing disability to children with impairments, considerations have to be made not only regarding the physical environment of the child, but also to parents and families as the immediate contextual settings for their children, which may facilitate or hinder functioning and participation. The WHO (2007) argues that due to the dependence of the developing child, the physical and social elements of the environment have a significant impact on child functioning, and that negative environmental factors often have a stronger impact on children than adults. Therefore, any plans and efforts to promote children's participation, health and well being should first focus on understanding the environmental settings that surround the child, since this also has an influence on their development.

The interconnection of fun, friends and future in the ICF framework

Rosenbaum and Gorter (2011) relate activities to fun, producing activities that the children might like doing. For them, life is about doing stuff together. In the ICF framework, fun is in the category of personal factors and participation. They claim that children with disabilities have a lower rate of participation than their able bodied peers. Thus, the focus of Rosenbaum and Gorter (2011) to the element of fun in the ICF is what can be done to increase and enhance participation of young people with disabilities. They claim that in order to achieve, we have to first find out what the children want to do. The activities might be formal or informal and the children may love doing them on their own or with others. Then we have to adopt self identified activities so as to allow the children to pursue the things they want to do. However, although we should not expect the children to carry out activities as if they were able bodied, we do have to think and realize that disabled children can with, more or less adaptations, demonstrate remarkable feats of physical and psychological achievement. For them, participatory activities can be used to

build children's confidence, competence, sense of achievement and capacity. The focus should be put on doing rather than accomplishing.

Friends and friendships occupy the same space as fun - namely personal factors and participation. Friendship making should be considered to be among the components of child development. The focus should be on the quality of relationships rather than the number. Therefore, Rosenbaum and Gorter (2011) stress that the service provider should consider what can be done to encourage, empower, and enhance children's opportunities to develop and nurture meaningful peer connections. Rosenbaum and Gorter use the word future to sum-up the 'F-words'. They claim that too often the idea that the future is what child development is all about is neglected. All children, including disabled children, are in a constant state of becoming. In this case, service providers need to think about the future in a positive way and encourage parents to do so as well. The present reality and future of the child and his or her family should be kept in view at all times. Therefore, addressing function, family, fitness, fun, and friends will constantly remind us of what is important in the development of all children, and that appears to be 'the future'.

Children's participation and agency

Community work builds its interest on understanding the conditions for individual and group participation in normatively expected social settings, and how the community may act in order to change or challenge the undesired conditions that lead to marginalizing or constraining their opportunities for social participation (Sudman and Henriksbø 2008). Children just like other human beings, possess the capacity to influence the conditions for participating in different situations and circumstances if they are facilitated. Indeed, children are and must be seen as active in the construction and determination of their own social lives, the lives of those around them and the societies in which they live. Recognizing the intrinsic capacities found in children, Hart (1992) asserts that children need to be prepared to become responsible participating adult citizens by gradually

exposing them to the skills and responsibilities involved in participation.[5] He argues that children learn to become competent caring citizens through their involvement with competent caring adults. Also, (Ackermann, Feeny et al. 2003) emphasize that there is a need to recognize children's participation since they have long been participating in different everyday settings such as the home, school, work, communities, wars etc but that their participation has been rarely acknowledged as the consequence of the adult perception of children. Similarly, Hart (1992) adds that there has been a tendency on the part of adults to underestimate the competence of children while at the same times using them in events to influence some cause. Hart (1992) applies the ladder metaphor to stimulate thinking about children's involvement in different projects and activities. He conceptualizes children's participation to be in a ladder form, which distinguishes the adult-child interaction represented in a participatory practice. The ladder consists of eight rungs, with the bottom three, manipulation, decoration and tokenism representing forms of non-participation, while the top five rungs represent varying degrees of participation as it is shown below;

Figure 4: Hart's Ladder of Participation
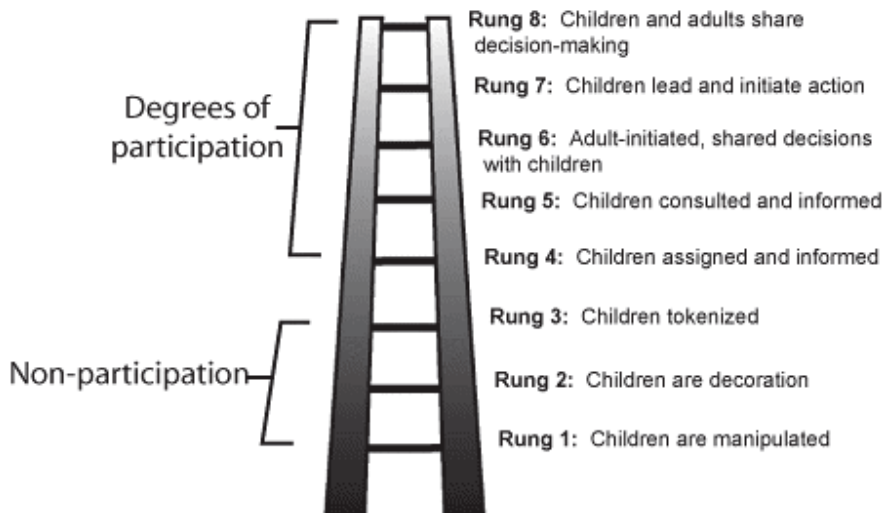
Adapted from Hart, R. (1992). Children's Participation: from Tokenism to Citizenship. Florence: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre.

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[5] Roger Hart conceives participation as a process of sharing decisions which affect one's life and the life of the community in which one lives (1992, p. 5)

Nevertheless, Hart's conceptualization of children's participation in a ladder form has been claimed to be unhelpful as it implies sequence, while in reality one level of participation may not necessarily lead to the next level (Ackermann, Feeny et al. 2003). As well, the conceptualization of levels of participation in terms of a ladder may imply a hierarchy of value, something which is claimed to be unrealistic. Therefore, (Ackermann, Feeny et al. 2003) stress that conceptualizing participation via levels is misleading and unfair since each individual child will experience his/her own participation challenges differently based on his/her context.

For his part, Hart (1992) argues that the ladder metaphor is applied just to stimulate reflections about children's position in participation, particularly with regard to children's targeted projects, and that the ladder should not be considered exhaustive (Hart 1992; Ackermann, Feeny et al. 2003). This is because the opportunities for children to participate in different projects and activities are highly dependent on their cultural context, and the adults' perceptions and attitudes towards children as their parents, families or caregivers. Indeed, recognizing the position of children in terms of participation indicates not only a realization of their capabilities to influence, but also it entails recognizing their right to experience agency. Olli, Vehkakoksi et al (2012) contend that a child's agency is realized when his/her need to exert influence is taken into account and responded to. Additionally, Blanchet-Cohen (2008:261) argues that recognizing child agency is about paying attention to children's power or lack of power, to influence or organize events and to engage in the structures that affect their lives. In this case, we can see there is interplay between participation and agency. Participation provides the space to experience agency, and agency is expressed through executing different activities and participation at an individual or group level.

However, children's opportunities for participation are faced with varied constraints compared to that of adults. Their status as children, their contextual environment and setting, their physical (dis)abilities, culture etc have always posed some constraints on their participation, impacting the nature of their involvement and the space for experiencing agency. Adolfsson (2011) contends that young children's participation is often urged by adults and that their participation is mostly dependent on their

developmental stages and their abilities to function independent of adults. Consequently, Percy-Smith and Thomas (2010) argue that children are widely denied opportunities for decision making due to their evolving capacities. On top of that, their physical immaturity, relative inexperience and lack of knowledge make them vulnerable and necessitate specific protections. However, Olli, Vehkakoski et al (2012) observe that other people's inability to understand a child's self expression or their unwillingness to let the child exert influence, may restrict the child's agency from being realized whilst not totally eliminating the existence of agency (Olli, Vehkakoski et al. 2012:2). Similarly, Hart (1992) argues that where opportunity to participate is suppressed by adults, children may organize themselves without involving adults, although this may not always be for good causes (Hart 1992). The important point to note is that children always posses agency regardless of the fact that it may be made active or passive. Their agency may be seen as an intrinsic value like other human rights, an instrumental value whose consequences are significant both for the child and for their society.

Moreover, we should remember that participation is a result of the interplay between functioning, disability, health, and environmental factors. When the child's health condition interacts with the environmental factors it may either lead to disability or restore functioning, depending on whether the environment acts as a barrier or facilitator. In this case, children's participation and the experience of agency may be facilitated or constrained by the environmental factors surrounding them or their health conditions.

Summing up the theoretical underpinnings

In this part, the presentation intends to bring together the above theories and concepts and make a summary of the discussion by looking at education and learning, disability, participation and the experience of agency by children with disabilities. From the discussion we have seen that desires and expectations for participation are mostly the same for children with and without disabilities. Children want to be with their friends and peers, engage with play, have fun and exchange experiences with others. However, it has been made clear that to children, participation tends to vary in meaning and nature from that understood by adults. The childhood status and state of being dependent on adults,

influences the nature and degree of their involvement in different activities. Consecutively, participation results from the interaction between health conditions, bodily functions/structure and environmental factors as well as personal factors. Hence, participation as a social factor is highly dependent on other factors, either health conditions, environmental conditions or personal conditions In this case, children's participation may either be facilitated or constrained by any of the factors and impact upon the child's opportunity to experience agency. As well, learning is participation. As we have seen from the UNICEF and UNESCO perspectives, learning is a lifelong process which starts in early childhood and extends to adulthood. Therefore, in order to prepare the individual with the knowledge, skills value, qualities, attitudes and abilities to communicate effectively and work productively with others, vocational education and technical training need to include all the four pillars of education (UNESCO 2005). That means learning will not only equip the individual with knowledge, but also provide him/her with all the skills and competencies necessary to meet his/her future personal and social needs. And that is agency.

CHAPTER 4 - Research Methodology

This chapter takes a pertinent position outlining and discussing the research methodology of the study i.e. how the study was planned, methods of data collection employed during field work, the procedures selected for analysis and interpretations of the findings. In this study, the approach employed is in line with Creswell's methodological point of view which considers a research design to be composed of philosophical worldviews, strategies of inquiry and research methods (2009:5).

Research design

In this study, the qualitative method is selected as the research design to study and explore *how children in a boarding school for children with physical disabilities negotiate enabling and constraining factors that have an impact on their academic achievement and future life possibilities*. Creswell (2009) contends that the selection of the research design should be based on the issue being addressed, the nature of the research problem, and the researcher's personal experiences, as well as audience for the study. Specifically, the decision to employ qualitative approach in this study was based on the nature of the research problem which calls for an in-depth understanding of the children in their natural setting (the boarding school) including their daily routines within different settings at the school, their interpersonal relationships and behaviors, the structural and social organization of the school, and the total environment which surrounds them, that being social, structural or physical. Moreover, to be able to capture how these children negotiate the enabling and constraining factors that affect their educational attainment, has involved not only understanding how things were done and organized at the school but there was also a need to recollect some information about their social and geographical backgrounds, their relationships with their families and relatives, their life history such as how they acquired their impairment, how they got to know the school, the process for school admission and so on, and link this information with their current situation at the school. In this case, the qualitative approach provided room for the researcher to get to know the personal life and everyday experiences of the

children such as how they found the schools as a group and as individuals, how they organized their daily routines at the school, and how they coped with their situation as pupils and as children.

Figure 5: A Framework for Design - The interconnection of Worldviews, Strategies of Inquiry and Research Methods

Philosophical Worldviews

Social construction

Selected strategies of inquiry

Qualitative strategies - Ethnography

Research Design

Qualitative

Research methods

Questions
Data collection
Data analysis
Interpretation
Write-up
Validation
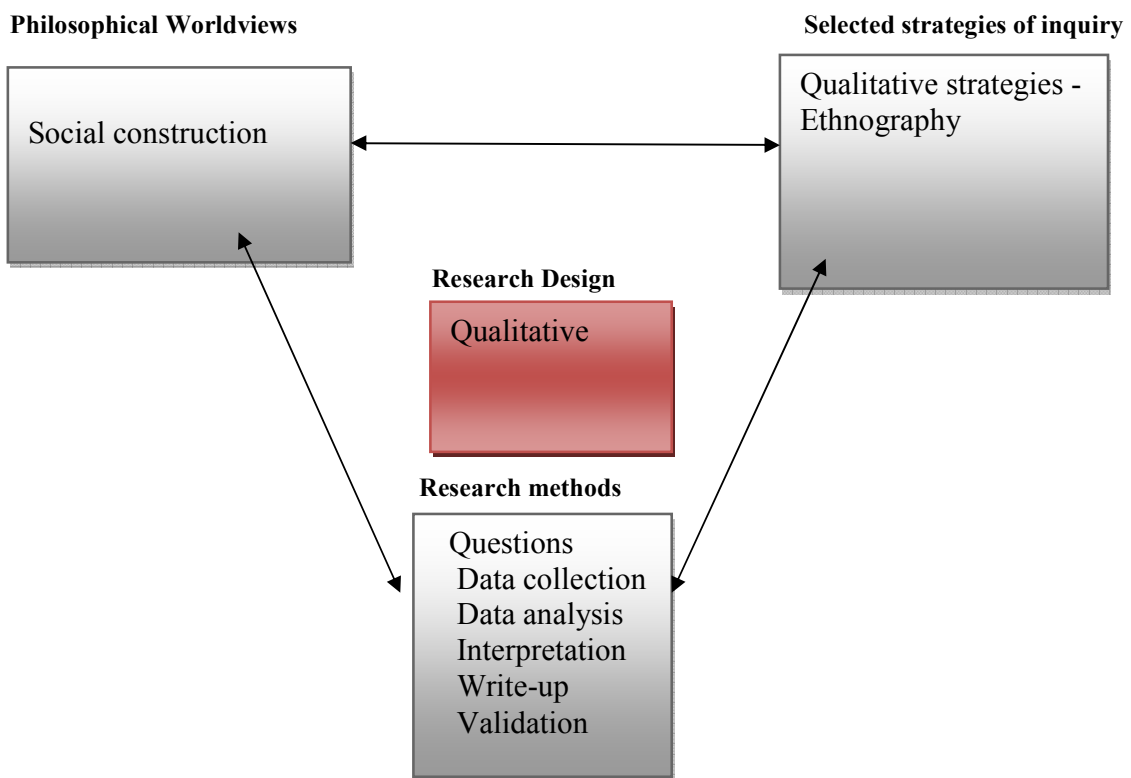
Source: Derived from (Creswell 2009:5)

The Philosophical approach – Social Construction

As shown in the diagram above, social construction was selected as the philosophical world view for this study. The social construction approach considers individuals to have subjective meanings of their experiences (Creswell 2009). Moreover, the approach holds the assumption that individuals seek an understanding of the world in which they live and

work. With respect to the research topic, I find that the social construction approach fits well since the approach emphasizes an understanding of participant views of the situation being studied, in this case children, and how they negotiate with the everyday challenges emerging from their education.

Strategy of inquiry- Ethnography

In this study, the application of the ethnographic method is based on the perspectives presented by Angrosino (2007), Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) and other relevant scholars on the same approach. According to Angrosino (2007:14), ethnography is defined as the art and science of describing a human group, its institutions, interpersonal behaviors, material productions and beliefs. Hammersley and Atkinson try to highlight the practical activities which are carried out by ethnographic researchers in the course of their data collection and analysis, which includes participating overtly or covertly in people's daily lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, and/or asking questions through informal and formal interviews, and also collecting documents and artifacts (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007:3). Through the use of the ethnographic approach, the children were able to share with me their feelings about their condition of impairment, their personal experiences, and the challenges and experience of living together as children and as pupils. Angrosino (2007:15-16) contends that among the advantages of the ethnographic approach is that it is field based and conducted in the setting where people actually live. Additionally, the approach is personalized and the researcher has face-to-face interactions with the people being studied on a daily basis, and he/she participates in, and observes, the lives being studied.

The decision to employ an ethnographic approach to study this particular community of children was based on the need for in-depth understanding of the children within the school setting, how things were organized by the children themselves and by the administration, how they shared their experiences and what they learned in the school in terms of living together as a community with shared experiences. Moreover, the approach was able to provide an opportunity to research with the informants, get their perceptions

and insights of their lived experiences, and not just regard them as instruments (Ledwith 2005). However, Angrosino (2007) claims that the ethnographic approach may involve some subjectivity due to the fact that human behaviors, values, and interactions are sometimes in the eye of the beholder and that they can be consciously or unconsciously manipulated by the people being studied. Considering the possible limitations of this approach, a triangulation of methods was employed so as to search for predictable patterns of information, emerging issues and avenues related to the study. Thus, this triangulation of methods provided a useful possibility for me to learn and understand how these children interacted with each other and with their school environment and setting as individuals and as a group.

Study setting/area

The study was conducted at Mafanikio (pseudo name) primary school located in Dar es Salaam. The study area was selected by considering the topic of the study and the need for the researcher to have direct communication with the informants. In this city, there were other schools for children with disabilities such as a school for the mentally impaired, a school for the deaf and a school for the blind, but I couldn't select these because the children in these schools had mental and visual impairments, and so communicating with them might have demanded specific or specialized communication skills which I don't have. In addition, the study area was selected by considering the possibility to gaining a study permit and accessibility since the study was time bounded. So, I selected this school which is owned by the organization where I previously worked so as to ease accessibility issues and allow me to contact the gate keepers. Creswell (2009) claims that there are always high possibilities for reporting data that are biased, incomplete or compromised by studying one's own organization or friends. However, even though I worked with this organization, I found that selecting this school as my study site had no any effect on the validity and reliability of this study. This is because I selected this school based on the fact that the school administrative leaders and workers who work in this school are not those whom I worked with, and I had had no contact or interaction with any of them before conducting the study. I also hadn't worked with the

group of children which I studied, and I knew nothing about them before the inception of this study. Therefore, the study area was chosen based on these considerations, thus mitigating the possible limitations which might otherwise have arisen.

Getting into the field

On 18th of July 2011at 10am I visited my field of study and had a brief meeting at the school with the school administration, where I briefly described my study. The social service secretary for the school also gave a short description about the school and explained that is run by the church. Around 12pm on the same day, I had a short meeting with the school head teacher and other school workers, including the matron, physiotherapists, a nurse and the school social service coordinator. I introduced myself and gave them a brief explanation of my study. I told them that my study was mainly about academic fulfillment and that I was interested to learn how everyday life within this compound is conducted and how the children run their lives within this environment. I told that: "I'm going to focus on how things are done by the children and for that case my study method will build much on observation". I also told them that I might sometimes conduct interviews with the pupils, and the workers related to the school, and thus begged for their cooperation. After the meeting, I agreed to take up the head teacher's invitation to meet the pupils and teachers on 25th of July, one week after they returned from holiday. The head teacher suggested this date so that I could meet the majority of the pupils, claiming that not all the pupils used to return to school as dated. I also arranged with the school director that on the same date I would be introduced to the caretakers. After this meeting I bought some soft drinks which were distributed to all who attended the meeting.

On 25th of July 2011at 10 am I visited the school for the second time, and had a meeting with the teachers and caretakers to introduce and explain to them the purpose of the study and how they could participate. However, I could not meet the pupils on the same date as planned because the meeting with these two groups took a bit longer than anticipated, and by the time I finished, the children were having their lunch break, which took place at

around 1pm. I found it important to meet with the teachers and caretakers first before meeting with the children since these groups had a direct influence on the children, and if they felt ignored it might have influenced their cooperation with the study and my freedom to access the children, particularly during classes. After this meeting, I was given a chance to move around with the school social service coordinator to get oriented in the school environment. On 26th at 10 am I visited the school with the plan of meeting the children. The head teacher guided me to each classroom where I was to introduce myself to the pupils and talk briefly about the study and how the pupils could participate. After I introduced myself to the children, I then decided to stay at the school until 4pm. During this period I tried to move around the school talking with the children and other people whom I came across. Actually, it wasn't an easy experience being at this school during these first few days. I felt uncomfortable and frustrated, also undecided as to what to do and how to start as I saw myself a stranger to all around me.

Putting into consideration Goffman's (1959) idea about self presentation, I tried my level best to present myself based on what appeared morally accepted in this place. For example, I couldn't wear trousers or mini-skirts during the whole period of my fieldwork. This is due to the fact that it is morally unacceptable to wear those kinds of clothes in religious based places. Even in schools, particularly government based schools; teachers can't appear in this way. So, to make myself appear less a stranger or new person in this environment I tried to dress simply, and I also avoided putting on things like jewelry, makeup, high heels or lipstick. I did this intentionally so as to avoid being easily spotted as a stranger as it was very rare for teachers or workers at this school to appear in this way. This strategy is also presented by Goffman (1959:16) as he claims a person can intentionally and consciously express himself in a particular way chiefly because the tradition of his group or social status requires this kind of expression. This strategy somehow worked out, and as the study progressed I became more familiar with the people around me, and the settings, so becoming freer to talk to the children and move about comfortably. However, this technique only helped me break the ice and move a bit closer to the people at the school; it didn't stop them from considering me as a highly educated and more informed person than most of the others in this setting. I noted this as

the study progressed. For example, whenever I had a chat or informal conversation with the teachers they started to ask questions related to my previous education: what is the situation of schools in Norway? What kind of job was I was expecting to do after finishing my studies? Likewise, the children asked me related questions such as how I got the chance to study abroad, how things look in Norway, how long it takes to travel from Tanzania to Norway and so on.

Playing a role as a participant observer and a teacher

I noticed the pupils were more attentive and better behaved in the presence of their teachers. When I took the role of teaching, teaching in some of the classes, the pupils were freer, and even during the time I marked their work they just surrounded my table. I noticed the difference after one of their teachers came in and shouted to them that they have to behave as they used to during other teachers' sessions. The pupils were told to sit at their desks and up bring the exercise books one by one. Although the teacher's intention had to do with maintaining order and discipline between teachers and the pupils, to me the condition of the children being freer during my session was interpreted as a successful interaction. This is because even though I took on the role of teaching them, I didn't want to assume the teacher's role per se. I decided to take on the teaching of some classes as a way to get closer to the children, and try to develop some kind of free interaction with them. So, during these sessions, I tried to create a flexible environment and let the children feel freer and more relaxed, able to act and behave naturally as they could do in the absence of their teachers. In relation to my study, I didn't find the role of teaching to have an effect on the writing of my field notes. This was because, after teaching, I gave the pupils an exercise to write and when they were doing it I also used a table and chair placed at the front to keep on writing my notes.

When I participated in the classes as an observer I opted to sit at the back of the class so that I could have a wider view of the classroom. However, I noticed some teachers looked uncomfortable in their teaching sessions during my presence. Most of the time, I could see the teacher teaching while facing where I was sitting. I can't say if these teachers interpreted my presence in their sessions as a kind of assessment of their

teaching or if they stick to what I told them earlier, that my study had to do with academic fulfillment and nothing else. I say this because in our country some years back there was a program for assessing teachers at school, and the one who was assigned to do this usually placed him/herself at the back of the classroom during the sessions. On the other hand, I can't say if the pupils were disturbed by my presence or not as I placed myself at the back and made it difficult for them to have face to face contact with me. But generally speaking, acting as a participant observer doesn't exclude the researcher from being observed and interpreted by those around him/her. This is also argued by Hammersley and Atkinson (2007:177) who say that even though the ethnographer is acting as an observer, he or she may be an important audience for the participants, or at least for some of them. As the way to reduce attention from the teacher who was conducting the session I tried to avoid writing while the teacher was teaching, and I sometimes tried to keep myself busy by reading some of my notes.

Time spent in the field

In terms of time, for this study I spent about two months in the field. In the first two weeks I went into the field on a daily basis. The time for arriving varied between 06.30 am to 10am. The time schedule for my arrival was made flexible in order to capture the activities which were taking place within different time scales. For example, there was a plan to observe how and when did the children prepared themselves for class sessions, how a regular day was organized from morning onwards, when and how the children carried out their self care and so forth. I couldn't be at the school earlier than these times for different reasons i.e. before and around 6am the children were undertaking personal cleanliness activities such as taking a bath, and I might have interfered with their privacy as they didn't expect me to enter their bathrooms! I also thought attending very early in the morning might have caused the administration people to become suspicious about the intention of my study, and they might have made my study difficult since they held the key for accessing the school and the participants of the study. At the weekend I also accessed the field within varied time schedules.

For example, in the morning I arrived between 8 and 10am, at mid-day around 12pm and after lunch time between 2 and 4pm. All these plans were made so as to observe what was taking place with the children within different time frames. I also tried to be considerate and not to interfere with the children's plans and schedules, especially during the weekend, since the children were mostly busy with their own business. I followed the children where they gathered as a group or as individuals, and tried to observe, listen or see what was taking place after I made some kind of interaction, as a way to initiate relationships. In short, why I opted to visit the field on an everyday basis during the first two weeks was in order to build relationships with the children and other people related to the school, and to orientate myself with the school schedule which guided the activities of the children. Also it enabled me to know the different school settings and so become familiar with the people at the school, and build relationships with them; this condition moved me from being seen as a stranger to a participant researcher.

After these first two weeks, my attendance in the field varied in some ways, for example, in terms of times I entered the field each day to that of leaving the field. For example, I could arrive in the morning and leave at midday, or arrive at mid-day and leave in the evening. This was done as I became more familiar with the field settings and became more focused. I also had to leave whenever I felt exhausted or when I found I couldn't write down all of my field notes, and I had to go home and attend to them.

Selecting Informants

The study informants were purposively selected. I purposively selected some classes where I participated as a participant observer during classroom sessions, free time, and extracurricular activities and thereafter conducted open-ended and semi-structured interviews with some of the pupils from these classes. I selected four classes which were standard 1, 3, 5 and 7 as my sample of participants for observational study and interviews. The classes tend to ascend as the pupils grow older. I selected these classes by considering the influence of age on the increase of capacities and competence in understanding and self expression. As children grow older their way of thinking about education and life in general tends to change as they keep on learning academically and

in everyday life. Therefore, I expected to get a number of varied insights and understandings about education and future life expectations from these children based on their age differences, for example, the child in standard 7 could have a varied understanding of education compared to the child in standards 1 or 2. Also, the meaning and importance of education increases as a child grows older and gains more understanding of the world and the future. Smith (2005) contends that children's capacity to participate in different issues is also influenced by their age, and that they tend to develop different thinking styles, behaviors and perceptions as they grow older. However, even within classes, age differed considerably among the pupils i.e. not all the pupils were of the same age though they were in the same class.

Informant selection chosen class-wise was also impacted by considering the diverse backgrounds of this group of children; the intention was to get as many representative participants as possible. Depending on the particular context, one may sample persons by reference to categories of gender, race ethnicity, age, occupation and so on (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007). However, the sample selection was not followed in a very strict way, especially during the interview conversations because there was a high interaction between children of different classes especially during free time. I also opted to observe the rest of the classes randomly though more attention was given to the mentioned classes. I had to attend to the other classes as well so as to make the other pupils not feel excluded from my study. This was since the head teacher introduced me to all the classes that I were to use as part of my study, explaining that I would be attending some of these as part of my research study. The general school setting, school workers, teachers and administrative people were also selected as a sample of the study for observation and/or interviews.

Methods of Data production

For this research study I conducted field work between July and September 2011, and thereafter in September 2012 I visited the field for the second time and conducted formal group discussions with the children. In this study, participant observation, in-depth

interviewing, document review, and a focus group discussion were employed in combination with other methods. We should note that ethnography which is field work based involves a combination of methods such as: questioning, listening, conversing, smelling, touching, and so on. In defining ethnography, Crang and Cook (2007) as cited by (Forsey 2010:566) consider it to be participant observation plus any other appropriate methods. Included in the other category are interviews, focus groups, video or photographic work, statistics modeling, archive work, and so on. Field work is considered to be the phase of observation, with the interviews and document review sections intertwined (Angrosino 2007). In addition, field work has to do with spending time in the relevant field of study, and the approach involves using whatever methods are necessary in the field to produce the empirical material: participation (acting and/doing), seeing, listening, reading, writing, talking, walking, feeling, sniffing, conducting formal and informal talks with individuals or groups of people and so forth (Taylor and Bogdan 1998; Forsey 2010; TRELL and HOVEN 2010). A combination of methods is often thought of as a way of checking out insights gleaned from different informants or different sources of data. By drawing from other types and data sources, the observer gains a deeper and clearer understanding of the setting and the people being studied (Taylor and Bogdan 1998). Therefore, in this section on data collection methods I will present and discuss whatever methods of data production were employed in the field, and how these contributed to the production of the intended empirical material.

Observation, listening, walking and doing

Participant observation as a field based strategy facilitating data production was carried out along with other data collection methods such as listening, talking, walking, feeling, touching, writing, documenting etc (Forsey 2010). In this study, participant observation is considered the main technique for data production since the approach provides the opportunity for the researcher to enter the real context of people's everyday lives. This means the researcher gets a chance to learn how things are done, and is able to capture people's actions and behaviors in the normal life situation, something which gives this approach a strong credibility for community work research. Ledwith (2005:32) asserts

that the beginning of the process of community development lies in listening, valuing and understanding people's particular experiences. Upon starting my field work, I also realized that I needed to get closer to the children and the people at the school so as to be able to capture how everyday life was organized in this setting. I gradually tried to develop relationships with the children and other people who were around, whenever possible. For example, I sat with the children during their free time and during breakfast, so as to exchange ideas with them, and build some relationships and friendships. I took some classes when the teacher of a particular subject was absent, and I also sat out in the open areas that the children used to conduct their play. I found this approach to be of advantage to my study as it opened up room for more interactions, particularly with the children. For example, the girls in standard seven invited me into their dormitory after class hours so that we could talk freely. The children were curious to hear about Norway and what things look like in European countries. However, I took advantage of that gathering to seek more understanding of issues concerning the topic of the study.

Generally, the observations were conducted during free hours, collective extracurricular activities and individual activities. The timetable for class sessions and after class activities were mostly used as a guide as to where to find the children for observation and interviews. Although the study involved other informants as mentioned earlier, more attention was given to the children since they were the main subject under study, and I recognized their crucial role in making this study successful (Blanchet-Cohen 2008). During classes, the focus was put on how things were done by the pupils, and by the teachers, for example: sitting arrangements, how the pupils participated in lessons in the presence of their teachers, in the absence of their teachers, during my presence as a teacher, and when I sat in the class as an observer.

Interviews – talking, walking, observing, listening

In this study, the interview was selected as the main method within the field work approach. As part of the data production process facilitated by participant observation, in depth open-ended interviews were carried out with the children, teachers, school workers

and school administrators. The duration of these interviews ranged from between thirty minutes to one hour depending on the age category of the informants (either the adults or children). For example, pupils under nine years old were interviewed in a shorter time than the older pupils. The interview duration was made shorter for children of this age after I observed signs of boredom and inattention once the interview took longer than thirty minutes. I also realized that the younger children expressed themselves more succinctly than the older children. Open-ended interviews particularly with children were conducted based on what was taking place in the particular setting (M.Carpiano 2009; Garcia, Eisenberg et al. 2012). However, (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007) claim that one important possible audience is of course the ethnographer, and that his/her personal characteristics and the way he/she is conceived by the participants may have a strong influence on what they say and how they say it. By considering the possible influence I might have on the informants, I made myself act flexibly, and tried to create as close contact with the participants as possible. I also tried to make the interview conversation more natural and flexible by asking different questions based on the issues I sought to explore (Garcia, Eisenberg et al. 2012).

Document Review

In this study, a document review was also used to complement data gathered through participant observation and interviews. (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007:122) claim that documents can provide information about the settings being studied, or about their wider context, and particularly about key figures or organizations. Key documents which were critically reviewed in this research include the organizational brochure stating the goals and purposes of running the school, school admission forms, documents concerning school rules and daily routines, teachers' responsibilities and the school's objectives and planned strategies. It was important to gather the documented information so as to complement it with the information garnered through observation and interviews.

Second phase field visit - Focus group discussion

In September 2012, one year after the field work, I arranged for a short second field visit and conducted a focus group discussion with some of the older children from standards four to seven. The visit was done for data validation purposes, and because I was seeking further insights into education issues and future expectations from the older children as they tended to come closer to their study accomplishments. I also discussed with them some of the issues which were captured in the first phase of the field work as a way to seek clarification and test the reliability of the information. (Kitzinger 1995) argues that focus group discussions are particularly useful for exploring people's knowledge and experiences, and can be used to examine not only what people think but how they think and why they think that way. I also opted to employ a focus group discussion with the older children in order to capture their different perceptions and insights based on their varied backgrounds, age, experiences, gender and so on. The discussions were conducted in the field, and the children were the ones who selected the venue, which varied depending on the choice of the group. Some groups opted to sit in a classroom and others opted to sit under a tree in an open space. During the group sessions, soft drinks were served to all participants. According to Kitzinger (1995:301), focus group discussions should be relaxed sessions conducted in a comfortable setting, perhaps including refreshments, with the participants sitting in a circle as a way to establish a harmonious atmosphere.

Composition and organization of the focus group discussion

The focus group discussion was conducted with four groups which comprised pupils from standards four to seven. The age of these children ranged from 10-16 years old. The distribution was as follows: the first group involved six pupils picked from standards four and five. The second group comprised the same number of children who were from standards six and seven. The last two groups comprised four pupils each and these pupils were from standards four to seven. Each pupil participated in the group once. I tried to have new participants in each group so as to be able to capture different perceptions and contrasting insights from different pupils. In all groups, gender was considered and the

groups comprised of girls and boys in equal number. Before picking up the group participants I made the participation open to any pupil in the respective classes. Since I visited the school after classes, most of these children were in the dormitories and other were scattered outside. I sent one of them to gather up the children in standards four and five, although made it clear to her that it was not necessary to get all of them. After they arrived, I realized most of them were able to recognize me and some asked me about Norway. After a brief chat I told them that I wanted to have a group discussion with those who were willing. I wrote down the names of those who agreed to participate and divided them into two groups. I then did the same for standards six and seven. After I created the four groups I told them that we could start our discussion the next day after class, and I would start with the first group.

The following day I visited the school and conducted the discussion with the first group as agreed. However, I made it clear to the pupils that whoever didn't feel ready to participate was allowed to leave before the discussion began, or even during the discussion. Most of them were willing to participate until the end, though one of the pupils from standard six opted not to participate as he said he had a plan to wash his clothes. I considered this child to be agentic as he was able to make decisions and prioritize what he thought was most important to him (MacNaughton, Hughes et al. 2007; Blanchet-Cohen 2008; Olli, Vehkakoski et al. 2012). The group discussion was conducted over four consecutive days, whereby each group participated for a single day. I interviewed just one group per day because the discussion was conducted in the evening after class and that I had to make it shorter to let the children continue with their evening schedules. I opted to conduct the discussions in the evening to avoid interfering with the children's classes Also, because the groups involved children from different classes, it would have been difficult to get all of them together at the same time during class hours. The duration for the discussion ranged from 45 minutes to one hour and 15 minutes. Data produced by these focus group discussions were also matched with the data produced in the first stage of the field work.

Data Saving

During the field work, I used my notebook to record non verbal communications and note some points or issues which I needed to explore further, or which I found interesting during the interview or during the time of observation. Hammersley and Atkinson (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007:142) assert that what is recorded as field notes will depend on one's general sense of what is relevant to the foreshadowed research problems, as well as on background expectations. A camera for taking pictures and a tape recorder for recording the interview conversations were also used to save the data. Before switching the recorder on I asked the informants if they felt comfortable for me to record their voices. I told them that the recording was done for the purpose of capturing most of the conversations and help to keep the flow of information. The participants didn't find any problems with that, and at the end of the interview conversations I sometimes switched the recorder on for a short time so they could hear their voices. This was done particularly with the children and it turned into a laughable experience as they found hearing their voices being a bit strange. All the interview conversations were run in Swahili. By using my knowledge of community work and my experiences as a Tanzanian, I was able to use the information captured through observations, listening, talking etc and match it with my area of study, noting some areas or issues which needed more exploration or focus.

Data processing, analysis and interpretation

Data processing was done partly alongside the field work and after the field work was completed. Since all the data and field notes were recorded in Swahili, the work of transcription was partly done during the field work period. However, I found the activity of transcription to be time consuming and exhausting. In addition, it was a bit challenging to find the English words which carried the same meaning of a sentence or words spoken in Swahili. However, I tried my level best to keep the original meaning of what was said by the participants. Even though I couldn't work with the whole transcription series during my field work, I developed a plan to go through all the data and field notes after

each field work day so as to discover what was missing or where to add more focus the following day. However, when working with my data after the field work was finished, I realized there was a need to go back into the field to gather some information which was missing, particularly concerning what the children's future (post school) expectations. Visiting the field for the second time also provided a way for me to validate the data gathered during the first period of my field work. All the data which had been taped were transferred to written materials and then transcribed. The field notes were also arranged chronologically based on date and the title of focus per field work.

During analysis the audio taped data gathered through individual interviews and focus groups, were matched with the field notes and the data from the reviewed documents. I went through all the materials and tried to pick out interesting, surprising and important ideas and develop the kind of analytical concepts which related to the theoretical frameworks. Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) contend that we have to use the data to think with and try to see whether we can identify any interesting patterns. Concepts such as agency, participation, learning and disability worked as torches which helped me to interpret the data and understand the connections between the empirical materials gathered and the theoretical frameworks much better. (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007:165) argue that the development of analytical ideas rarely takes a purely inductive form. Theoretical ideas, common-sense expectations, and stereotypes often play the key role. They also add that there is no single formula that can serve as a strategy for analysing the ethnographic data. Hence, ethnographic researchers are expected to establish their outlined framework for analysis based on the visited literatures and the themes emerging from the data collected. The data was then analyzed manually using a descriptive form of analysis based on different studies and literature about disability, education and community work. Lastly, the processed and analyzed information was written in a monographic form, to include the participant quotations followed by my interpretation.

Ethical considerations

All the initial preparations for accessing the field were sorted out before the commencement of this study. A letter to support the study was obtained from my research supervisor at Bergen University College, which together with the letter obtained from the Institute of Social Work was used to apply for a study permit from the Tanzania Commission for Science and Technology (COSTECH).The permit obtained from COSTECH was used as a support document in seeking access in the field. Although the gatekeepers for the field were contacted prior to the inception of the study, the supporting documents from the recognized authorities were still required to prove the authenticity of the study purposes. (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007) claim that negotiating access also involves ethical considerations, for example, to do with whose permission ought to be asked as well as whose permission needs to be obtained if initial access is to be granted (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007:42). During my entrance into the field I first contacted the gatekeepers whom I had prior communication with. The gatekeepers in this case were the organization's social service secretary and deputy social secretary. After a brief meeting with them, they introduced me to other school administrators and the school head teacher. The meeting with the head teacher and the school administrators opened up the opportunity for me to meet with the rest of the teachers, school workers and pupils in order to introduce them to the purpose of the study and ask for their consent to conduct this study with them.

Therefore, I generally received acceptance from the mentioned groups to conduct the study in their settings as a participant observer. However, during the interview conversations, I asked for the informant's consent once again since the interviews were tape recorded, and I had to make sure the informants were at ease with the information they were sharing. I explained to the informants that the recording was done purposely to capture the flow and the contents of the conversations and not otherwise. More explanations were particularly made to the pupils to make sure they felt safe and comfortable with the information they were sharing with me. I ensured them of the confidentiality of the information, which opened up room for more in-depth and relaxed

interview conversations. Therefore, ethical issues were considered by all categories of informants with the researcher standing in the position of participant observer and not interventionist (Taylor and Bogdan 1998). In addition, ethical issues were considered in all stages of the research from topic formulations to the dissemination of the findings. For example, as a way to maintain the school's confidentiality I have called this school Mafanikio which is a pseudo name, and all the participants in the interviews have been given fake names, although they are among the most common names used in Tanzania.

CHAPTER 5 - How the children themselves contribute to enhance their everyday living and form interpersonal interactions and relationships in a boarding school

Boarding school, through its social, structural and physical environment matters in the everyday life of the children, their academic achievements and future life expectations. It has an influence on their daily routines, interaction patterns, actions, decisions, behaviors, etc. King, Rigby et al (2013) claim that the school environment, given its broad geographical, architectural or social characteristics encompasses multiple activity settings. In this respect they refer activity settings for children as particular places in which they "do things" including active pursuits i.e. (artwork, visiting others, taking part in physical activities and doing chores) and more passive activities (reading and watching television). The different places at Mafanikio boarding school represent different activity settings[6] where the children interact with the tasks and activities of their everyday lives. Thus, in their effort to enhance everyday living and form interpersonal interactions and relationships, the children undertake different strategies and actions. In particular, this chapter seeks to present and analyze what these courses of actions and strategies are, in an effort to explore how the children themselves contribute to the enhancement of their everyday living skills, and formation of interpersonal interactions and relationships at this boarding school. As well, how are things done and organized by the children themselves, i.e. how the children organize their daily lives, undertake their daily activities, interact with each other, and so forth, will be also explored.

Everyday living in a boarding school – learning to do

Living in a boarding school involves taking part in different activities, not only academic based, but also concerning everyday life. The school context, in terms of its different settings becomes the natural environment where children spend their time in doing different things that influence their everyday lives. In this case, the children do things based on their prior experiences or they engage themselves in learning to do things based on the existing demand. Additionally, the contextual condition, available facilities, rules

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[6] Setting/ in this aspect refers to varied contexts within the school environment. For example, classrooms, dormitories, playing grounds etc.

and regulations that guide the place all matter in influencing what is done by a child, how, and when. According to Gieryn (2000:465), places are made by people. They are also interpreted, narrated, perceived-felt, perceived-understood, and imagined. In trying to construct their place and make sense of their surroundings, children at this school engaged with different activities and actions which enhanced their everyday lives. For example, the children had to wake up early in the morning, take a shower, put on their uniforms, make their beds, clean their surroundings, assemble for morning announcements and information, and attend class sessions on time. Some pupils claimed this kind of life to be difficult, but they acknowledged they were used to it. When I had an interview conversation with Dorcas, a standard four pupil, she said;

> *Dorcas - During weekdays we have to wake up around 5a.m, take shower, put on our uniforms, make our beds and leave the dormitory to clean our surroundings.*
>
> *Violet – So how do you find this life in a boarding school?*
>
> *Dorcas - I find it to be difficult but I'm used to it as I have learned to be responsible. In the weekends we have to clean our dormitories, toilets, surroundings and wash our clothes. You know if it was at home my mom or my sister could wash for me or remind me what to do but here no one to do that so I have to do it myself.*

Generally, these children experience a dramatic change in leaving home and going to a boarding school. For them to manage boarding life as pupils may encompass learning what to do, when and how to do it, day after day. The children have to adapt to school life, learn to be responsible, be time conscious, follow the routines based on the rules and regulations of the school, and try to do whatever they are expected to do based on the existing situation. Being agentic individuals, children just like adults, are capable of taking different actions, developing new skills and mechanisms for responding to everyday life situations and demands based on the situation at hand (Fuchs 2001; Blanchet-Cohen 2008). The researchers believe that children can learn new things and develop competence once they are trusted and provided with an opportunity to do so (Blanchet-Cohen 2008; Olli, Vehkakoski et al. 2012). Likewise, demands which are put on them by their current environment, the rules and regulations that guide the school, economic factors, and so forth may demand they learn new things. For example, living in

a boarding school far from parents and family may require the child not only to live in this school environment which is different from home, but also learn to do things independent of parents and family. One might ask, is this not what is usually done by all children at boarding school? The answer is clearly yes. However, living in a boarding school as a child with a disability means things don't function in a same way. In this environment, disabled children have to learn to use their capacities and learn to see themselves as more able-bodied than disabled. Therefore, being able to develop skills and mechanisms for responding to these demands not only makes life possible at school, but is also an opportunity for them to discover their strengths and capabilities. This is in line with what was pointed earlier by Adolfsson (2011) whereby children with disabilities can develop good skills once they are given opportunity to do things on their own. Also, Adolfsson (2011:37) claims that when children get the opportunity to help themselves in an active way, they learn about their own capabilities and how to be independent, which has been established as the primary aspect of well-being in adulthood.

Learning self care

Self care is a learned activity which improves gradually with respect to time, age and shared experiences. School as a learning environment provides room not only to learn academic based skills, but also provides an opportunity for competence development through practice. According to Delors (1996:21), 'learning to do' entails the acquisition of a competence that enables people to deal with a variety of situations, often unforeseeable, and to work in teams. However, competence develops along with the opportunities available for practice. Delors (1996:21) adds that competence and skills are more readily acquired if pupils and students have the opportunity to try out and develop their abilities by becoming involved in different work experience schemes or social situations while they are still in education. When I had interview conversations with the children most of them claimed to have acquired the skills of self care gradually from fellow pupils. Asha, from standard five, said:

Asha - When I came here I couldn't do anything. I couldn't wash my clothes, take bath, or take a broom to sweep. But I saw my fellows doing all these activities despite

of their impairments. I started to learn day after day. Now I can do everything for myself. Even during the holidays my parents were surprised to see me cleaning and washing my clothes something which I couldn't do before. Being in a boarding school enabled me try to do things by myself.

As was stated earlier by Rosenbaum and Gorter (2011), performance improves with practice through activity execution. In this case, learning to do involves executing different activities which lead to competence development. In the above quote, Asha acknowledges developing skills in self care gradually after picking them up from her fellow pupils. As we know, self care involves a series of activities depending on what is to be done. For instance, the activity of washing may involve fetching water, the actual washing, rinsing, draining and hanging up the clothes to dry. All these diverse actions require a wide range of functional skills for a child to accomplish (Adolfsson 2011). The age of the child is also important as there certain activities which can only be done by children of a certain age. So, how were the children at this school able to manage all these activities? Hamis, a standard five pupils, commented:

Hamis - Helping each other has just developed as a behavior. If we don't help each other we can't do anything. If you see your fellow is unable to do a certain thing you have to assist him/her. And if you will have deficit (mapungufu[7]) to do a certain task the one who is around can assist you. That's why you can find even if we are assigned different tasks they get done without any problem. Even washing our clothes we assist each other.

Also, Mary, a standard three pupil, considers the action of helping others to be an experience learned from other pupils.

Marry - In this school we have learned to help each other. We have to wash for our fellows who due to the condition of their impairments can't do so. Also push those who use wheelchair in case we see them struggling to move. All these I saw my fellows doing and learned to do the same since I think it is the proper way of living and it makes us live as a family.

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[7] Mapungufu is a Swahili word which is used to denote weakness or deficits. Mostly this word is used when someone is talking about someone's weaknesses/deficits in terms of physical abilities or behavior.

The demands put on us by the situation at hand may influence our behaviors and taken course of actions. According to Freire (1996), in order for people to take collective action, they should first of all be able to communicate and form a dialogue through which they can discover their shared experiences. From there, they can reflect and decide to take collective action or otherwise, depending on the existing situation and how they have understood it. Having different degrees of disability demands different sorts of cooperation. For example, sitting in a wheelchair necessitates being pushed to various places: the classroom, dining room, or playground. Having no arms means the necessity of assistance with washing,[8] taking a shower, making the bed etc. It would be difficult to manage alone in these circumstances. Being able to complement each other makes things easier, and can be a way to make life easier in this locality. What Hamis mentioned above concerning helping each other, highlights the awareness held by the children regarding their varied abilities, strengths and demands. These children don't consider themselves to be helpless or lacking strength, rather they admit to having varied capabilities at different times and places based on the activity at hand. They were also able to acknowledge and appreciate the varied capabilities found in others, and the existed similarities, stressing cooperation and interdependence as ways to get things done. Since this school involves children of varied age categories, it's obvious that their varied capabilities are also influenced by their age, and not only their functional conditions (Uprichard 2008). For example, there some activities which can be done by a child aged 12 which can't be done by a child aged 7 years. According to Adolfsson (2011), activities in preschool and school are not only academic, they also include mobility, self care, interpersonal interactions, problem solving, decision making and planning. Self care, being part and parcel of the children's everyday life at Mafanikio, involves a series of actions which call for varied capabilities and thus create conditions for participation and cooperation to get things done.

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[8] Washing is done by hand since the school has no washing machines.

Self care, functioning and capabilities

However, even though helping each other seems to be useful in making things easier among the pupils at this school, it doesn't seem a reliable way to accomplish all of the children's everyday life activities and demands. Interdependence and cooperation among the children can be situational and contextual based. This is what I observed one day during my fieldwork at this school:

It was around 11am, and I was sitting in an open space facing standard one's classroom. Two pupils came out of this class, one sitting in a wheelchair while the other pushed him and they were heading for the dormitory. I followed them, as I wanted to know what would happen. The one who was pushing the wheelchair informed me that the boy in the wheelchair had been told by the teacher to go back to take shower since he appeared to be unclean and smelled of urine. After they approached the dormitory the other pupil left for his classroom, leaving the pupil in a wheelchair with a caretaker, Yassinta, to help him clean himself. Yassinta stopped the cleaning work she was doing, and instead helped this child with the activities of taking a shower, dressing and washing his wheelchair. She moved the wheelchair in the sun to dry. When I asked her how often they have to help the pupils with personal cleanliness, she said:

> Yassinta - We don't have the responsibility of helping the children with personal cleanness such as that of taking shower. We can help them with washing their clothes those in standard one up to three and cleaning their dormitories in week days. However, majority of the standard one and two face a lot of problems in doing personal cleanness since they are still small to do it by themselves especially by considering they are disabled.

I then asked her how she found the activity of helping each other, which is carried out by the pupils themselves. She commented that:

> Yassinta - You know the issue of getting assisted by fellow pupils is not very much reliable as it depends on the willingness, commitment and capabilities of the one who is going to help you. So you can find these children are clean in some days and in some days they are very unclean. Since myself I have a small child at home, I feel bad

when I see them being very unclean. So I used to help them as I feel doing it as a mother just as I do to my child.

Performance and the ability to participate in different actions and activities improves with time (Hart 1992; Uprichard 2008; Rosenbaum and Gorter 2011). Likewise, the ability to take part in different actions and activities may be highly dependent. Adolfsson (2013:195) argues that children's participation in everyday life situations is largely dependent on physical, social and attitudinal factors in the environment in addition to individual factors such as bodily functions and the execution of tasks. Adolfsson (2011:34) considers everyday life situations to be episodes that occur regularly in the natural environments where the children usually spends time, and it including actions with different levels of complexity, context specificity and impacts on development and child functioning. Adolfsson (2011) uses the example of the action of dressing to highlight the series of actions which are involved, which include reaching, holding, grasping, buttoning, choosing appropriate clothes, putting them on in a sequence, and looking in the mirror to adjust the clothing. We can use Adolfsson's example and relate it to the activity of taking a shower which also involves a series of actions such as undressing, accessing the bathroom, turning on the water, using soap and a wash cloth, cleaning the body, rinsing, and using a towel to dry the body. All these actions demand the child exhibit a range of functional skills in order to accomplish them.

According to (Adolfsson 2011), functional aspects encompass how children use their individual resources and how involved they are in the contexts where they usually spend their time. In this case, functioning may be situational and contextual based. In the ICF-CY, function belongs in the category of 'activity and participation'. However, participation and activity execution may take place within different contexts and may also depend on what is to be done, when, how and with whom (Cornwall 2008; Tesoriero 2010). It is clear that conditions for participation in everyday living differ between children with and without disabilities. Likewise, participation in undertaking activities of self care may differ as well among the disabled children themselves, depending on type of impairment, age, and contextual conditions.

As Rosenbaum and Gorter (2011) pointed out, the family represents the essential environment for children. Families are expected to offer care, support, and protection to their children, especially when they are very young. However, from the experience learned from the children in this school we can argue that families do not always become the central contextual factor in the life of their children. The role of a family to a child may also depend on time, environment, age, and the (dis)abilities of the child. For example, the children in this school had to leave their families at their young age and stay in a boarding school for almost seven years, meeting their families only very occasionally. In this case, who offers the central context to these children when they are at school? Being far from their parents, having some functional limitations in carrying out some activities, and failing to get self care support with respect to functional conditions and age, poses some challenges to the children's self care, which is a necessary activity in their everyday lives. However, the need for self care, the condition of having some functional limitations and the situation of being far from home and family can also be a turning point as they realize their strengths and sense of agency. This may come about as they develop mechanisms for responding to the everyday needs and demands of the school situation, which includes the absence of their parents and families. It opens the room for the growth of self autonomy as the children learn to be independent. It also influences the conditions needed for participation, mutual support, and community development, as the children develop a sense of togetherness and learn to cooperate for reasons of self-interest (McMillan and Chavis 1986; Hart 1992; Percy-Smith and Thomas 2010; Tesoriero 2010).

Everyday living in a boarding school – learning to live together

We should note that living in a boarding school involves more than having accommodation at a school, and attending class sessions and participating in activities taking place in that particular school. Living in a boarding school encompasses learning, knowing, adapting to the environment and understanding others who you interact with in everyday living. Likewise, learning to live together involves the ability to discover others, learning about their behaviours, emotions and reactions, and understanding

oneself in relation to others (Delors 1996; Goffman 2010). Learning to live together is one of UNESCO's pillars of learning, which demands pupils, to discover others and themselves so as to manage to work together toward common objectives in a cooperative way (Delors 1996; Nan-Zhao 2006). Since learning is a process, then living together becomes a part of that process, one which is done day after day. This is what Joyce, a standard six pupil informed me with regard to learning to live with other children:

Joyce - I remember when I arrived in this school I knew nothing about the routines of here. I was welcomed by one sister who was in standard five by that time. She assisted me with my luggage and accompanied me to the dormitory. After we had chatted shortly she asked me if I would like to be her school young sister. I just accepted even without knowing what was next. Other days she told me if you have dirty clothes you can just leave them on your bed then I can wash for you after class hours. She also visited me in the dormitory during free times and even when I felt sick she used to bring me food from our school kitchen.

From this script we can see that Joyce's school sister started to show her what being a sister entailed. For her, taking the position of a sister had to do with keeping close contact, showing care and being there for better or for worse. For Joyce, this was a learning period. She had to learn what it meant to have a school sister, and also what it meant to be a young sister to someone else. However, she added that after she had became familiar with the school environment she was able to understand the wider issue of sisterhood, and the varied relationships which existed among the pupils. She added;:

Joyce - As I got accustomed to the school environment I realized that there were many pupils who had their school sisters. Thus, I took it as a routine set by the pupils themselves. However, later I came to realize that there were some pupils who had no school sisters as well. But personally I enjoyed the situation of having a school sister. And therefore, when I reached standard five I decided to have a young sister as well.

Learning to live together may also involve observing, assessing, experiencing, integrating and responding to different situations and states of affairs. It opens the room for interactions, communications, information sharing, and so forth. Non verbal communications such as feeling, observing, seeing listening etc, also play a major part in the procedure of getting to know others (Goffman 1959; Goffman 2010). From this view,

living together not only provides space where pupils can get to know each other but also opens up room for them to create the mechanisms and conditions needed for cooperation and participation in everyday living based on how they have understood each other and the situation at hand.

With respect to what Joyce said above, there were also some pupils who had no school sisters. Among those that I managed to talk with, varied reasons were given for this. Reasons included that some of the school sisters were too authoritative and controlling. Likewise, some considered school sisters to be more benefits oriented and that they selected the young ones who seemed to be economically better off or those who were often visited by their parents or relatives since they knew they could share what they brought to them. For them, not having a school sister was a better option than having one. In this case, it can be seen that children are capable of making autonomous decisions if they are left to evaluate the situation based on their own understanding. McNaughton, Hughes et al (2007) argue that young children have their own ideas, values, and understandings of themselves and the world, and that they can share their views as to why they opt for certain actions or relations and not others. On the other hand, the action of some children who opted not to have a school sister can also be understood in terms of discrimination, marginalization and exclusion, none of which are easy topics for children to discuss with a researcher. We should consider that the children in this school have different types and degrees of disability which make their capabilities, actions, appearance, neatness, etc different from one another. Thus, having a certain type of disability may act as a facilitator or an obstacle in interactions and relationships, including that of the school sister. For example, having an abnormally big head, salivating or being ugly and smelly may act as reasons for avoiding a person (Goffman 1963; Douglas 1966; Lupton 1999).

On the other hand, the action of some of the children who opt to take care of and establish friendships with the younger ones, while others decide not to, may indicate children's ability to make rational choices based on expected rewards. According to Bauman and May (2001:63) a rational action is characterized by a conscious choice being

made from among several alternative courses of action oriented toward the achievement of an end. In this respect, having a school sister or not is a matter of making a rational decision after first weighing out the costs and benefits of this. Blanchet-Cohen (2008) contends that children are, and must be seen as, active in the construction and determination of their own social lives, the lives of those around them and the societies in which they live. Living together may entail more than forming communications, interactions, friendships or sharing custody. Living together also has to do with understanding each other and being there for each other for better or for worse.

Living together- Sharing accommodation

Photo showing the arrangement of beds in a dormitory

In the sharing of accommodation, the arrangement of beds, the open space in the dormitory, the location of the bathrooms and the sleeping schedule may all influence the relationships and interactions formed among the pupils day after day. Accommodation sharing may open up a space for discovering more about others and may entail understanding their needs, discovering their strengths, learning about their emotions, and perhaps being able to tolerate and respond to their changing demands, behaviors or emotions. The condition of sharing accommodation provides an opportunity for the

children to know and understand each other better compared to the opportunities found in sharing class sessions or meeting in the playing ground. It is obvious that accommodation settings provide the space for the actions and interactions of everyday livings to take place, for example, self care. The activities of washing, personal cleanliness, dressing, making the bed etc., which mostly take place in the dormitories, not only constitute everyday living but also enable the pupils to understand the strengths and demands of each other better, influencing the conditions for participation and cooperation in order to enhance their overall sense of living.

For example, one morning I visited one of the boys' dormitories and found the pupils still preparing for school. In short, the pupils were busy. Some were putting on their shoes, others were making their beds, and those who used prosthetic legs were getting assisted to put them on. There was also one pupil who used a back support belt and he was being assisted to put it on. The one who provided assistance had two hands but a prosthetic for one of his legs. This was interesting to me as I learned how the pupils cooperated to get things done. Indeed, performance improves with practice(Rosenbaum and Gorter 2011). Having some responsibilities which they have to fulfill in their everyday lives, could be seen to provide the opportunity for them to learn and develop skills in helping themselves. Rosenbaum and Gorter (2011), assert that children first learn to do things in their own way and then (maybe) develop good skills in those activities. Disabled children, just like their non-disabled peers, have the ability to exchange experiences with others, develop skills and take some initiatives to contribute to their everyday lives. Moreover, apart from learning to live together, accommodation sharing provides the space for showing that they care for each other, can develop responsibility in helping each other, and use their abilities to enhance their everyday living. It also provided an opportunity for them to realize their agency. Agency is a feature in all human beings and the realization of agency is dependent on interaction with other people (Olli, Vehkakoski et al. 2012).

Living together – caring and sharing

One evening after classes had ended, I visited the girls' dormitory. Outside the dormitory I found some girls sitting chatting, while others were washing clothes. They welcomed me and gave me a chair to sit on. I asked them which class were they in, and they told me they were from different classes: standard four, five and six. They seemed to be quite free with each other as they talked, and made some jokes freely. Upon making conversation with them, I asked how often they had to wash their clothes and how do they do it. One of them responded by saying they wash their clothes at the weekend and after class or whenever they find the need to do so. Another girl interrupted by saying not all can wash their clothes. There some pupils who are helped by others.

> *Violet - How is that organized?*
>
> *We know who needs help. So when you want to wash your clothes you can just ask her if she has some clothes for washing. If she has then you can just take them and wash together with yours. But sometimes you can find she has already got help from someone else so anyone can help her.*
>
> *Violet - So how do you arrange that? Do you wash to each other based on the classroom you belong?*
>
> *We don't care whether this is in standard four, five, six or seven. We just help each other. Even when one of us is sick we care for her by bringing her food if she can't go in the dining.*

Children are capable of understanding others and taking autonomous decisions based on their point of view. Living together involves knowing each other, as was previously pointed out (UNESCO ; Nan-Zhao 2006). The demands of everyday living and the contextual conditions therein may all contribute to the need to cooperate to make a living. Likewise, the contextual conditions and the demands of everyday living may necessitate conditions for participation, which (Tesoriero 2010) considers to be a process. Having to help each other with washing, care for each other in times of sickness, and support each other enhances living, stimulating the conditions for participation, although this may develop gradually. In addition, these processes may be important mechanisms for developing a strong feeling of belonging as these children become the most important

context (in terms of creating family like relationships) for each other (Rosenbaum and Gorter 2011). McMillan and Chavis (1986:5) argue that the *sense of belonging and identification* involves the feeling, belief, and expectation that one fits into a group and has a place there, a feeling of acceptance by a group, and a willingness to sacrifice for a group.

Friendship formation

From the beginning of the analytical discussion in this chapter we have seen that living in a boarding school has contributed to a number of the children's actions and activities that come to enhance their everyday living and learning. The children engage with the learning process in terms of carrying out different activities, adapting to school life, learning to live together, and developing their own mechanisms for the enhancement of their everyday lives. All these actions and conditions provide the opportunity for interactions, communications and participations among the pupils. Being able to interact and communicate may provide the chance of developing strong interpersonal relations, friendships and collective measures depending on how each have understood the other or based on a shared interest (Freire 1996; Nan-Zhao 2006). During the interview conversation, it was revealed that in the process of friendship formation the children had different reasons and expectations for choosing their friends. Their friendships had some grounds and they didnt just happen. The ensuing conditions, including their disability, and the responsibility of self-care, influenced how they selected and created friendships amongst themselves. This is how Jonathan, a standard six pupil, explained it:

Violet - What are the conditions for your friendship?

Jonathan - Here the conditions of our friendships are very diverse. Some create friends based on what they are expecting from them such as financial support, physical help or support on lessons/education. For example if a pupil is visited often it becomes easy for him/her to get many friends because she/he tends to be better off economically. Myself I have friends for education support, friends to play with and a friend for helping in physical activities. But sometimes most of the friendships develop based on age. For example, the young pupils may develop friendships with their fellow young pupils.

Children are considered to be competent actors who have the capacity and ability to make decisions and take actions on things that affect their lives. They tend to develop competence and abilities when they are exposed to different environments and learn new skills in response to the demands of an existing context (Masten and Coatsworth 1998). As social actors who are capable of creating and communicating their views concerning their everyday lives to those around them, they are able to observe and assess actions and situations and give judgment and decisions based on their understandings. Living together provides them the ability to interact and understand each other, although it doesn't necessarily determine the conditions for their friendships and ensure cooperation. The condition of living together instead provides them with the chance to know each other better and that has become the basis for their decisions regarding friendship formation and cooperation. Moreover, being able to understand oneself and others are important skills for a child, that is, to know when, where and how to respond in different situations and actions when interacting with others.

In the above quote, Jonathan mentioned different grounds for the pupils' friendships, which were mostly influenced by the demands created by their daily school life. The demands of self care such as washing, cleaning, dressing, etc and the academic responsibilities generated by being in a school environment such as doing exercises, homework, preparing for exams and so forth, impacted significantly on their friendships and relationships. Privilege and power follows prestige. Being bright in the class, having the ability to perform some tasks and being better off financially all count as favorable attributes in terms of enhancing living and contributing to friendship formation among the pupils. From Rosenbaum and Gorter's (2011) perspective, friendship has to do with having *fun*. They stress making quality relationships rather than a number of relationships. On the other hand, however, the children consider friendship as to do with fulfilling expectations which contribute to learning and getting things done at school. Apart from having fun, the children have to consider the demands created by their everyday life at school such as self care and learning and making decisions. In this case, making a number of relationships in order to fulfill the demands of everyday living and get things done may sound more important than having quality relationships. Bauman

and May (2001:61-62) contend that in choosing our courses of actions through conscious and rational deliberation, we also anticipate their probable outcomes. Having some demands and responsibilities to fulfill necessitate taking decisions based on the current situation, while at the same time considering the expected outcomes.

Function, fitness and interpersonal relations (belonging, community)

On the other hand, enjoying some advantages based on economic status, functional ability or academic performance may lead to manipulation of the relations among the pupils in the name of friendship. Power can be used to achieve both positive and negative ends (Dominelli 2002). Having more resources such as money, being bright in class or having only a mild disability may give a child power and a wider range of choice when it comes to friendship formation. Power is an enabler, and the more power people have, the wider their range of choices (Bauman and May 2001; Dominelli 2002). To have power is to be able to act more freely, while being relatively less powerful, or even powerless, means having that freedom limited by decisions made by others more capable of determining our actions (Bauman and May 2001:62-63). In this case, a child who selects a friend who is more privileged than him/herself based on academic performance, ability or economic reasons, may find him/herself living with the values and conditions set by his/her fellow, thus affecting his/her ability to make autonomous decisions. However, the ability to respond differently in relationship formation reflects children's understanding of themselves and others and their sense of agency, in terms of making the decisions that enhance their everyday lives at school.

On the other hand, the children were able to recognize that there was a mixture of different abilities around them, which they claimed did influence their relationships, both amongst themselves and with their teachers and caretakers.

Violet - Is there a disability which is more valued than the other and why?

Eliza - Yes that condition exists and it often happens depending on the existing situation. For example teachers and care takers prefer to send the pupils who are able to walk than those who sit in a wheel chair. That means the pupils who are able to walk are sent to do different things more often than those who sit in a wheelchair. And

because of that, the pupils who are able to go here and there quickly find themselves to be closer to teachers and caretakers than those who sit in a wheel chair or use crutches. So the children who are used mostly by teachers and caretakers are those with albinism or the ones who are able to walk. Even when it comes to friendship selection you can find the one who uses wheelchair have friendship with the one who doesn't use wheelchair because of assisting each other. But sometimes you will find those who are able to walk become friends of each other.

As was previously suggested, disability is a situated social phenomenon and children with an impairment may experience disability differently based on different factors. Having a similar impairment doesn't necessitate similar consequences(Rosenbaum and Gorter 2011). What Eliza (above) revealed is that, ability among the pupils is more measured on what they are able to do based on the demands created by the way of life at this school. There is a hierarchy of disabilities among the pupils and teachers prefer to have close contact with those who can do what they are asked to do quickly. Failure to meet some expectations put on them by the conditions of everyday life may become the reason they are treated or perceived differently. That is, it influences the development of *us* and *them* groups or the in- group and the out-group, whereby the in-group is more valued before the out-group (Bauman and May 2001). It is also claimed that there some expected ways of life and behaviors found in society, and that performing contrary to these might be the cause of marginalization, discrimination and exclusion (Goffman 1963; Bauman and May 2001).

On the other hand, having an impairment doesn't necessitate having disabilities because the disabilities may occur or be facilitated by personal factors or barriers found within a person's context (WHO 2007; Adolfsson 2011). In this sense, forming interpersonal relationships and having fun may be facilitated or hindered by the functional conditions of the child in relation to the contextual demands. As was pointed out earlier (WHO 2007), functioning and disability are dynamic interactions that occur between health conditions and contextual factors. However, teachers' and caretakers' lack of awareness and knowledge about disability and children's agency may lead to the suppression of that

agency, as they tend to underestimate the children's abilities and suppress the opportunities they have to try things out.

Social interaction, play – spare time

Play and leisure play a crucial part in everyday living among children. It is through play that children come together and participate to make their play meaningful. Hart (1992) argues that children should be allowed to play together in un-programmed ways in order to learn to cooperate and create communities themselves. Play may involve mobility, selecting the place to play, choosing the game, agreeing on the rules and conditions for the game, convincing each other to participate, and so forth. In this case, play is an activity which involves sequences of actions and thus requires varied functional skills.

A Photo showing children at Mafanikio during spare time

For example, during the free time you could see two or more children walking together from one setting to another or sitting in a group. Pupils using wheelchairs were assisted to move from one setting to another. When the children sat in an open space to play, they sat in a group. Those using wheelchairs were helped to move from his/her wheelchair to sit with others on the floor, and there were some who took off their prosthetic legs when they sat on the floor to play with the other children. All these were actions which took

place during play activity. Depending on age, play is characterized in different ways. Play is the most important occupation for young children but in proportion to the whole lifespan, it means those activities undertaken for their own sake beside the daily routines that occur such as waking up in the morning, brushing one's teeth, doing the dishes, washing and cleaning, or visiting relatives (Adolfsson 2011:37).

Apart from creating fun, the activity of play is considered to be among the ways in which children practice participating among themselves without the influence of adults (Chawla 2001). Participation has to do with being a part of the decision making process, being seen and heard. It also provides room to experience agency. Through participation, children get to know the varied needs and strengths of other people and learn to accommodate others. For example, selecting a game which can favor a child who sits in a wheelchair, a child who is able to walk, and another child who has had both hands amputated can illustrate a high degree of participation practice, which in most cases is underestimated by both the adults and the practitioners (Hart 1992; Ackermann, Feeny et al. 2003; Percy-Smith and Thomas 2010; Adolfsson 2011). Participation has to do with sharing the decisions which affect one's life, and the life of the community in which one lives (Hart 1992). Sharing involves influencing what needs to be done, when and how. During the interview with the children, the opportunity to play with each other was most frequently mentioned as one of the things that made them like this particular school.

Violet - What makes you like this school?

Jenifa - Personally what makes me like this school is that here I have met my fellows we laugh, play and we don't discriminate each other. We are free.

Salum made the same observation;

Salum - What makes me like this school is that here we feel to be in the same condition. We love and care for each other. For example when we play, everyone feels free and there is no need to think about your condition since we understand each other.

Play is mentioned as necessary for the growth of cognitive, social, linguistic, emotional and physical skills (Adolfsson 2011). However, the activity of play may be influenced by the child's condition of impairment, the existing environment or more personal factors such as the child's motivation to play. Rosenbaum and Gorter (2011:461) contend that children can demonstrate remarkable feats of physical and psychological achievement with more or fewer adaptations, and that emphasis should not be put on expecting them to do things 'normally'. Playing while crawling on the ground, and taking off prosthetic legs or arms in the playground, may seem to be very abnormal ways to conduct play, but since they have been selected by the children themselves as the right way to proceed and have fun then should be encouraged as they are processes which enable them to discover their own personal strengths.

Further, we have seen that the children consider themselves to be free with each other as they consider themselves as having the same conditions. The statement by Jenifa that stresses "here I have met *my fellows*" may indicate that the condition of being together as disabled may influence the development of a common identity. According to Dominelli (2002:40-41) identity formation involves an interaction with others to arrive at a statement of who each person is, both individually and collectively. She further claims that identity of the individual can be created, negotiated, recreated and renegotiated through social relations in which they both engage. The statements given above by Jenifa and Salum such as '*we are all the same', 'we don't discriminate each other', 'we understand each other'* etc highlight how identity formation may involve self differentiation and exclusion. Dominelli (2002:41) also adds that identity formation encompasses a process of separating or differentiating oneself from another or others, and is reliant on creating and maintain difference. In this case, social interaction through play and spare time leisure activities not only allow the children to have fun, but may also influence common identity formation among the children, which in some way may work for them as a resource or an obstacle, depending on the existing situation (Goffman 1963). However, identity is considered to be fluid and subject to change over time depending on different situations and contexts (Dominelli 2002). So saying, the identity

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which may be formed by these children is liable to change over time depending on the contextual conditions.

Closing remarks

From this chapter we have seen the children as agentic individuals who were able to take different strategies and develop different measures to enhance their everyday living experiences within this school, including developing interpersonal interactions and relationships. They engaged themselves in learning to do things on their own, including self care, helping each other, sharing and caring, forming friendships, playing together, and being there for each other. Moreover, we have seen the children being active in terms of learning to live together, learning about their strengths and capabilities and compensating each other as a way to make things possible within this boarding school environment. Through sharing, caring, and supporting each other the children ultimately feel empowered.

The next chapter intends to explore how the children enhance their academic achievements and learning outcomes within Mafanikio boarding school. However, there is a major interconnection between the first chapter and the following chapters since the study intends to understand the children in a collective sense.

CHAPTER 6 - How the children contribute to enhance their academic achievement and learning outcomes within Mafanikio boarding school

In this chapter, the analytical presentation focuses on an exploration of how the children contribute to enhance their academic achievement and learning outcomes within this particular boarding school. Education is considered to be a process of lifelong learning, with school acting as the context in which children learn not only the ‚'basics' but many of the values, behaviours and skills that will shape their adult future in the work place, at home and in society at large (UNICEF 1998:16; Nan-Zhao 2006). Taking into consideration the value and the influence of education to these children's lives and their future expectations, the discussion will explore what is done by the children themselves to enhance their learning and academic achievements. Likewise, the learning environment at school, and other factors which influence children's education and learning outcomes, shall be presented and explored.

Everyday living: schooldays –learning to know

During the school day children at Mafanikio have to participate in all activities and actions relating to their education and learning. They have to attend classroom sessions, participate in lessons, and do their exercises and homework. During classes, all the children sit in groups, and when I interviewed the teachers they claimed that this arrangement was made in order to make them help each other and develop a culture of teamwork. Teachers expected that through group work the children could help each other to understand the lessons, do the exercises together and be supportive of each other. However, when I interviewed the children they gave different perceptions about sitting in groups. Rather they claimed that not all of them benefited from that sort of arrangement. For example, the children who were slow learners didn't benefit much from the group and those who were bright found sitting in groups to be destructive to their concentration. Agnes, a standard three pupil, said:

Agnes - You know in the group you can find there are those who understand fast and those who are slow to understand. Those who understand fast sometimes they get tired of teaching others and they decide to work on their own. Or some can just allow you to copy what they have written without teaching you how they did it. Also you can find there some pupils who are not serious in the group. They like to talk, make noise and disturb others. That makes it difficult for those who want to work quietly.

Working in groups, though it might be helpful for some of the children, doesn't seem to work for all of them, as it poses some challenges to both those who are bright and those who are slow to learn. The former find being in groups to be destructive to their concentration, while the latter find working in groups to be less helpful to them as they fail to catch up with those who are bright. It would be unwise to assume that all children will experience equal level of participation when they are put in groups, for as argued by (Ackermann, Feeny et al. 2003). As members of a learning group, the children varied understandings, capabilities, interests, and so forth. That means, each pupil carries with him/her his/her personal perceptions, wishes, capabilities etc. which in some way influence how he/she will participate in learning (Hart 1992; Percy-Smith and Thomas 2010). Therefore, to assume that when they are put in groups these children will be able to work together at an equal level, may overlook their diverse capabilities and interests. Moreover, paying heed to differences such as slow learners and fast learners leads to discrimination and oppression, as the latter assume superiority over the former (Freire 1996; Dominelli 2002). It is possible to care for ones neighbor but these children still have the right to be educated based on their developmental level, abilities, and learning styles (UNICEF 2012). Ignoring the differences existing among these pupils can be considered a potential discrimination trap. Also, letting bright children teach the slow learners deprives them of their own learning i.e. they have to use the class-time for both themselves and their classmates. In this case, working in groups can be more useful when the arrangement considers issues of flexibility and the various capabilities of the class members.

However, the children acknowledged that they have developed their own ways of enhancing their learning, as Agnes adds:

Agnes - What we usually do is that when the teacher is not in the class you can just move to your friend in another group and do the work together. This is done by most of the pupils who find it difficult to work with others in the given group.

Children as social actors are capable of developing their own autonomous way of enhancing their learning based on existing situations. Learning to know encompasses learning how to learn (UNESCO). In this case, children's ability to develop different mechanisms by which to respond to academic demands and challenges, reflects their powers of critical thinking. Becoming critical leads to autonomy, and autonomy leads to empowerment which is achieved in a collective state (Ledwith and Springett 2010:19). Critical consciousness is the basis of autonomous learning (Freire 1996). For these children, being at this school without parents or relatives to support them in their learning i.e. helping them with exercises, homework, and learning to read and write, stimulates the condition for participating, which also creates hope out of hopelessness (Freire 2004; Ledwith and Springett 2010). For example, forced to think for themselves, they will also think of the alternatives available to enhance their learning process. This might include finding friends to work with or using their free time to undertake self study, indicating some level of critical reflection and transformative action, thus leading to praxis (Ledwith and Springett 2010). However, we should remember that some children were considered to be slow learners, and these might be among those who are left behind in the learning process. What do they do to enhance their learning? What is done by their teachers? This is to be analyzed below.

Everyday living at boarding school –learning to read and write

During the field work I participated in teaching in some of the classes. Upon working with the children I realized that some were unable to read and write. These included children in standards one, two and three. When I had an interview with some of the standard five pupils concerning this issue, they claimed that some children even reach standard seven without being able to read and write. However, they had divided insights upon what was the cause, and what should be done for those in this situation. Some children perceived the lack of progress of some pupils to be caused by their teachers, as

they tended to put little effort into helping those lagging behind. Some pupils blamed the pupils themselves thinking make little effort to learn to read and write:

> *Hassan - You can find there some pupils who reach standard seven without being able to read and write. This is because teachers make very little follow-ups in the classrooms. Once they identify a pupil who can't read and write they will give the task of teaching him/her to a fellow pupil. But after that they don't make follow-ups again to see if they keep on teaching each other or not! So the pupils will teach each other for sometimes and then stop after some days since there are no any follow-ups*

Teaching each other can be among the ways of helping the children learn to be supportive to each other. It can also enhance children's agency. A professional can give a child the responsibility of teaching something she/he already knows as a way to stimulates his/her agency as that role makes the child's strengths more visible (Olli, Vehkakoski et al. 2012). However, if it has to be done as a responsibility and not as a way to empower the children and stimulate their agency, it becomes more oppressive for the child, depriving them of a learning opportunity. Also, that action can be interpreted as avoidance of responsibility by the teacher, instead rendering them as unmotivated or uncommitted to the work of teaching.

On the other hand, some children considered other children's inability to read and write to be their own fault. They claimed that after class there is ample time to engage in different activities on their own. Thus, those unable to understand in the class could have used this time to learn from their peers who were able to understand.

> *Joyce - I think that is the problem of the pupil him/herself because we normally have a lot of time after class sessions and before sleeping time. So if you can't read you're supposed to ask your fellow who can to help you.*

It is claimed that, in most schools in Tanzania, teachers have no time to make critical follow-ups of how and what the children are learning. Instead, examinations and tests are used as the major way to measure children's ability in learning and understanding. Also, teachers are sometimes claimed as authoritative, the condition which make it difficult for

pupils/students to face them whenever they need assistance in learning or other issues (Malmberg and Sumra 1998; Wedgwood 2007). Joyce's comment above can be interpreted in several ways. First, teaching each other can be interpreted as among the ways selected by the pupils themselves to enhance learning and achieve their academic goals, irrespective of support from teachers. Second, her comment may indicate that children at this school have learned to take the initiative on issues concerning their welfare and learning as they found this to be the only way they can achieve their academic goals and learning. On the other hand, Joyce's statement suggests that those pupils who are unable to read and write could have used their peers during their free time to assist them to learn, indicating that, as conscious beings, children must learn to take responsibility by making good use of their social capital such as their ability to help each other (Freire 1996; Minkler and Wallerstein 2005). It may also mean that some pupils have understood their teachers' attitudes towards them, and that they have developed the mechanisms to respond to the situation, including using each other to enhance their achievements in learning and academics.

However, some teachers considered the condition of being slow to learn as resulting from the child's disability. Teachers considered that the problem was associated with the impairment and that they could do very little to change this situation. When I asked teacher Rehema how she would describe the pupils' academic progress in this school, she replied:

> *Rehema - First of all I can say majority of these children are slow learners compared with the normal children. For example, if you teach 2+2 you can find only few understands. So you have to repeat several times but still you will find among many only few keep on understanding. So, thinking that you can teach something and get them all understand is not possible. For a teacher if you teach and only half of the class understand it means you have failed and you have to repeat that lesson. But how many times do you have to repeat?*

> *So it reaches a point you teach and move forward without caring how many have understood. In normal schools, if you teach a lesson those who understand are many and those who don't understand are few and if they get some extra teachings they can also understand. But here is the opposite. When you teach few understands and majority doesn't understand.*

Violet - Why do you think they don't understand?

Rehema: I think their impairment have affected their brain as well. I think some of them after acquiring disability even their brain were affected.

Rehema's comments above could highlight that some teachers have developed negative attitudes concerning the learning abilities of some of these children. These kinds of attitudes could be among the reasons for them making such little effort to help those who are lagging behind, as was highlighted by Hassan. Teachers' negative attitudes about disabled children are mentioned as among the barriers facing most disabled children within different schools (Mkumbo 2008; Mbwilo, Smide et al. 2010).We should remember that learning to learn involves learning beyond educational skills. Being at this school these children use up a lot of energy in learning about their environment, learn to execute self care duties, clean their surroundings and to move around independently. Given this situation, it is possible that some of the pupils lack the energy to put up with both the practical and academic demands put on them by this school.

For example, if a child uses the first three years at the school to learn to take care of him/her self and undertake the necessary activities involved with this as well as having a severe disability, that child must start to lag very much behind in education. In this case, some children lagging behind in their learning might be there not because of their intellectual capabilities, but due to the fact that they use too much effort to get into strong positions of learning. On reflection, having to spend much of their time and energy on everyday living and then still have to fulfill the demands put on them by the school learning environment, they are likely to find themselves seriously lagging behind in terms of their education. We should consider that the experience of disability and health conditions in children and youth differs in nature, intensity and impact from those of adults (WHO 2007; Adolfsson 2011). That being the case, it becomes necessary to first explore all the conditions and situations which may affect the children in the process of learning before considering their intellectual capabilities as contributing to their poor performance. Olli, Vehkakoski et al (2012:7) argue that children should be regarded as individuals instead of looking at them as primarily coloured by his/her impairment or a

label attributed to him/her. Likewise, UNICEF (2012) stress that a child friendly-school is the one which promotes good quality teaching and learning processes with individualized instruction appropriate to each child's developmental level, abilities, and learning style, and using active, cooperative, and democratic learning tools.

On the other hand, the teachers' response might be pointing to the reality that children with disabilities often have different abilities compared to the non disabled, and that they need special considerations when it comes to education. If we refer to what UNICEF pointed out, whereby schools should be able to accommodate the diverse needs of children through individualized instruction appropriate to each child's developmental level, abilities and learning style, can we say that this is what is missing in this school, that this is the condition which causes the teacher to find their work so difficult and challenging?

Learning to learn: homework and self study

As a way to fulfill the school's academic demands, some children took different initiatives i.e. participation, cooperation, mutual support and empowerment to achieve their learning goals. During the evening, weekend and free time the children co-opted their class mates to assist them in doing their homework and lessons. When I had spoke with some of the standard two pupils concerning their homework and other lessons, they remarked:

> *We normally do our homework in the evening after class sessions. If it happens you don't understand the question you can ask your fellow in the same class incase he/she have understood it. But if it happens that even you're fellow can't do it then we used to find those who are in the upper classes and ask them to teach us.*

'Learning to know' involves thinking in a coherent and critical way (Nan-Zhao 2006). Teaching each other, doing homework with a fellow pupil or finding a friend who can be academically supportive can be considered to be among the critical measures taken to enhance learning among pupils (Freire 1996). Having responsibilities to fulfill such as

that of learning, these children engaged into dialogue which stimulated critical consciousness and led to the motivation for collective actions to take place, for example, helping each other in (Freire 1996; Ledwith and Springett 2010). However, being more focused in terms of learning and doing homework, may also have something to do with age and competence development. During my field work I realized there were some pupils who used most of their free time to go back to the classroom to do their homework and undertake some self study. During our interview, I realized that most of these children were from upper classes i.e. standard three and above. They claimed to have understood the importance of studying hard, realizing they were at school to study and not to play. However, they acknowledged that this way of thinking only started to develop as they ascended the education ladder, and became older. Juma, a standard five pupil, said:

> *Juma - When I was in standard one I didn't know the importance of school and I used most of the time playing. Even when my parents or relatives visited me I just cried and wanted to go back home with them. But when I reached standard three I started to realize that I was here to study and that I have to focus on academic issues*

Rose a standard three pupil commented:

> *Rose - For me I think when you're in standard one you don't know yet what you're supposed to do and that playing takes the lead. But as you keep on growing and ascending classes you start to realize that you're here to study and not to play.*

John, a standard six pupil, regarded himself as pretty stupid during those days in standard one:

> *John - When I was in standard one I was just stupid. When my parents visited me I just cried and wanted to go back home with them. But now I understand the meaning of school and thus I'm working hard on my lessons (John a standard six pupil).*

Education as a lifelong process is considered to take place throughout the life course. According to UNICEF (1998), education is one important context in which the capacity for self expression and other skills and behaviors required for participation in society are

learned (UNICEF 1998). As these children grow older, they tend to develop perceptions about their future life, and the importance of earning a living, colored by the conditions which influence their actions i.e. studying hard to pass their exams. The majority of these children come from poor families, and have parents without reliable incomes. In this case, performing well in education will enable them to contribute to their family income, and avoid becoming a burden. Ledwith and Springett (2010) argue that when we begin to see the world in different ways we change how we act in the world. Education helps pave the way to a successful and productive future, and it is an essential means of ending generational cycles of poverty (UNICEF 2010). Moreover, being able to participate to enhance the learning process creates hope for educational achievement. Education is a liberating process that teaches people to become critical and autonomous thinkers (Freire 1996). Education is also a social experience, through which children learn about themselves, develop interpersonal skills, and acquire basic knowledge and skills (Delors 1996:23). According to Freire (1996), it stimulates critical consciousness. Likewise, critical consciousness develops through growing older. For example, as they age, the children at this school develop some level of critical consciousness about learning and education, and from there try to develop different mechanisms to enhance their learning. These range from studying hard, helping each other with their homework and learning, to evaluating their past perceptions in education in relation to the present. Competency, ability and being responsible develop over time.

Everyday living –learning to be

Learning to *be* can be interpreted in one way as learning to be *human*, through the acquisition of knowledge, skills and values conducive to personality development in its intellectual, moral, cultural and physical dimensions (Nan-Zhao 2006:3). It can take place within a school and a non-school setting. Leaning to be as part of education involves developing critical thinking skills, and exercising independent judgment, as well as becoming personally committed and responsible. During the interview, Zawadi, a standard seven pupil, claimed that during her almost seven year stay in this school, she has learned many things not only based on academics but also concerning her perceptions and the way she relates to others.

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Zawadi - There is a very big difference for me being in this school academically, perceptions-wise, and age. Academically I have learned many things including reading, writing etc.

Also being in this school I have grown in age and as I keep on becoming older I have realized that even the responsibilities and how I relate with others especially the young ones changes. For example now I'm called 'sister' by those who are bellow my class and even sometimes I find myself supervising or sorting out different issues that needs my assistance.

According to Zawadi, her seven years stay in this school has been of importance not only with regard to academic issues, but also to the way she thinks and view things. She has realized that growing older also has to do with her changing responsibilities, how she relates to others, embraces authority and exerts her ability to make, influence and find solutions to issues that come her way. Based on Hart's (1992) ladder, children's participation increases as they ascend upwards on the ladder. As the children at the school grow older and wiser they tend to enlarge their context of participation i.e. becoming consultants to others. If we remind ourselves of the extract above, it is clear that Zawadi is proud of her status of being called a sister, and that she is happy to take the responsibilities accompanied by it. To be called a *sister* based on African culture goes along with respect, being trusted and taking responsibility. In this case, a *sister* is expected to differentiate herself from those below her age in terms of behavior, actions, perceptions etc. As well, a *sister* is expected to provide care, protection and find solutions to issues brought to her by the younger ones.

On the other hand, Rhoda, a standard five pupil, considered the activity of self care at this school to be among the methods which help them to become independent in the future.

Rodah - For example when you are told to wash your clothes or to make your bed is not that the care takers are humiliating you instead they are helping you to learn because you won't stay here forever you have to leave and stay somewhere else.

I find this interesting, not only in understanding the transitional life of being a child and the development of competence, but also in terms of how the children start to develop critical thinking skills, take responsibility and learn to *be* by assessing their past with respect to the current experiences, trying to link this with their future. This transition can be well understood based on what Uprichard (2008) termed 'children as being and becomings'. According to Uprichard (2008), this is a temporal and complementary transition which can be utilized to understand a child in his/her everyday realities in relation to the future experiences of becoming adult. He argues that in order to consider the temporality of the 'being' child alongside that of the 'becoming' child, we are required to consider the ontological nature of time and change in dynamic systems (Uprichard 2008). From the above, it is indicated that the children are themselves aware of the transitional nature of their lives, and that they sometimes look at their past in relation to their present time, evaluating themselves based on that. Learning as a lifelong process takes place in different ways, both formal and non-formal. In this case, the 'being and becoming' child's perspective can help us understand the everyday life of the children at this boarding school, as they learn to *be* pupils, children and future adults. If children are perceived as 'beings and becomings', then we might also say that they too are in the social processes of engagement that are based on past, present and future 'timescapes' (Uprichard 2008). This 'being and becoming' discourse extends the notion of agency offered by the singular 'being' discourse to consider the child as a social actor, constructing his or her everyday life and the world around him/her, both in the present and the future (Uprichard 2008:305-311).

However, it is not always the case that competency increases parallel with time and increased age. Likewise, not being competent in certain things doesn't necessarily indicate being incompetent. Instead, competence has to be considered as fluid and situational. Uprichard (2008:305) argues that competence can be facilitated or hindered depending on the social context. From this point of view, children and adults can be competent and incompetent depending on what they are faced with. For example, from the interviews presented earlier, we have seen that children acknowledge helping each other with different tasks including washing for some of them. As Hamis previously

suggested: *if you see your fellow is unable to do a certain thing you have to assist him/her. And if you will have deficit (mapungufu) to do a certain task the one who is around can assist you.* Hamis and the other pupils' comments suggest that being competent or incompetent tends to vary within a certain time frame and for specific tasks. Thus by recognizing the varied capabilities found among them, the children uncovered the skills of cooperation and 'being there for each other ', important conditions for making life livable within the school, since each of them can be competent and incompetent in certain circumstances. This can be regarded as learning to *be* stimulated by critical thinking as the children learn to complement each other and use their strengths to get things done. Moreover, we should note that children are vulnerable and competent, and that they need protection and the conditions to participate. In this case, their competence has to be analyzed in the light of present and forthcoming situations, as it will tend to vary across time and place.

Developing a sense of community- exercising agency

In community work we believe that community does not emerge from nowhere. There should be some grounds or reasons that give it meaning and sense of being a community. In particular, the children in the school under scrutiny share many things in relation to their environment, academic issues, social relations, etc. To some extent, such aspects make them a community of shared experiences. Sharing custody, helping each other in different activities of self care, participating in class sessions and their spare time, and taking the responsibility to care about one another, has created a strong sense of interdependence among the children, which may develop a feeling of community. McMillan and Chavis (1986:9) assert that the "sense of community is a feeling members have of belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and the group, and a shared faith that member's needs will be met through their commitment to be together".

However, being able to cooperate, share workloads and intermingle doesn't necessarily mean that things are okay. Instead, this could be one way of responding to the demands of everyday living so as to enhance life. Day (2006:1) claims that the essential meaning

of "community refers to those things which people have in common, which bind them together and give them a sense of belonging with one another". During the interview conversations, some children admitted to doing some actions which are restricted, based on school rules, without the knowledge of the administration or their teachers. They acknowledged having things like radios and mobile phones in their dormitories but they kept this their own secret as they are not allowed to have them. This is how they put it when I asked them what they do to make life more fulfilling within the school environment.

> *Violet - What do you do to make life more fulfilling for you within this compound?*
>
> *Lots of laughter*
>
> *John- Here we are restricted not do to many things for example, not to take food to the dormitory, not to have radio, mobile phones or to carry with us snacks or sweets when we are coming from holiday.*
>
> *Amina - If you will be found with a mobile phone or radio it will be taken and stored until the time of going home for holiday then is when you can get it back again. So some of us may come with radio or mobile phones and hide it without matron realizing that. We tend to keep the secret for each other and even we have told our parents not to mention if they have given their children a radio or mobile phone because based on school rules we are not allowed.*

The children mentioned acting against school rules to be among the ways whereby life is made happier within this school environment. This was admitted by some of the standard six pupils when I conducted a group interview with them during the second field visit. However, the response of laughter from these children can be interpreted in many ways; it may highlight that doing things which are not allowed is fun, or/ the laughter may indicate that the children are trying to deliver a message about how they have been able to play around with those in power by poking fun at the school structure. Laughing together as they did and making fun reduces frustration. In this case, playing around with the school rules may enable them to avoid frustration and instead make them feel empowered. When rules are so rigid, and regulations so clearly stipulated, they are easier for the children to subvert. The children are able to learn clearly what should be done,

and from there, try to make alternative ways. Goffman (2010) asserts that every species including humans have a way of monitoring their surroundings, and that things like sound, smell, sight, touch etc can be used to give a message about a situation, whether it needs a quick response or not. But as the individual becomes adapted to their surroundings, he/she gets used to some matters and develops coping behavior which makes them select which matters to give much attention to, and which ones to ignore (Goffman 2010:238-239). Scanning and monitoring are part and parcel of human life activities as they struggle to react appropriately to every situation (Goffman 2010). In this case, joking around with the school structure can be among those resulting from scanning and monitoring, as the children kept on being *on* and *off* guard.

On the other hand, playing around with school rules can indicate daring as the children try to take an element of pleasure out of a situation of risk. Lupton (1999:149-150) contends that people actively take risks for the excitement and sense of achievement that they bring with them. The central attraction of risk-taking lies in the courting of danger, and ensuing sense of achievement. It also breaks one's routine, albeit temporarily, and helps a person avoid a sense of boredom and predictability, and the dissatisfaction that may accompany these states. Can we say the children played around with the rules as a way to empower themselves? Tesoriero (2010:85) claims that empowerment aims at increasing power for the disadvantaged. As a way to empowerment, individuals or groups take the opportunity to take power into their hands, as they distribute power from the *haves* to the *have nots* and so on. Also, Ledwith and Springett (2010) consider participation as a form of empowerment, and that empowerment is closely tied to the process of becoming critical. Critical consciousness involves understanding the nature of power, and the way in which it permeates our lives. In this case, doing things which are against the rules may also be interpreted as consciously playing with power as the children try to test their own power against that of the school administration, which is also a risk activity. Taking risks can also be among the ways the children exercise agency as they transgress fear and consider risk activities to bring them a sense of excitement and achievement (Lupton 1999).

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However, it is important to note that all the activities taken by the children in this school, helping each other or playing around with the rules and protecting each other, includes important elements for developing sense of community. A sense of community can be understood as sharing, caring and protecting each other. It also has to do with rejecting oppressive decisions or developing mechanisms for rejecting decisions which do not favor the group. For example, developing collective measures of protecting each other i.e. keeping quiet about acts restricted by the administration, and making strategies to protect themselves against the school administration and teachers, can demonstrate a high degree of solidarity, which is best understood based on the perspective of 'a sense of community'.

Summing up the arguments

In this chapter I have tried to present what is done by the children as a way to enhance their learning and contribute to their academic achievement. We have seen that the children have developed different mechanisms and strategies as a way to respond to academic demands and enhance their learning. They have developed their own way of working with others in terms of doing exercises during class sessions, learning to help each other do their homework, and be generally supportive to each other in order to enhance learning. Moreover, we have seen that children, as 'social beings and becomings' learn to take responsibility as they age, and come to identify their future expectations. They are also able to assess their competence development. This is interesting as we learn how these children have been able to participate, develop critical consciousness and agentically contribute to their everyday learning and academic achievement. Also, through sharing, caring, and protecting each other, the children feel empowered, and this influences the development of sense of community. Therefore, with respect to what I have presented and discussed in this chapter, it is necessary to now move onto the next chapter which intends to analyze *how Mafanikio boarding school itself enables or constrains children's learning and academic achievement.*

CHAPTER 7- What does Mafanikio boarding school itself facilitates or hinder when it comes to learning and educational achievement?

With respect to the topic of study, this chapter presents the analytical discussions on what the boarding school by itself enables or constrains when it comes to learning and educational achievement. To start with, the chapter will look at the possibilities for education and learning enabled by Mafanikio boarding school, followed by a discussions of the constrains faced by the children as informed by the pupils, teachers and workers I met during my field work.

Education and learning possibilities for disabled children

During my interviews with the children, most of them considered the opportunity of studying at Mafanikio boarding school an important enabler of their access to education and other services. While some of the children informed me that they delayed starting school because of difficulties in being accepted by local/regular schools,[9] others who tried to seek a place at these schools claimed to have received negative replies i.e. disabled children have their own special schools. Likewise, the teachers and school workers considered Mafanikio boarding school to offer opportunities and services which could have been difficult for these children to access in regular schools, and even in their families.

Opportunity to gain an education

John, a standard six pupil, said that he delayed starting school, beginning in standard one at the age of thirteen after a long struggle to find a school which could accept him. He claimed to have tried to get admitted to a number of different schools located in his neighborhood over a period of several years, but with no success. For him, being at this boarding school was a great opportunity and academic enabler. When I asked him about

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[9]In this thesis, the term 'local/regular schools' is used to represent all the primary government owned schools found in the communities which are meant to provide education for all children.

how he feels being one of the disabled children studying at this boarding school, the conversation went as follows:

John - I find studying at this boarding school to be useful opportunity for me to get education. I remember I stayed at home for many years before I could get an admission to this school. My mother tried several times to find a place for me in the nearby schools but teachers couldn't accept me as they argued that I have to study in a special school. So my mother heard of this school through my aunt who lives in Dar es Salaam and started to make follow-ups until when I got the chance to come here.

Violet –Do you mean it was easy to get admission at this school compared to other main stream schools you had applied before?

John – No, Even after my mother had applied for me to study at this school, I had to stay at home for two more years before getting admission. Each time she was told there was no more vacant place for me to come to study. So I was very happy when the chance for me was found and that when I came here I just started to focus on studies as I considered myself to be lagging behind.

Violet – How old were you by the time you started standard one at this school?

John – I was thirteen years old

John sat in a wheelchair and his legs looked abnormally small and skinny. Because of his mobility impairment it wasn't easy for him to gain access to the regular schools. . From what he said previously, it is evident he considers the existence of this boarding school as an open door for him in terms of accessing education after the long experience of the rejections from the local/regular schools in his locality. However, an empirical study on education accessibility for disabled children in Tanzania by Mkumbo (2008) indicated that environmental and attitudinal barriers to educating disabled children are still found in most of the local /regular schools. For example, because of these, John could not find a place in any of the schools within his community, and instead needed to travel all the way from Tabora (in the western part of the country) to Dar es Salaam, more than 700 kilometers away. In this case, John has to stay away from home and his parents have to pay for his transport and related costs. On top of this, John has to spend many hours commuting, with the risks accompanying the reckless driving of those around him, the poor condition of the transport vessels and the poor road conditions. In this case, if the school environment is not made conducive enough to include the diverse needs of the

children they end up excluding some of them, adding an extra burden to the child and his/her family in the name of disability (UNICEF 2005; UNICEF 2010).

Based on the ICF framework, an individual's functioning and disability occurs in a context (WHO 2007; WHO 2011). For example, John's failure to find a place at one of the nearby schools may not necessarily result from the condition of his disability per-se but from the social, structural and environmental barriers found in his context. Disability is argued to be changeable, impacted by both intrinsic and extrinsic factors, and that a child with impairment may not always have participation restrictions in all everyday life situations (Adolfsson 2011). In this case, the structural conditions found in a particular place may relieve or add an extra burden to the disabled child and his/her family depending on how things are organized. Place matters in explaining any social phenomena (Gieryn 2000). The school, the community or country, through the implementation of social, political and administrative rules and regulations, are essential in determining the influence of disability on disabled children and their families. Having a system/government which does not offer any compensation or support with education, medication, care and the like for those who are disabled compel their parents to work extra hard to meet these needs. This situation has often led to these children being regarded as a burden on the families.

Moreover, the situation of John having to stay at home until the age of thirteen as he was unable to access education, raises the question as to the number of disabled children who are still struggling to access education countrywide. This may also mean that the six education goals of UNESO and WHO, particularly the one that ensures that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, will have access to, and complete, free and compulsory primary education of good quality, are far from being achieved, specifically in Tanzania (Bank 2009).

Convenient studying and living premises

Children at Mafanikio consider it easier to attend class sessions when the classrooms are located at their residence. The school accessibility commitment has reduced transport inconveniences to them and their parents, and now they don't have to think of waking up very early in the morning to scramble for buses in order to reach school. Also, the children mentioned the architectural accessibility of the buildings at this school, which have made it easier for them to move freely to different places within the school. This has meant a removal of the environmental barriers which they could have faced if they had to study in day schools. Eliza, a standard three pupil, says:

> *Eliza - The boarding school has made it easier for me to attend in the classes easily. If it was a day school, it means that I must be brought to and from school every day. For me I have only one brother who could do that and unfortunately he is at school in another region. So I think it could have been impossible for me to study in a day school.*

Rehema, one of the standard five pupils, made the same observations:

> *Rehema - You know, many of the local schools are day schools and that children have to go every day. For me I can't cross the road or take a bus alone. It means my parents have to take me to and from school every day due to transport problems. This could have caused a lot of expenses to my parents and also disturb their working time.*

Amina, a standard three pupil, commented:

> *Amina - Most of the schools which I had sought a place I was told that disabled children have their own schools so they can't accept me. Among the reasons given was that they had no helping facilities such as wheelchairs and even the environment was not conducive for the disabled children. But here the school environment has been very conducive for me since the ways are accessible compared to the ways at home or local schools.*

Lack of accessible and reliable transportation to and from schools, negative attitudes of some of the teachers as well as architectural and physical barriers are mentioned among the main constraints to education facing most of disabled children worldwide (Elwan

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1999; UNICEF 2005; UNICEF 2009) and Tanzania in particular. From the findings, it is evident that the children I interviewed considered boarding school a relief from the difficulties they had encountered in accessing education. From their comments, we become aware that not only the environmental conditions of the school matter, but also the school's accessibility, the availability of transport to and from the school, the infrastructural conditions, the existing rules and regulations which guide the use of roads, public transport etc. For example, Eliza said if she had to study in a day school she would have needed to be taken to and from that school every day. Likewise, Rehema was in a similar situation when she said that it would have been difficult for her to take a bus or cross the road alone. From what they have said, it can be argued that the difficulties the children face in taking public transport or crossing the road do not necessarily result from their condition of disability, but rather from the poor transport systems in the country, and other conditions which do not take into account the needs of people with disabilities. In this case, access to education for children with disabilities needs to be looked at in a broader sense, including the barriers found in the family, community, and within the school context. According to UNICEF (2010), educational environments must be safe, healthy and protective, endowed with trained teachers, adequate resources and appropriate physical, emotional and social conditions for learning.

Moreover, we have seen that some children who tried to find a place at a local school were given negative replies such as *disabled children have their own special schools*. Even though lack of assistive devices and poor environmental condition were mentioned as the main reasons for not accepting them, these kind of answers can be interpreted in several ways. First, such a response may highlight the lack of willingness to include disabled children in mainstream schools. Second, it can indicate the teachers' unpreparedness to take responsibility in terms of having disabled children in the school alongside the non-disabled. Third, it can indicate lack of awareness by the contemporary campaigns that promote inclusive education, to which Tanzania is among its signatories through the Salamanca Statement and Framework (1994). Although this study did not involve teachers from local/regular schools, and this analysis is based on comments from the children, the findings by Mkumbo (2008:14) indicate that some regular

schoolteachers are not supportive of mixing disabled and non-disabled children in regular schools for various reasons. Among the reasons they gave was that children with disabilities would cause a lot of disturbances to learning for the other children, and also demand a lot of time, since they would need extra attention. Others claimed that disabled children could not cope with the learning speed of non-disabled children because of the former being slow learners. For these reasons, some teachers considered having them in their classes as an extra challenge to their work. In this case, this boarding school has turned into a remedy for these children, providing them with the opportunity to access education, which could hardly be obtained in the regular schools.

Availability of basic services and learning life skills

When I conducted the interviews, the pupils, teachers and school administrator considered this school as supportive in many ways compared to what is found in local schools. This school provides material support such as food, clothes, wheelchairs, etc, services which are mentioned to be rarely found in local/regular schools. Irene, from standard one, said:

> *Irene - What I like in this school is that here we are provided with food, clothes and good upbringing. Our caretakers are relating to us just like our parents at home. Also here we are living together with love and peace.*

Apart from the services that they are provided with, the children appreciate the good upbringing they get at this school and claim that they relate to their caretakers just like their parents. From this point, we can learn that children always need to have their parents around, and that once they are far from their biological parents they tend to ascribe that responsibility to the ones who seem closest to them. As was discussed earlier, in the ICF framework, parents and families are termed as central contextual factors in their children's lives (WHO 2007). When children relate to their care takers as their parents, it can be in terms of care, protection, love, affection, guidance, advice etc. Talking from my own experience, most African parents, and Tanzanians in particular,

tend to be strict and authoritative with their children. They are the ones who decide most issues for their children, and the children have little room for negotiation on the decisions their parents take. Even though there has been a slight flexibility with more educated parents, particularly those who live in big cities, most decisions remain under the parents' control. This is because of the perceptions adults have about children, believing them to be vulnerable, in need of their parents' protection, and unable to make rational choices and decisions (Ackermann, Feeny et al. 2003; Percy-Smith and Thomas 2010; Adolfsson 2011). In this case, when the children admit that they relate to their caretakers just like their parents, this doesn't necessarily mean that their caregivers have been soft on them.

On the other hand, the children counted themselves as living together in love and peace, and that the opportunities offered by the school have brought them together. In other words, the children have developed a shared emotional connection which may be the result of their shared history, close interactions, shared experiences, relationships and so forth (McMillan and Chavis 1986; Ledwith and Springett 2010; Tesoriero 2010). As we have previously seen, the children in this school participate in many activities that contribute to their everyday lives, learning and education. In this respect, the school has facilitated the opportunity for them to learn extracurricular activities such as school rules, life skills such as self care, cooperation, keeping secrets for each other, playing around with the school rules, protecting each other, etc. All these conditions stimulate collective actions, critical consciousness, mutual support, collaboration and hope for the future (Freire 1996; Bracht 1999; Freire 2004; Minkler and Wallerstein 2005).

In terms of services, Faridah, one of the teachers also thinks that the pupils at this school benefit from the services they are provided with. Even though she acknowledged the insufficiency of these services, she also considered them to be much better than those they could have accessed at home.

Faridah – If you try to look deep inside you will realize that here they are getting better services compared to what they could get at home or in the local schools. Even though I can't say these services are enough but they are much better compared to

how it is in their family where they come from. Also the environment here is secured and that they are under good care and protection of the caretakers.

From what is presented by Faridah, the school teacher and the children above, we can say that this school has much to offer these children compared to other schools. However, this also raises some questions as to the conditions found in the regular schools or in the families of these children, if what are provided with by Mafanikio boarding school is so much better.

Availability of learning materials and rehabilitation services

John – Here we are provided with text books, pens and exercise books but in other local schools they don't even have enough books. Also in most of the local schools classes are overcrowded to the extent that it makes it difficult for the teachers to make follow-ups on the progress of the pupils.

Being provided with the necessary learning materials makes the children at this school better off compared with the non-disabled children at the local schools. As was discussed in chapter two, education in Tanzania faces many challenges ranging from overcrowded classrooms, a high ratio of students to teaching and learning materials, a high student to teacher ratio, lack of sufficient classrooms, toilets and classroom furniture to poor quality teaching and learning (Wedgwood 2005; Swarts, Mwiyeria et al. 2010). However, the condition is considered to be much worse for the children with disabilities as they experience barriers and constraints stemming from poor transport infrastructure particularly in the rural areas, the lack of trained teachers (both regular and special education teachers), the lack of specialized equipment and teaching/learning materials, and the negative attitudes of both teachers and community regarding disability (Karakoski and Ström 2005; Mkumbo 2008; National Bureau of Statistics 2008; Mbwilo, Smide et al. 2010). On top of that, other services such as rehabilitation are considered to be inaccessible to the majority of disabled children. The administrator at Mafanikio considered the availability of this service here to be a remedy to the Mafanikio pupils.

Deogratius - At Mafanikio we are providing rehabilitation services for example correcting a severe disability which may hinder a child from participating well in studies and other activities with others. Also here we have dispensary which provides medical services in case any child falls sick.

Rehabilitation services are considered to be inaccessible to the majority of children living in rural areas due to the lack of health care providers, the inability of parents to meet the service costs, the lack of public transportation to access services, and a lack of information concerning where to access these services (Cameron, Nixon et al. 2005). Being that this is the condition facing the majority of disabled children, the availability of this service at this school is seen as relief to them and their families.

To conclude, we can say opportunities for disabled children to access education is surrounded by many challenges and constraints. These are various and stem from different sources and grounds, ranging from personal to contextual, and to that of the impairment condition. In this case, Mafanikio, by specifically targeting children with physical disabilities, tries to provide a way into education by providing some services and possibilities which wouldn't be accessible or available in the local/regular schools. However, there is no prize that does not come at a price. Being at this school there other challenges these children have to face, and these also stem from various sources. As that is the case, the next part focuses on the analytical presentations and discussions of the challenges faced by the children studying at this particular school.

Constraints faced by the disabled children in this particular boarding school

Even though the children acknowledged benefiting in many ways from being at this school, they also claimed to be facing different challenges, stemming from various sources. The following analytical discussion will present and discuss these challenges in detail.

Constraining Rules and Regulations

The children claimed they were not allowed to carry things like mobile phones, radios, candy, chewing gum or any food related items during the school day or even during visits from their parents. Dorah, from standard five, argued that apart from the experience gained from living in a boarding school, she thinks that is more akin to living in a prison, finding there is not the freedom which was used to at home**.**

> *Dorah **-** Being at this school I have learned to live in a boarding school compared to how I used to live at home.*
>
> *Violet **-** What have you learned at this boarding school that is different from home?*
>
> *Dorah **-** When I'm at home I can decide to go anywhere to play with my friends but here you can't decide at anytime to leave let's say to take a walk outside the school. This is because at this school there some rules which restrict us such as where we can go when and for which reasons. Also we are not allowed to have radio, mobile phones or things like snacks. We are not allowed to bring with us even sweets when we are coming from home after holiday. This condition in some way makes us feel like we are in prison.*

From the above, we see that Dorah considers the school to be constraining her freedom, thus her comment about prison. However, the metaphorical use of the word 'prison' by the children to relate to the school can have many interpretations. As we know, prison is the place where prisoners are always under the order and restrictions of their masters. There are restricted movements within specific times and specific areas. Also the prisoners may be able to make few choices, few decisions, have no freedom of speech and perhaps no voice. However, the children argued they have made their own ways of responding to these constraints. For example, some of the children acknowledged that their peers kept mobile phones and radios in the dormitories without the knowledge of their matron. Acting against the given rules and regulations can be a risky decision. However, the action of children taking such risks by playing around with the administrative rules could be explained as one way of exercising agency and liberating oneself - at least temporally - from control and established order. Cooperating in doing risky activities together nurtures a spirit of togetherness as they combine it with the feeling of shared experiences. Moreover, acting against the given orders is a way of

exercising power *over,* which also carries with it the risk of being regarded as deviant and dangerous (Lupton 1999; Dominelli 2002).

From what Dorah said above, we can also see that the rules of the school constrain not only the children but their parents as well. A parent has to know that talking with his/her child may turn into a problem for the child if he/she is caught (by the matron) using a prohibited phone. In this case, a parent has to consider when to communicate with his/her child, defer to the conditions given by the child, and make sure that they play the game intelligently, so as not to miss out. Hollis (1994) argues that in order to understand people's actions we have to understand them within the agent/system relationship. For the individual as agent, their actions are shaped and influenced by the system in which they are the subjects. However, it is not only the structure that shapes the agent, but the agent may also shape and influence the structure. Fay (1996:65) argues that structure provides the conditions for the possibility of action, acting a guide for how actions are to be performed, but it is agents who produce and reproduce these actions by means of their activities. In this case, the agents (children) may play according to the rules of the game or alter the rules to suit their needs. However, some actions are only possible because they are enabled by certain social structures and constrained by others (Fay 1996). In this case, the strict rules of the school constrain some actions i.e. having a mobile phone, but also stimulate critical action and creativity, for example, hiding/keeping secrets and so forth (Freire 1996; Lupton 1999).

Lack of freedom of speech and influence on received services

The children appreciated some of the services they are provided with such as books, clothes and accommodation but they claimed to be unhappy with some others such as food and the lack of freedom to express their concerns to the administration.

Violet - How do you describe the school and the services you're provided with?

Ruth-On my side I find this school to have good environment and also we are provided with health services in case someone fall sick, accommodation, books, uniforms, etc.

however, I can't say these services are well covered. But personally I think food is a big problem.

Violet - What do you mean by saying food is a big problem?

Ruth - I mean in this school the food is not good in most of the times. Sometimes we are provided with food which is not well cooked. Also we are not getting varieties of food such as meat, fish or fruits and even the portions we get sometimes are too small.

Violet - Have you shared these concerns with the school administration?

Ruth –Previous, we used to have school baraza (meeting) where teachers and pupils could discuss different matters but nowadays it's no longer there. We used to present our different concerns and write down in small pieces of paper and give it to our representatives who could forward them to the teachers in case they were worried to speak it publicly. And if the concerns were directed to the care takers or school administration then teachers could inform them or if it concerned teachers then they used to provide feedback about the issue. However, the baraza was banned because onetime we complained about the services including the food we are provided with the condition which angered the administration. They considered that to be the plan made by the teachers to blame the administration through the pupils. So currently we have no anyway we can present our concerns.

Dissatisfaction with the food and an inability to change the situation were most frequently commented upon by the children and their teachers. Mwami, the teacher, said:

Mwami - I think the children accept the services which they are provided with though they seem to be unsatisfied with quality and how they are delivered. I say so because at one time we had a school baraza (meeting) and the pupils were able to present their concerns. They talked a lot of things including their dissatisfaction with the quality of food. That situation angered the school leaders as they translated it negatively and decided to prohibit it. They interpreted it as it was teachers who planted those words to the pupils. Even though there were some complains which concerned teachers as well, most of the concerns were directed to the organization.

Violet- What do you finds to be the reasons for the school administration to prohibit the school baraza?

Mwami- Mhhh! I think they know what they are doing. It can be possible that there are many things they don't like to be disclosed to the pupils and teachers and thus, the school meetings were threat to that

Violet - So how do you describe the freedom of speech for the pupils at this school?

Mwami –I can say the pupils at this school have no freedom to express themselves. I say so because currently the pupils have no anywhere to present their concerns as a group. For me I think the school meetings were useful for the pupils since they were not only for presenting problems but they also helped the children to build self confidence to speak in front of others

What was said by the pupils and their teachers can be interpreted in many ways. First, what the children said could indicate their dissatisfaction with what they are provided with in relation to what they expect. Second, the decision for banning the school meeting could indicate that the administration distrusts the teachers and pupils. Third, comments by pupils and teachers could indicate their lack of trust for the administration. Lastly, what was said generally could indicate the existence of a collaboration/communication gap between teachers, pupils and the administrative staff. However, these conditions can have implications, not only on the academic side of the pupils, but it can also influence their agency. Olli, Vehkakoski et al (2012:2-7) argue that it is not ideal for children to participate only when decisions are being taken about big issues, but also when deciding on small issues such as the menu at a child's institution. They add that other people's inability to understand a child's self expression or their unwillingness to let the child exert influence may restrict the child's agency from being realized. Moreover, denying children their freedom to express themselves is contrary to what is stressed by the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), who argue that learning environments must ensure children's rights are protected and their voices heard (UNICEF 2010). Freire (1996) argues that education should be the practice of freedom as opposed to the practice of domination. Denying children freedom of speech through dialogue risks banking. According to Freire (1996), banking concept of education doesn't engage students into critical thinking; instead, it treats them as passive recipients of information. Banking denies dialogue, treats students as objects of assistance, inhibits creativity, and domesticates the intentionality of consciousness by isolating consciousness from the world (Freire 1996:64).

Teachers' absenteeism and lack of follow-up

Teachers' absenteeism was also among the issues I noted during my fieldwork. Most of the time pupils were in the classes alone, making a noise without any teacher present, or without an assigned task. Among the classes which I taught were those with absent teachers. Being a participant observer in these classes, I also realized there were some children who couldn't read and write. These children were from standards one, two and three. I also noticed that some of their exercise books were marked with *ticks* which indicated *correct* even if what they had written was totally unclear. What made me look at their previous work, was that some of these children were very quick to bring their exercise books to me for marking whenever I provided a new question. However, what they wrote was totally different from the given task. Somehow I was caught in dilemma - whether should I give them a tick as the previous teachers had or should I indicate that what they had written was wrong. I decided to give them other simple exercises and spend some time trying to teach them, though that had very little effect as I needed more time and commitment.

During an interview conversation with the children they expressed their concern about the follow-up they have been receiving from their teachers. They counted poor attendance, insufficient number of teachers and lack of follow-up to be among the challenges which threatened their academic performance. Hassan, from standard six, said:

> *Hassan* **-** *This school has very few teachers. Also those who are available I feel like they're not committed to their work. You can find there some pupils who reach standard seven without being able to read and write. This is because teachers make very little follow-ups in the classrooms.*
>
> *Violet* **-** *How do you describe your teachers? Do they like their job?*
>
> *Agnes: I think not all teachers who like their job. There some teachers who teach just for the sake of teaching. There is one teacher who used to assign us tasks from the books but never instruct us how to do them. He just gives us the task of copying from the books, and when we are through he can give us the same tasks even if it is repetition. Even in marking he is not careful. You can find you get a tick where the answer is wrong and vice versa.*

However, even though it was clear to the teachers that some of the children were lagging behind, there were no any extra sessions or plans by the teachers to try and help these children. (Barnes and Mercer 2003; Priestley and Shah 2011) indicate that low expectations of schools for children with disabilities are among the reasons for low support and poor services in different special schools. Can this be the case with this school as well? What is said by Barnes and Priestley may be one of the causes, but surely not the only reason. The answer has instead also something to do with teachers' negative attitudes, poor collaboration between teachers and administration, and lack of motivation among the teachers, as analyzed under the subsequent subheadings.

Teachers' negative attitudes

Talking with the children, they presented their own concerns about the negative attitudes of some of their teachers, claiming that some of them use very daunting language when talking to them about education. Although they acknowledged they were encouraged to study hard by some of the teachers, they also pointed out that some of the teachers used harsh words. Here is what some of the pupils claimed;

> Baraka - *Most of the teachers always tell us to study hard and that if we fail our exams then there is no other alternatives for us. They tell us that our fellow non-disabled children can perform other jobs like puling carts and carrying baggage and get paid. How about us?*
>
> Halima – *Some of the teachers try to teach us nicely and they always encourage us to study hard so that we can pass our exams. But there some of them who tend to use very harsh words and tell us 'if you study hard or not that is your business, as at the end of the month my salary is there. If you will fail then you will join your fellow beggars in the street. I hope you have seen them'. Those words are very painful.*

The concerns raised by the children above highlight the tensions that they picked up from their teachers, as they were reminded of being different from their fellow non-disabled pupils, in terms of life-alternatives after school. That is, the children were reminded of their limited abilities at the same time as being asked to work hard in order to be able to compete at the same level as the nondisabled pupils. Though this could be one way of

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helping the children reflect upon their future expectations, it is an approach that may also be socially and psychologically destructive. Olli, Vehkakoski et al (2012:7) argue that children should be regarded primarily as individuals, rather than being perceived as a child through his/her impairment or other label attributed to him/her. Discriminating against children due to their impairments and learning capabilities reinforces a climate of harassment and constraints, which they should have left behind in their regular schools and communities. According to UNICEF (2010), schools should operate in the best interests of the child. Also, the learning environments must be a haven for children, where they can learn and grow, and run with innate respect for their identities and varied needs.

'If you study hard or not that is your business, as at the end of the month my salary is there'. This sounds to be a harsh and rude way of delivering a message. However, if we try to understand this statement from different vantage points, we can get different interpretations. It may mean the teachers wanted the children to know that they are responsible for studying hard for their own good, and that if they fail, the teachers are not the ones to be blamed. On top of that, teachers' negative words such as 'if you won't work hard, you will become a beggar' could be pointing to the reality of the situation, and not merely be expressing a negative attitude. If the teachers say only good words such as 'all of you will pass your exams', ' life is good in the future', etc then this might distort the reality for some of the children, as not all of them are going to have a good future, indeed some may have to face challenges such as that of becoming a beggar. Saying negative things to them becomes a challenge which makes them work hard as a way of showing the teachers that this will never happen to them. It may make each of them work harder so as to avoid being trapped in the situation painted by the teachers. In this case, negative or bad words are not always bad, but rather can be more reflective and touching, helping the children to think more critically about their futures.

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Constraints resulting from poor collaboration between the teachers and the school administration

At interview, the teachers claimed that they receive little cooperation from the school administration. They claimed that for them, being sent to work in this school by the government means the church is not ready to cooperate closely with them as it considers them to be government employees who have no any affiliation with the church. They consider this condition as having implications for the pupils' academic achievement and their everyday lives at the school, as this mindset hinders the administration from receiving input from teachers concerning the pupils.

> *Rose – (Teacher) What I see here is that there is no good link between the church and the teachers who are under the government. Here teachers are considered to be government workers and that they have no any relationship with the church which owns the school. Therefore, the church does things on its own way and the teachers too. Even if you try to give an advice on some issues you can find one side agrees and the other do not and the children end up missing important things. There is Swahili proverb which says "when two bulls fight the grass suffers".*

Also, a teacher named Alex, considered lack of motivation, lack of payment for extra teaching and lack of other means for extra income, to be among the major reasons that cause some teachers to ask to be transferred away from this school. He also mentioned teachers' failure to provide extra teaching for the pupils as among the consequences of the poor collaboration between the church and the teachers, as pointed out below:

> *Alex - I remember one time teachers suggested that the pupils needed extra teaching because the class time is short and there were many children who were lagging behind. The church people agreed but they were not ready to pay for that service. Do you think those teachers will be teaching without eating! At the end the children are the ones who suffer. We see they need extra teaching as there are many who are lagging behind but because there are no agreed strategies to do this then we are just pushing them! Another thing is that most of the teachers who are assigned to work here tend to ask for transfer after a short period. This is because of the condition of here that there is no motivation or any other means for extra income such as conducting small business. Also majority of the children are coming from the rural and that their parents are poor so even if you will ask them to pay for extra teaching where do they get the money?*

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As we have seen previously, the pupils complained that their teachers were absent from most of their sessions, and that they seemed to be unmotivated by their work. Likewise, some children complained of the teachers using harsh words when they were trying to get them to study harder. Do we think these kinds of reactions can be the consequences of lacking motivation and the low income which these teachers claimed to be facing? But whatever the reasons, these instances do impact upon the academic achievements and learning outcomes of the pupils, as they are the ones who suffer the consequences.

Constraints in accessing school, family poverty and related challenges

As was highlighted earlier, most of the children at this school come from rural areas, where the majority of the parents are considered to be poor. Parents have to provide the children's bus fare back to the school after the holidays, while the government provides the fare so they can return home. However, most of the pupils considered this routine to pose some challenges, in terms of reporting to school on time after their holiday. They claimed some parents fail to provide the fare on time, and some even fail to provide it at all, thus threatening their school accomplishments.

> Janet - *Another thing is many of us come from other regions and some parents can't pay for our fare. The government pays for one way ticket when we go for holiday and that parents have to pay for our return. Because of this some children return late to school and others don't come back at all.*
>
> *For example, there was a pupil who was from Mara region and he was very bright but his parents were poor. When we went home for holiday he failed to come back to finish his standard seven because his parents couldn't afford to pay for his fare. This was very sad for us and teachers as we all expected him to do well in his final exam. Teachers tried to contact his parents but they couldn't be reached.*

Even though this school provides accommodation and some other services, it tends to work out expensive when factoring in the cost of transporting the child from home to school. The majority of non-disabled children go to the local schools that are located within or close to their villages, and therefore don't incur the cost of bus fares. This is the case as they usually walk to and from school, if they live in a rural area, while those in the big cities can take public transport on a daily basis (although most of the time, public

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transport tends to be overcrowded and uncomfortable for children). In this respect, children with disabilities have to pay some extra costs such as that of having to travel many hours to school, particularly those from rural areas, while additionally, their parents have to pay for their bus fare, which tends to be expensive for some parents. Having the same type of disability doesn't necessitate having the same condition in terms of economic background, culture, religion, and so on. In this case, even though this school intends to include disabled children in education by specifically targeting children with physical disabilities, there were some children due to be excluded because of the financial constraints found in their families. Poverty is considered to be a big challenge to the families of the disabled and their children as disability tends to increase a family's expenditure, while reducing its opportunity for earning - as most of the time, they have to care for their disabled child/ren (UNICEF 2005). Also if the family is already poor due to a lack of education and employment, having a disabled child becomes a double blow, which affects the child and his/her family. Rank (1994) as cited by Dominelli (2002:124) argues that failure of children to achieve is attributable to parental poverty, as well as inadequate employment, lack of opportunities, and educational underperformance. This is to say, the economic condition and the educational level of the parents and families of the disabled child, are heavily implicated in the quality of care and the services received by the children in the family. Having a good education provides the possibility for a good job, and hence good economic possibilities for serving the family.

Concluding remarks

The findings in this chapter suggest that if properly run, boarding schools offer a potentially higher likelihood for increased learning possibilities and opportunities for disabled children than the regular/local schools. As we have seen, this boarding school has turned out to be an educational remedy for disabled children as it provides them with the opportunity for study which couldn't be found in regular schools. The school has also provided them with their basic needs, learning materials and rehabilitation services which they could hardly access in the regular schools. However, being at this school also includes some constraints, ranging from constraining rules and regulations, lack of

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freedom, negative attitudes from the teachers, low academic support, to those constraints that result from their family's economic conditions in supporting their school attendance. Despite these challenges however, the children at this school are active in taking action, and developing various mechanisms to help enhance their everyday lives. Getting the opportunity to study here, has turned this school experience into an important setting for them, one which fosters creativity, stimulates critical thinking and nurtures hope for the future.

Therefore, with respect to what has been presented and discussed in this chapter, it is important that I next present and discuss some specific case-related evidence on *how the children at Mafanikio boarding school conceive life after school with respect to future life possibilities, education and independent life.*

CHAPTER 8 – How do the children at Mafanikio boarding school conceive life after school with respect to future life possibilities, education and independent life?

This chapter presents analytical discussions on how the children at this school conceive life after school regarding future life possibilities and independent living. The empirical materials in this chapter were gathered through focus group discussions with some of the children from standards four to seven in order to capture their insights on education and their future life expectations. As children grow older, they tend to think and reflect on their futures. According to Rosenbaum and Gorther (2011), the future is what child development is all about. For example, attending school, learning to support each other, care for each other, learning life skills and so forth, not only enhance life for the children but also have a substantial influence on their life as 'prospective' adults. Therefore, I will start by presenting an analytical discussion as to how the children negotiate their future life expectations and possibilities for education, before ending end up by exploring how these children conceive the future in respect of establishing a family, gender roles and their condition of disability.

Future expectations with respect to education

I conducted focus group discussions with some of the standard four and five pupils seeking to learn about their future expectations with respect to education. Most of these children had different wishes and expectations concerning their future and education, as Pendo (12, std5) one of them informed me:

> Violet - *How are you prepared with life after your completion of school?*
>
> Pendo - *If God helps me finish standard seven and thereafter secondary education, then I will join college study. After that I will find a job and be able to help my parents.*

From this, it is evident that Pendo wishes to study beyond the primary and secondary education levels. She is striving for a chance to pursue a university degree. She also adds that after her university education she will find a job and support her parents. Pendo's

wish to support her parents didn't take me by surprise. It is very common for most Tanzanian children to develop ambitions to support their parents. This is probably because most children come from poor families and so see the economic hardship endured by their parents, thus developing some level of ambition to help them get out of that situation once they see there is a possibility of doing so. This experience suggests that often, our ambitions for future achievements are inspired by the challenges we encounter or by the possibilities we find. However, as I got to know Pendo better, it made me realize why she had a dream to support her parents. One of the things I came to know about her was that her disability happened at the age of six, when she used to accompany her mother to fetch water far from home. Unfortunately, one day she fell in a ditch and injured her pelvis. She was sent to the local dispensary but her condition became worse because the problem was not properly diagnosed. She was then referred her to a regional hospital where they detected the problem, but then she became weak from the waist downwards and now uses crutches.

Due to her disability and the non-supportive environmental conditions of most of the local schools, Pendo was unable to study locally. She was sent to Mafanikio boarding school after obtaining financial aid from an organization supporting people with disabilities. Her parents have no any reliable employment and both live rurally. Her mother is employed in a small retail shop for little payment. Her father works in a butcher's shop as a cleaner, and is compensated with a small portion of meat or sometimes a small amount of cash. With her condition, even if Pendo passes her standard seven examinations, she cannot go any further as the possibility of her parents paying for and supporting her through further education is almost impossible unless the organization continues its assistance or else other sources are sought. That is why her future is not only determined by her good performance but also by *God's help* to enable her to reach where she aspires. From Pendo's experience, we can learn that poverty lead to impairments and hardships, and it produces consequences that money could have ameliorated or prevented (Beresford 1996; UNICEF 2010). For example, a lack of water services within her home, a lack of paved walkways in her community and a lack of good health services nearby might all be sources of Pendo's impairment which perhaps could have been avoided.

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In addition, the economic situation of the family matters in determining the future achievement of the child. Being bright at school can be scuppered by a lack of financial support to achieve the necessary educational goals, thereby dragging a person into poverty. In this case, the future possibilities to education, particularly for a child with disabilities, may be highly influenced by the economic conditions of the parents and/or the economic and social security support available at his/her residence. Beresford (1996) argues that the creation of impairment and the impoverishment of disabled people cannot be understood in isolation from social, economic and political factors. Parents' economic conditions, the society's perceptions of disability, and the policies that govern the place/country, need to be explored in order to understand how they may contribute to the creation of impairments or vulnerabilities in people/children with disabilities. However, Pendo thinks critically about life and has developed some expectations for her future despite the challenges. This also denotes development of learning skills such as learning to *be,* stipulated by UNESCO. This is revealed when Pendo tries to think critically of how she can utilize education in response to the economic problems facing her family. Education liberates and can be used to fight poverty (UNESCO ; Freire 1996; Nan-Zhao 2006). According to Freire (1996:90), people as beings tend to reflect on their own situationality to the extent that they are challenged to act upon it. Reflection stimulates critical thinking whereby people develop tolerance and hope for the future (Freire 2004). From what Pendo expresses, we can also learn that the challenges she has faced in life haven't made her lose hope, instead, she is motivated to reflect and think critically of the possible alternatives to improve the situation. This can be understood as *critical hope* as termed by Freire (2004). He argues that we need critical hope the way a fish needs unpolluted water, and that without hope there is little we can do.

Education- Family expectations and future possibilities

In African countries and Tanzania in particular, the economic success of one child is perceived as the success of the parents and the whole family. Parents who live rurally, usually with no reliable income, gain hope whenever they see their children making some economic progress. They believe their success will make a way through for their young

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ones and the family in general. Whenever a child encounters some economic possibilities he/she firstly tends to think of his/her parents and the rest of his/her siblings. This has developed as a culture and children tend to learn it as they grow older. When I had group discussions with a few of the pupils from standards six and seven, some of them expressed their different concerns with respect to education, family expectations and future possibilities.

Flora (14, std6), expressed her ambition to support the education of her young sister and support her family.

> *Flora - After finishing this study I expect to join secondary education and after completion I will find a job as a part time teacher and bring my young sister to Dar es Salaam for schooling. I will also support my mother in-law.*
>
> *Violet: how old is your young sister and where is she?*
>
> *Flora - She is 7 years old and she lives in Tabora with my mother in law. Our parents died some few years ago.*

Musa (15, std7), also said:

> *Musa - Personally I thank God I'm getting education in this school and I pray that when I finish my standard seven I get a chance to continue with secondary education. There are many disabled children like me who are in the streets begging and that they do not have access to education as I do.*
>
> *My dream is to become a doctor.*

Flora is striving to achieve an ordinary secondary education. That is her future plan. Based on what she told me, it might seem that she is not interested in a university education. However, if we try to understand her future wishes concerning her family we can realize that waiting until she completes a university education and get a job might be too late for her young sister to also be educated. In this case, getting up to form four education assures her of the secondary certificate which she can use as a reference to find a teaching job, and thus support her young sister and her mother in-law. What we can learn from Flora's information is that some children perceive the future with the wish not only to support themselves, but also of being supportive to their families and relatives.

Having to look after young ones or paying their school fees is not perceived as merely the parents' responsibility, especially in poor rural families. In the family, everyone has to contribute to secure basic needs and cooperate to get things done. This is exercising agency as Flora tries to negotiate the pros and cons of further education, take into consideration the welfare of the whole family, and think of the alternatives of offering support to the family. This can also be considered as learning to be a responsible adult citizen as children gradually participate by taking on some of the adult responsibilities (Hart 1992; Nan-Zhao 2006).

Just like other children, those with disabilities have their dreams, hopes and ambitions for the future. Given the processes of being and becoming, they are also agents of their own adulthoods, and their agency exists both in the present and the future (Uprichard 2008). For example, Musa's comment highlights that he is aware that education is a key to avoiding poverty. He also added that a disability such as his (a mobility disability) is compatible with going to university and becoming a doctor. This is a competent, yet vulnerable actor, critically exercising agency. However, the opportunities available in the society, people's attitudes towards disability, the demands of life and the economic position of one's parents can be among the barriers faced by disabled children when looking to achieve their future expectations through education. Bauman and May (2001:18) assert that there some situations where our freedom to act is limited by circumstances over which we have no control, and thus having the ability to modify or change our skills is one thing while possessing the capability to reach the goals we seek is quite another.

On the other hand, Musa appreciated the chance he got to study and argued that there are some disabled children who were not able to access this opportunity. Poverty and parent's low expectations as to their children's contribution after education could be among the reasons some disabled children are missing out the opportunity for an education (Mittler 2004). It is claimed that education is a matter of priorities and that a child without disabilities is prioritized on the grounds that educating a disabled child is seen as a wasted investment. A study conducted in Tanzania by Al-Samarrai and

Peasgood (1998:396) indicated that within the family education can be viewed as both a consumption and a good investment. As an investment, parents educate their children to ensure that their offspring will be best placed to support them in the near future. In this case, achievement through education is seen not only as a way to individual success but also as a family success. However, the constraints found in the existing social and structural life of these children such as environmental barriers, lack of educational support, discrimination in education and employments are all more challenges to them for achieving a better life. These are also the conditions which could cause their parents to hesitate in supporting them, for they indicate that any investment for a future return as not being assured. Yeo and Moore (2003:573) point out that an early lack of investment in disabled children is not just a reflection of ignorance, but in the situation of poverty this can be considered as a rational decision.

Future education achievement and family economic conditions

Ali (16, std7) has an ambition to continue with further studies after he is done with his primary education. However, the economic conditions of his parents make him worried as to how far he can achieve his wishes.

> *Ali - After finishing standard seven I wish to be selected to join even a vocational education. However, the challenge which I see here is that even if I will pass my exams if my parents won't be able to pay for my school fees and other needs it means I won't be able to continue with studies. I may end up becoming a beggar the condition which is not good since not all people will be willing to help me. Others may insult me, beat me or give me nothing.*

> *Violet - Why do you find begging as an alternative if you won't be able to continue with further studies?*

> *Ali - You know if I won't be able to continue with school and find a job afterwards, it means I will depend on my parents for everything. But for how long will they keep on supporting me? You know in the family there are other children as well who also need support from my parents and not only me. So myself I have to find a way to support myself and reduce the burden to my parents.*

For Ali, performing well in his standard seven final exams will not guarantee him continuing with further education, this also to do with the economic conditions of his parents. His parents' inability to support him through further education due to poverty might become one of the reasons for him ending up living the vulnerable life of a beggar. Ali's comments reflect what is stated by the ICF-CY framework, whereby parents play an important role in their children's growth and development, and that due to the condition of dependence, children experience the consequences of disability differently than adults (WHO 2007; Rosenbaum and Gorter 2011). As an institution, the family is regarded as a source of stability and security to its members (Bauman and May 2001). In this case, the growth and wellbeing of a child is highly influenced by the economic, political, cultural or social position of his/her family. However, it is important to recognize that although poverty is widely experienced among disabled people, there are significant differences as to how it affects them at an individual level (Beresford 1996). These differences are well reflected by what was observed during the fieldwork.

During my fieldwork I noticed that at this school there was one pupil who was registered as a day student, and that he attended school on a daily as opposed to boarding basis. This child was in standard three (10 years) and sat in a wheelchair. In the morning he was brought to school in a private car and was collected in the evening after classes finished. He also had a personal assistant who took care of him throughout the day at school. He was pushed him to toilet, dining hall and other premises where the other children gathered. Although this child was disabled just like other children, he appeared to be better off than the others in many respects. The shoes he put on, the neatness of his uniform, the attention he received from his assistant and teachers clearly indicated that he came from a well off family. When I talked to his assistant he told me that he had been hired to take care of him. If this assistant could get the opportunity to continue with further education, he would have been in form two (secondary level). He told me that he got this job after he had completed his primary education. He had not been selected to join a government secondary school and his parents couldn't manage the cost of private schooling. If we try to make a relational analysis, then we can see that poverty is not an obstacle to educating this disabled child, but for his assistant poverty had become an

obstacle for continuing win further education despite having no condition of disability. Poverty can therefore be seen to affect both disabled and non- disabled children in different ways. However, poverty and disability are connected; being disabled while living in poverty adds more challenges to achieving in life, compared to the challenges encountered by the person who is poor but not disabled (Beresford 1996; Yeo 2001). As we have seen, even though this assistant was not able to continue with his secondary school education due to financial constraints in his family, he was able to find a job as an assistant to this disabled child.

However, returning to Ali, the interesting thing we can learn from him, is that, despite all the challenges he thinks he might face in the future; he has been capable of voicing different alternative ways of earning in the future, for example, begging if his parents are unable to support his further studies. He is aware of the challenges of becoming a beggar but he thinks begging can feature among the alternatives which can help him avoid becoming a burden to his parents. He also thinks of the other children in his family, and argues that he is not the only one who needs the support of his parents. This way of thinking can be understood as critical reflection based on Freire's (1996) pedagogy. As they grow up in this boarding school, the children also develop a number of critical reflections about life and future possibilities. Action and reflection occurs simultaneously (Freire 1996). It might sound strange for Ali to propose begging as an alternative to earning if he doesn't make it through to further education, especially considering the stigma and discrimination which most beggars face world-wide. But on the other hand, Ali could be referring to the reality whereby most of the disabled people in the country end up in begging as they experience very narrow opportunities for education and an independent life (TOMRIC 2000). Freire (1996) asserts that a critical analysis of reality may, however, reveal that a particular form of action is impossible or inappropriate in the present time; and that those who, through reflection, perceive the infeasibility or inappropriateness of one or another form of action (which should accordingly be postponed or substituted) cannot thereby be accused of inaction. Critical reflection is thus also action (Freire 1996:109).

Disability, future expectations and independent living

For a child with disabilities in Tanzania, their future life achievement is not conceivable beyond the possibilities found amongst their parents and relatives, the opportunities found in their community, and his/her condition of disability.

Amina (13 std6), expressed her worries of the future challenges if she has to live without her parents, especially considering she is disabled. She considers that her disability will make it challenging for her to gain help from her relatives if her parents are not there to support her.

> *Amina - Because of the condition of disability, it is very easy to be cared by my parents than step relatives. So if it happens that my parents die then it will be very difficult to find a relative to support me or stay with me compared to a non disabled child.*
>
> *Violet - why do you see the condition of disability as an obstacle for you to get support from relatives if your parents won't be there?*
>
> *Amina - You know for a person who is not your parent when he/she decide to stay with you often he/she will expect there some activities you can help him/her with. For example if he/she has a small business she/he will ask you to work there or if they have small children he/she will expect you can help with babysitting or help with the house chores. But if you have a disability which makes it difficult for you to do these kinds of activities then it becomes very difficult to find a relative who will be ready to take you as you become like a burden to him/her.*

Amina has a mobility disability and uses a wheelchair. Though she has been able to cooperate with other pupils in activities such as cleaning, washing and doing the chores, still is fearful when conceiving a future life that doesn't include her parents. She thinks her relatives won't be ready to have her live with them, as they think she will become a burden on the family rather than be helpful and get things done. This can be interpreted as the consequences of the negative attitudes and low expectations held by the disabled people themselves (Beresford 1996; Mittler 2004) as Amina fails to acknowledge her capabilities in terms of being able to carry out tasks of self-care, and help other pupils with washing. However, her comments do have a lot to say about the role of parents to

their children. Parents provide psychological and physical protection to their children and being sure of their presence makes the child feel psychologically protected (Bauman and May 2001; Rosenbaum and Gorter 2011). In this case, Amina might be concerned with not only how she can contribute if she has to live with her relatives, but also how she can be sure of being protected in hands that are different from those of her parents. On the other hand, a person with an impairment may become disabled when he/she fails to live up to the demands put on him/her by his/her contextual conditions and the demands of life. Bauman and May (2001) assert that how we act and see ourselves is informed by the expectations of the groups to which we belong. When the condition of disability interacts with other contextual factors it may lead to difficulties in achieving an independent life, as they tend to put constraints on pursuing some actions and activities that enable independent living. For example, being able to cope with school life but being worried about coping with family life in the future indicates varied contextual demands and their influence on disability (King, Rigby et al. 2013). There are some actions and demands which are put on a child within a school environment which can't be the same as those found at home or in the community. Also poverty, negative attitudes, low expectations and both structural and environmental barriers are among the obstacles that hinder people with impairments from pursuing a variety of activities that the non-disabled pursue, and this may have little to do with their impairment per se (Beresford 1996; Rosenbaum and Gorter 2011). For example, for a hand amputee, having a dishwasher or washing machine makes the lack of hands of less problematic compared to if he/she has the need to handwash the clothes or do the dishes. Similarly, disabilities tend to vary depending on the life situation facing a person with an impairment. It depends on the complexity or severity of the individual's shortcomings in interaction with barriers within his/her environment (Adolfsson 2011).

On the other hand, what Amina admitted above can be considered as an example of reflective thinking. Children with disabilities just like other children are concerned about their future life as future adults (Uprichard 2008). They have their wishes for the future, think of the possibilities and challenges, and try to find a way through by constructing different alternatives for future achievement. This is exercising agency, and also thinking

critically, as we can see when Amina tries to figure out the different alternatives for becoming an independent adult, and able to contribute to her family (Nan-Zhao 2006; Blanchet-Cohen 2008). According to Freire, reflection - true reflection - leads to action and that action will constitute an authentic praxis only if its consequences become the object of critical reflection (Freire 1996:48). People (children) as autonomous subjects, have the capacity to think for themselves, and through doing this they transcend their world and act to create it. The process of becoming critical is known as conscientization based on Freirian pedagogy. In the process of conscientization, Freire (1996) identified three interlinking levels: magical consciousness (people are passive and unquestioning about the injustices in their lives); naïve consciousness (people individualize their problems and often blame themselves); and critical consciousness (connections are made with the structural nature of discrimination) (Freire 1993a:109; Ledwith and Springett 2010). From what we have generally learned from the children in this boarding school we can say that they are in the process of conscientization and have been rotating through these three levels at various times. For example, Amina's comment above, denotes that in a way she blames her impairment as a hindrance for her taking responsibilities taken by the non-disabled but also at a certain point she blames the social and structural organization of life such as having no planned support and compensation for a disability, the condition which put all the responsibility of care and support onto the family.

However, Meekosha (2011) argues that there is a need for contextualizing disability in geopolitical terms since there is a clear difference between how the concept is conceptualized in Northern countries and those in the South. This can also be done at national, community and family level. The consequences resulting from the condition of impairment differs among people as they are highly dependent on other factors such as culture, gender, religion, class, social organization, and so forth. Dominelli (2002:23) argues that practitioners can avoid creating cardboard cut-outs to fit particular stereotypes by engaging with the complexities of both their own contexts and those of the individuals or groups with whom they are working. In other words, both the practitioners and the individuals (the children with disabilities) are surrounded by different contexts within

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different systems and structures, which in some way influence their situations or the course of actions and decisions they have taken.

Future expectations - establishing a family, gender roles and the condition of disability

Connell (2009:73) argues that when we look at a set of gender arrangements, whether the gender regime of an institution or the gender order of a whole society, we are basically looking at a set of relationships; i.e. ways that people, groups and organizations are connected and divided. As a set of relationships, there are always some demands, opportunities and expectations which are created, and which may influence the way people organize their everyday lives, form relations and interactions and think of future possibilities. During the interviews with the children, I found that some of them tried to conceive future life via their gender roles. This led to some of them worrying about whether they would be able to accomplish these roles, given with their disability conditions. Amanda (16, std7), was among the pupils who showed concerns about the challenges associated with a disabled girl getting married and being able to fulfill the responsibilities of a wife.

> *Amanda - The challenge which I see in the future as a girl is the ability to get married and establish a family. Because of my disability I think it won't be easy to find a man to marry me.*
>
> *Violet - Why do you see your disability condition as an obstacle?*
>
> *Amanda - You know because of our life situation, a woman is expected to take care of her husband, children and do the entire house work. So if you're disabled, a man can think you can't do all these works and not be ready to marry you.*

In most of the African cultures a woman is considered as the caretaker of the family and most of her responsibilities are based at home. As a wife and/ mother, she is expected to fulfill all the family responsibilities including taking care of all the family members, the house, and make sure things are in order. Since the entire range of household chores is done manually, for example, washing, doing the dishes and so on, being physically fit is very important. However, there has been a slight change in the responsibilities of women

in urban and rural areas, whereby most of the housework of those in urban areas is done by a house maid. This has mostly to do with the life style in these areas, where some women work in offices or run small businesses which leave little time for them to do the housework. It also has to do with the income level of a particular family, because of the financial implication of hiring a maid. In this case, Amanda's concern is not based on her disability condition per-se but the responsibilities which are put on her by her gender and her (in)ability to meet them. According to Connell (2009:74) people are held accountable for their gender conduct when they engage in much everyday conduct, ranging from conversations and housework to interaction styles and economic behavior. However, our gender practice is shaped by the gender order in which we find ourselves and we are not able to make it the way we like (Connell 2009).

Hassan (16, std7), has the same concerns about his future gender responsibilities along with his disability condition.

The challenges which I see in the future are associated with finding a job and support my family. As a father I am expected to be the bread winner of the family. Inability to find job due to disability is the most likely challenge to me in fulfilling my responsibilities as a husband and father. Also the possibility of getting a woman to get married to might be impossible because it won't be easy to find a woman who will truly love me with my poverty and disability. It could have been easier if at all I had money with disability or have no money but non-disabled.

Hassan's comment above indicates that his first concern is not his inability to establish a family due to his disability, rather he thinks the condition of being poor and disabled might hinder his marriage prospects. He is also not sure if he will manage to get a job to support his prospective family if he gets married. For him, it could have been easier to find a woman to marry him if he was wealthy and had a disability than to be both disabled and poor . His comment also implies that it is often difficult for men to perceive their future outside their expected roles and responsibilities as the heads and providers of the family. Based on functionalist analysis, the primary responsibility for breadwinning and instrumental leadership is allocated to men, while women assume the primary

responsibility for the family and take on the role of expressive leadership (Wallace and Wolf 2006:433). In the same vein, Connell (2009:83) argues that whenever we speak of a man or a woman we call into play a tremendous system of understandings, implications, overtones and illusions that have accumulated through our cultural history. In this case, Amina and Hassan's way of thinking could be reflecting the kind of social organization they are living in, which could be the result of location specific cultural beliefs and practices. Fay (1996:67-68) asserts that our culture and society continue to enable and constrain us, and that they shape our personal and social identities by selecting, mediating and preventing certain sorts of activities and outcomes. Even though there are diverse cultural practices in Tanzania, the belief in the woman as housewife and the man as the head and family provider remains dominant in all cultures and religions. With the influence of modernization and globalization, there have been some slight changes in gender roles where men and women, particularly those living in urban areas, collectively contribute to the family. However, a man is still expected to contribute a larger portion as compared to the woman, and if it happens that a woman earns more than her husband, then she turns into a threat to him, because this is likely to trigger an inferiority complex. Also, the man's position as household head and the final decision maker in the family, is prone to threat, especially by those having less income and expenditure decision power than the wife. So, Hassan's concern is based on how he can meet his future responsibilities as a man along with his disability.

If we relate what Amina informed us with Hassan's disposition, we learn that both men and women are enabled or constrained by their gender responsibilities in addition to their functional conditions. However, how, when and on what they are enabled or constrained might differ across cultures. For example, the African perception of a man as the family bread winner and a woman as a caretaker, has influenced not only the way both sexes conceive life, but also how they are prioritized by their families and communities in terms of access to opportunities such as education (Al-Samarrai and Peasgood 1998). Since men are the providers of the family, investing in a boy child's education has become prioritized compared to investing in a girl child. This is clearly reflected in Amina and Hassan's observations. As seen, Amina is not concerned with her inability to

make an earning if she gets married, but rather with her inability to fulfill her responsibilities as a wife. On the other hand, Hassan's concern is about earning and his ability to support a family. He considers a reliable income as an assurance for him getting married, an opportunity regarded as being close to impossible for someone who is both disabled and poor.

This experience suggests that being wealthy adds to the prestige and masculinity of an African man. Practice informs us that a man feels more confident before a woman if he has money while also being disabled, while for a woman, it is the opposite. Manbizo an artist with a physical disability presents this experience very well. As was reported by Mohamed (2013), Manbizo claimed that because of him being rich, many women, young and old one, used to seduce him, asking if he would marry them. He thought his status as a famous artist, along with his wealth, made him beloved by women despite his disability.[10] In this case, Manbizo tries to tell us that for him getting a woman to marry him is not a problem at all despite his disability, so long as he is wealthy. On the other hand, what Amina and Hassan observed, conversely suggests that children with a disability will conceive future life possibilities along their gender roles as constructed by their socio-cultural values and their functional condition. Being a woman or a man with a disability will mean facing diverse constraints due to the existing diversities in social constructions of gender roles. This becomes the grounds for the radical relativism perspective put forward by Ingstad and Whyte (1995:5-7) emphasizing the importance of exploring the kind of identities and values that emerge in any given social context. These have a lot to say about an individual and his/her capacity.

Summing up remarks

The discussions in this chapter provide the general view that children with disabilities conceive their future life with respect to education and independent living, as highly dependent on a myriad of factors. As they grow older, children think of education as an important enabler for income generation and independent living in the future. They are

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[10] Mohamed, P. (2013). Born with disability, grew up with ability. The Gurdian. Dar es Salaam, Ippmedia.com.

also concerned with of how they can be supportive to their families and relatives in the future through education. This reflects a level of critical thinking which is stimulated by learning and education as the children grow older. It also represents children as agentic individuals who are capable of influencing and shaping their futures, and that of their families. Parents are also an important contextual factor, for the prosperity of their children play an important role in determining the opportunities available for them in terms of further education and financial support. The good economic position of these parents gives the children more possibilities to acquire a quality education and other services, particularly if the children are disabled. However, on approaching adulthood, children also think of higher responsibilities in line with their gender roles, the likely hindrances and ways to get out of them. It is interesting to learn from this experience of children reflecting critically on their future and the whole concept of independent living, putting across their hopes for the future despite their disabilities, and constructing their future lives through the lens of socially constructed gender roles. It is from this kind of reflection and critical thinking that alternative courses of action for a brighter future can be devised.

CHAPTER 9 – Summing up the key findings and suggestions for further studies

The ontological stance of this thesis builds in a community work belief that children as *beings* and *becomings* (Uprichard 2008)are creators and shapers of their futures, based on existing or arising possibilities and circumstances. Having this assumption in mind, I found it important to first learn from the children before taking any further action to facilitate change. This is in line with the assumption that "the beginning of the process of community development lies in listening, valuing and understanding people's particular experiences" as put forward by Ledwith (2005:32).

From the study findings, it has become apparent that children with disabilities have the potential to influence their everyday life if they are given the opportunity to do so. They were able to engage in the process of learning by undertaking different activities, adapting to school life, forming friendships, learning to live together, and cooperating to build a community of shared experiences. Participation and dialogue among the children took a crucial part in influencing the taken course of actions. Activities such as: self care, washing for each other, cleaning their environments, and helping each other, provided the room to understand themselves, explore their potential, and learn to become independent adults in the future.

By contributing to their learning and academic attainment, the children developed their own way of working with others, in terms of doing exercises during classes, learning to help each other with their homework, and be generally supportive of each other to enhance learning. The high sense of cooperation and mutual support found among them allowed a feeling of belonging and community to flourish. As a community, the children gave individual accounts of how they challenged the constraining administrative rules and regulations so as to enhance their well being. Their accounts justified why and how they experienced the pleasure of risk taking by playing around with the structural rules, i.e. having a mobile phone, and, keeping secrets for each other, were seen to create excitement and reduce frustration. These instances can be seen as examples of how an agentic decision can be a way of expressing daring and developing a feeling of achievement.

Further, as competent actors, the children were able to offer different viewpoints concerning the school such as how it has contributed to their educational attainments, and also how in some ways, it has constrained them. The study claims that children with disabilities are just like other children; they have all the capabilities of influencing their everyday lives, their learning and their future existences. They are aware of the importance of education in fighting poverty and have thus developed some future expectations and ambitions through the process of education. However, this study argues that the opportunities available in society, people's attitudes towards disability, the demands of life, and the economic position of their parents can be among the barriers that impede these children from achieving their future expectations through the process of education.

Suggestions for future studies

We have seen that the school environment has contributed to learning and development of different skills for these children. However, there is a need to study further the potentialities found in the boarding school environment for influencing autonomous actions and decisions made by children.

The study revealed that there some children who lagged behind in learning, which was claimed to be the result of their disability and a lack of follow-up. However, there is a need to find out how the activities of adapting to school life, and learning to care for one's self, may also influence their learning and academic performance.

Further, there is a need to explore how the administrative rules and regulations of the school may influence the freedom and confidence of the children in presenting issues which affect their welfare.

Last but not least, it is claimed that gender affects people with a disability differently based on culture, class, context etc. However, there is a need to study what assumptions are held by disabled people themselves concerning their gender roles, and how these may influence their perception of their future life development, and the course of action they may take.

Unsolved dilemma

The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education (1994) insists that every child regardless of the child's social, economic, cultural, linguistic, physical and health background, has to have access to, and receive, appropriate education However, this study revealed that the presence of this school has turned out to be an educational remedy for those disabled children who had struggled to secure access in local/regular schools. So, do we have to follow the Salamanca Statement and discourage the existence of these types of school or do we have to do the opposite?

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ANNEXES
1. Research permit

TANZANIA COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (COSTECH)

Telegrams: COSTECH

Ali Hassan Mwinyi Road

Telephones: (255 - 022) 2775155 - 6, 2700745/6
Director General: (255 - 022) 2700750&2775315
Fax: (255 - 022) 2775313
Email: rclearance@costech.or.tz

P.O. Box 4302
Dar es Salaam
Tanzania

RESEARCH PERMIT

No. 2011–228-NA – 2011-121   25th July 2011

1. Name   :   **Violet E. Mammba**

2   Nationality   :   **Tanzanian**

3   Title   :   **Schooling for Children with Disabilities**

4   Research shall be confined to the following region(s): **Dar es Salaam**

5   Permit validity **25th July 2011to 24th July 2012**

6. Local Contact/collaborator: **Mr. Polycarp Africanus, Institute of Social Work, Dar es Salaam**

7. Researcher is required to submit progress report on quarterly basis and submit all Publications made after research.

M.Mushi

for: **DIRECTOR GENERAL**

2. Tentative plan for my fieldwork

3. Observation guide

Observation will be conducted
- In the classroom settings
- Outside the classroom settings based on the ongoing activities
- In the surrounding areas such as sleeping places
- Playing grounds
- Etc

Areas of focus

1. How is this boarding school making a difference for the children when they are at school?

Questions i.e.

- How did you get to know the school?
- How do you live here?
- What have you liked at this school?
- What do you do to make your stay happier within this school?
- How did you learn to help each other? How did that start? How did you establish your Upendo group?
- When do you do your homework?
- Who assists you doing your homework?
- When do you care for each other? When does the older support and care for the young ones? How is that done? Who organize that? How is your relation with your parents when you are at school? How much do your parents like your presence at home during holidays?

2. How is this boarding school making a difference for these children after school? (Extra curriculum in learning)

- How do you think life would have been if you were not in this school?
- How are you prepared with life after you're done with school?
- Is it possible to come back home?
- If you won't be selected to join secondary school then where do you go? How are you going to manage life from there?
- What have you learnt to school that you think can help you manage life at home and in community at large? Or what have you learned at school that you think you can bring back home?
- Do you see any difference for you being at school for those seven years?
- How do you imagine you will be able to contribute when you come back home (i.e. help in house works, etc)
- I think you have made friends for you being here for almost seven years. How are you going to maintain your friendships? Is it possible to keep contacts?
- How do you leave from here? Are you going to leave in groups, pairs or individually?
- Have you maintained friendships with your peers in the community at home?

I will look on the services which the school provides, the administration relations with teachers and other workers in serving the children, and how the administration relates to children

4. Age is not only about numbers! It's about power hierarchy, division of responsibilities etc. The older have to care for the young ones and act as a role model i.e. in conflict resolutions etc. I shall explore more how these sisters and brothers are found, how they work with their young ones and how this is organized.