

**The Influence of Parental Education and Literacy Skill  
Levels on Children's Achievement in Primary School,  
Moyo District, Rural Uganda**

**By**

**Sr. Alice Jurugo Drajea**

**A THESIS**

**Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the  
degree of**

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN EDUCATION**

**Supervisor: Prof. Carmel O'Sullivan**

**The University of Dublin, Trinity College Dublin**

**2015**



## **Declaration**

I hereby declare that this is my original work and that it has not been submitted for the award of any degree at any other university. I duly agree that the library may lend/copy this thesis on request.

---

Sr. Alice Jurugo Drajea

## **Dedication**

To my mother, Raphaela Kayodi, for her inspiring years as a mother, teacher and generous support to disadvantaged children, and to my niece Prisca Saayo, who will never attend school because of her multiple disabilities as a result of cerebral malaria.

## **Acknowledgements**

The completion of this piece of work drew on a number of significant people without whom this study would not have been realised.

My most sincere thanks go to Mr Diarmuid Kenneally, who offered to pay for this study. Through the recommendation from Hon. Sylvia K Gavigan, on the same note, I thank the Comboni Missionary Fathers, London Province, and Irish Aid for their contribution. I wish to thank individuals who willingly proofread my work from time to time: Lambert Peter Olupot, Justin Wallace, Ms Peggy O’Sullivan and my colleagues. I sincerely thank the Loreto Sisters who accommodated me throughout the course of this study without which I would not have found a convenient place to reside in. To family friends in Ireland: McDonnell, McLean, Wallace, Mulhair, Farrelly, Buthelezy, and friends who made me feel at home with their caring spirit, I can never thank them enough. Not forgetting my family, religious sisters and friends back in Uganda whose contact and support I often cherished. The participants included in this study were invaluable; starting from the district education Authority, Mr Michael Mali, the DEO, headteachers and teachers, pupils and parents, senior community members and the Deputy Commissioner for Primary Education at the national level. They have not only become part of this thesis but also part of my life. I carry them with me in mind and heart as long as I talk, think and reflect about the concerns of this study. Their information has been an integral part of this work for they provided human faces to the problems unveiled in this study in the rural district of Moyo, Uganda.

I reserve my greatest thanks for my amazing supervisor, Professor Carmel O’Sullivan. The amount of attention, and time dedicated to supervising this work is beyond all imagination. I thank her for her tireless support, encouragement and insightful guidance. I extend this gratitude to all the dedicated lectures and all the staff members in their various capacities in the School of Education, Trinity College Dublin for their professional support and cooperation throughout the full length of this study.

## **Abstract**

This thesis explores how the different levels of parents' education and literacy skills influence their primary six children's academic attainment. The interest in this area was derived from endemic poor literacy abilities among universal primary school children in rural Uganda leading to persistent poor school achievement.

The study reviews pertinent literature related to parental education and literacy skill practices in the home setting. The focus is on the nature and quality of support parents provide, the amount of available literacy related resources in the home environment because of parental education or lack of it and the challenges they face. These areas underscore the three research questions guiding the study. Related studies indicate that if parents have well developed literacy skills and practices, and adequate literacy resources at home and in the community, they will positively influence their children's education. However, when they lack such symbolic social capital, they face challenges that are likely to impact negatively on their children's educational achievement. This phenomenon is explored in this study in a development world context, notably the Moyo district in Northern Uganda.

Mixed-methods with an ethnographic element is used to gather data from 119 participants across three geographical sites through the methods of questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, document analysis and participant observation involving three primary schools, and nine families of different educational and economic backgrounds. Vygotsky's socio-cultural historical theory and the concept of cultural capital in terms of intergenerational transmission of educational success underpins the basis for the inquiry.

Data are thematically analysed using a cross-case analysis. The findings indicate that all parents researched, regardless of the different levels of their education, desire that their children succeed in education but they face serious economic and other problems in supporting them to do so. The educated parents are aware of the problems and the advantages of education, but the reality of their lives and the financial challenges they face restrict them in prioritising time for educational activities with their children. Their support remained at the level of paying school fees for their children, and barely providing other school requirements. The semi-literate and uneducated were aware of the broader benefits of education, but were not yet fully aware of the level of interaction that is required to support and encourage their children for school success. This is compounded by the harsh financial realities in the

everyday lives of these families. Their low and irregular income tend to control and hinder them from extending adequate support to their children's schooling. There was evidence of an overly heavy burden of responsibilities on parents that are work related. Salaried parents worked away from home and so did the semi-literate and illiterate (mostly doing casual jobs and cultivation). Whereas a lack of time negatively impacted upon all parents' ability to support their children's education. illiteracy hindered the academic involvement of less educated parents. Overall, the children involved in this study were deprived on many fronts: limited parent-child interaction, lack of home study and own space, play and educational opportunities. The study concluded that parental education and literacy skills exclusively are unlikely to enhance children's achievement. Instead, parental knowledge of school matters and practical engagement with additional external support could make a difference in children's achievement in school. The study makes recommendations for policy and practice in educational, economic and political spheres. It will also serve as resource material for future research..

## Table of Contents

Declaration .....	i
Dedication.....	ii
Acknowledgements .....	iii
Abstract .....	iv
Table of Contents .....	vi
List of Tables:.....	xvi
List of Figures: .....	xix
List of Photos:.....	xxi
List of Boxes: .....	xxiii
List of Abbreviations:.....	xxiv
CHAPTER ONE.....	1
General Introduction.....	1
1.1. Introduction.....	1
1.2. Rationale.....	1
1.3. Background and Contextual Information to the Study .....	6
1.4. Theoretical Frame .....	9
1.5. Justification of the Study .....	10
1.6. Personal Statement.....	12
1.7. Research Questions.....	12
1.8. Methodology.....	12
1.9. The Chapter Layout .....	13
CHAPTER TWO.....	15
LITERATURE REVIEW .....	15
2.1. Introduction.....	15
2.2. Definitions of Terms.....	15



2.3.	Theoretical Frame of the Study .....	23
2.3.1.	Understanding the Sociocultural- Historical Theory.....	23
2.3.2.	The Concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) .....	24
2.4.	Philosophical Perspectives of the Study: Symbolic Interactionism .....	26
2.5.	The Impact of Parental Education .....	28
2.6.	Direct and Indirect Impacts of Parents' Education.....	33
2.6.1.	Direct impacts of Parents' Education on Children's Education.....	34
2.6.2.	Indirect Impact of Parental Education.....	41
2.6.3.	Home Learning Environment: Children's Achievement.....	50
2.7.	External Factors and Children's Achievement.....	53
2.7.1.	Parental Education: Child Safety and Children's Achievement .....	53
2.7.2.	Parental Education, Neighbourhood and Children's Achievement.....	55
2.8.	Literacy for Parents and Children.....	56
2.8.1.	Literacy as Foundation for Education .....	57
2.8.2.	Literacy for Capacity Building.....	61
2.9.	Global Literacy Levels .....	64
2.9.1.	Literacy Levels in the Developed World Context.....	65
2.9.2.	Literacy Levels in the Developing World Context .....	65
2.9.3.	Literacy Rates in Uganda .....	66
2.10.	Conclusion .....	72
	CHAPTER THREE.....	75
	CONTEXTUALISING THE STUDY .....	75
3.1.	Introduction.....	75
3.2.	Brief Background to the Study Location.....	76
3.2.1.	Geographical Location .....	76

3.2.2.	Demographic Context.....	82
3.2.3.	Economic Context .....	85
3.2.4.	Political Context.....	86
3.3.	Education in Uganda.....	89
3.3.1.	Education Before Independence.....	90
3.3.2.	Education after Independence .....	91
3.3.3.	Current Education System in Uganda .....	92
3.3.4.	Universal Primary Education: Policy on Responsibilities .....	99
3.4.	Conclusion .....	100
CHAPTER FOUR .....		101
METHODOLOGY .....		101
4.1.	Introduction.....	101
4.2.	Research Aim and Questions.....	101
4.2.1.	Aim of the Study .....	101
4.2.2.	Research Questions of the Study.....	101
4.3.	Study Design and Rationale.....	102
4.3.1.	The Mixed-methods Research Design .....	102
4.3.2.	Qualitative Approach .....	104
4.3.3.	Ethnographic Approach.....	107
4.3.4.	Reflexive Ethnography.....	112
4.3.5.	Disengagement from Field Research .....	116
4.3.6.	Theoretical Considerations.....	119
4.3.7.	Methodology .....	121
4.4.	Participants .....	123
4.4.1.	Population, Sampling Design and Sampling.....	123

4.4.2.	Sampling Procedure .....	126
4.5.	Methods (Instrumentation) .....	128
4.5.1.	Questionnaires .....	128
4.5.2.	Interviews .....	130
4.5.2.1	Location of Interview .....	131
4.5.2.2	Type of Interview: Semi-structured .....	132
4.5.3.	Participant Observation .....	134
4.5.3.1	Advantages and Disadvantages .....	135
4.5.4.	Document Analysis .....	137
4.6.	Administration of Methods .....	138
4.7.	Ethical Issues .....	140
4.7.1.	Validity and Reliability .....	141
4.7.2.	Triangulation .....	142
4.7.3.	Bias .....	142
4.7.4.	Piloting .....	143
4.8.	Data Analysis .....	143
4.8.1.	Thematic Analysis .....	144
4.8.2.	Data Management .....	144
4.8.3.	Process of Analysis .....	145
4.8.3.1	Analytic Method .....	146
4.9.	Data Presentation .....	149
4.10.	Conclusion .....	150
CHAPTER FIVE .....		153
FINDINGS FROM SCHOOLS .....		153
5.1.	Introduction .....	153
5.2.	5.2 Description of Schools .....	153

5.2.1.	The Urban Primary School.....	154
5.2.2.	The Semi-Rural Primary School .....	157
5.2.3.	The Rural Primary School.....	160
5.3.	Respondents: Headteachers and Teachers .....	163
5.3.1.	Headteachers .....	163
5.3.1.1	Headteachers: Biographical Information.....	164
5.3.1.2	Headteachers: Knowledge about Parents .....	165
5.3.2.	Teachers as Respondents.....	178
5.4.	Interviews with Educators .....	186
5.4.1.	Data from Educator Respondents.....	187
5.4.2.	Teachers' Responses about Educated Parents.....	190
5.4.3.	Interventions for Pupils .....	203
5.4.4.	Interventions for Parents .....	205
5.5.	Similarities and Differences in the Findings .....	211
5.6.	Conclusion .....	212
CHAPTER SIX .....		215
Findings from Pupils, Parents and Senior Community Members .....		215
6.1.	Introduction.....	215
6.2.	Demographic Information: Pupils, Parents and Senior Community Members .....	216
6.2.1.	Description of Participating Pupils.....	216
6.2.2.	Description of Participating Parents and Family Features .....	217
6.2.3.	General Parents' Occupation.....	227
6.2.4.	Pupils' Parents' Levels of Education .....	228
6.2.5.	Participating Senior Community Members.....	229
6.3.	Questionnaire Responses from the Ninety P. 6 Pupils .....	230
6.3.1.	Question 4: Pupils' Progress before Primary Six.....	230

6.3.2.	Question 7: Pupils’ Responses to Possible Reasons for Repeating Classes.....	231
6.3.3.	Question 8: Pupils’ Experience of Parents’ Involvement in their Education .....	234
6.3.4.	Questions 9 and 10: Pupils’ Responses to the kind of Support they Receive/Expect to Receive from Parents .....	235
6.3.5.	Question 11: Pupils’ Perception of their Parents’ Education in Relation to their Education.....	238
6.3.6.	Question 12: Pupils’ Views about whether Parents Regard Education as Important .....	241
6.3.7.	Question 13: Pupils’ Views about their Contribution to their Own Education..	242
6.3.8.	Question 14: Pupils’ Readiness for Primary Leaving Examinations .....	243
6.4.	Ethnographic data: Description of the Home Backgrounds .....	244
6.4.1.	Children of Educated Parents (F1) .....	244
6.4.2.	Children of Average Educated Parents (F2).....	246
6.4.3.	Children of Less/Uneducated Parents (F3) .....	247
6.4.3.1	Question 1: Children’ Views About whether their Parents’ Education Matters in their School Progress .....	249
6.4.3.2	Question 2: Children’s Responses to whether it was their First Time in Primary Six.....	249
6.4.3.3	Question 3: Pupils’ Responses to why they Repeated Class (s) before Primary Six.....	250
6.4.3.4	Question 4: Data from Documentation: Progress Report of the Nine Pupils ...	251
6.4.3.5	Question 5: Pupils’ Expectations of their Parents’ Support.....	254
6.4.3.6	Question 6: Assessment of Literacy Skill Abilities .....	254
6.4.3.7	Main Challenges Pupils Face.....	257
6.5.	Interview Responses from Parents.....	262
6.5.1.	Parents’ Practices of Literacy Skills.....	262
6.5.1.1	Respondent Parents: Professional (F1).....	263
6.5.1.2	Respondent Parents: Semi-skilled Parents (F2).....	263
6.5.1.3	Respondent Parents: Unskilled Parents (F3).....	264
6.5.2.	Question 1 Language Usage.....	265

6.5.2.1 Language Spoken at Home.....	265
6.5.2.2 Oral Language.....	265
6.5.2.3 Question 2: Reading Skills.....	271
6.5.2.4 Question 3: Writing Skills.....	274
6.5.2.5 Question 4: Listening Skills.....	277
6.5.2.6 Question 5: Parents’ Responsibilities for their Children’s Education.....	281
6.5.2.8 Question 7: Parents’ Views about their Own Education and Levels of Literacy Skills.....	286
6.6. Study Research Question 2: Literacy Environment in the Home.....	293
6.6.1. Professional Households: Literacy Environment and Resources.....	293
6.6.2. Semi-skilled Households: Literacy Environment and Resources.....	295
6.6.3. Unskilled Households: Literacy Environment and Resources.....	297
6.7. Research Question 3: Challenges Parents Face in Supporting the Educational Needs of their Children.....	299
6.8. Report from Senior Community Members (SCM).....	309
6.8.1. Responses from Questionnaire Schedule to Senior Community Members.....	309
6.8.1.1 Question 1: SCM Views about Parents.....	309
6.8.1.2 Question 2: SCM Views about Pupils’ Home Background.....	312
6.8.1.4 Question 4:SCM’s Knowledge about External Help to Parents.....	314
6.8.2. Interview Responses from Senior Community Members (SCM).....	316
6.8.2.1 Question 1: SCMs’ Educational Backgrounds.....	317
6.8.2.2 Question 2: SCM’s Views about the Roles of Parents to their Children.....	318
6.8.2.3 Question 3: SCMs’ Views on Parental Support in Retrospect.....	320
6.8.2.4 Question 4: SCMs’ Views about how their Education Played a Role in their Own Family.....	322
6.8.2.5 Question 5: SCMs’ Views about How Parents could be Supported.....	323
6.8.2.6 Question 6: SCMs’ Responses on Intervention for Pupils and Parents.....	325
6.9. Conclusion.....	328
CHAPTER SEVEN.....	329
DISCUSSION.....	329

7.1. Introduction.....	329
7.2. Challenges.....	329
7.2.1. Language Deficiency.....	330
7.2.2. Challenges of Time .....	333
7.2.3. Poor Households.....	335
7.2.3.1 Low Family Income .....	336
7.2.3.2 Poor Infrastructure.....	336
7.2.4. Illiteracy.....	340
7.2.5. Cultural Traits.....	344
7.3. Effects on the Child .....	350
7.3.1. Language Deficit .....	350
7.3.2. Domestic Responsibilities by Children .....	351
7.3.3. Deprivation.....	353
7.3.4. Summary .....	356
7.4. Opportunities .....	358
7.4.1. Government’s Education Policy.....	358
7.4.2. Parental Education.....	358
7.4.3. Shifting Parental Attitudes .....	359
7.4.4. School-based Opportunities .....	360
7.4.5. Advantages of the Extended Family System.....	360
7.4.6. Children’s Own Contribution.....	361
7.5. Conclusion .....	361
CHAPTER EIGHT .....	365
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....	365
8.1. Introduction.....	365
8.2. Conclusion .....	365

8.3. Major Findings.....	366
8.4. Summary.....	369
8.5. Recommendations Arising from the Findings.....	371
8.6. Limitations.....	376
8.7. Areas for Further Study.....	377
8.8. The Significance of the Study.....	378
8.9. Practical Strategies Arising From the Study Findings.....	379
8.10. Personal Reflection.....	382
References.....	385
Appendices.....	419
Appendix 1 - Questionnaire for Pupils.....	420
Appendix 2 - Questionnaire for Headteachers.....	425
Appendix 3 - Questionnaire Schedule for Teachers.....	431
Appendix 4 - Questionnaire for Senior Community Members (SCM).....	436
Appendix 5 - Questionnaire for the District Education Officer (DEO).....	439
Appendix 6a - Semi-structured Interview Schedule with Parents.....	444
Appendix Interview 6.b - Schedule for Parents.....	456
Appendix 7 - Interview Schedule with Educators.....	457
Appendix 8 - Interview Schedule with Pupils (n 9).....	458
Appendix 9 - Observation Checklist.....	462
Appendix 10 - Field Study Schedule.....	472
APPENDIX 11 - Consent Forms and Letters of Permission.....	480
Appendix 12 - Letter to the District Education Officer.....	484
Appendix 13 - Response from the District Education Officer.....	485
Appendix 14 - Participant consent form.....	486



Appendix 15 - Request for Parents' Permission.....	487
Appendix 16 - Request for Teachers' Permission from .....	488
Appendix 17 - Request for Headteachers' Permission .....	489
Appendix 18 a - A Sample of Family's Ordinary Day .....	490
Appendix 18 b - A Sample of Family's Ordinary Day .....	490
Appendix 18 c - A Sample of Family's Ordinary Day .....	492
Appendix 18 d - A Sample of Family's Ordinary Day.....	493
Appendix 19 - A Sample of Primary Teachers' Payroll for Moyo District.....	494
Appendix 20 - Location of Uganda in Africa .....	495

## List of Tables:

Table 1.1 - Main Reforms in the Primary Education Sector in Uganda .....	3
Table 2.1 - A Comparison of Population and Literacy Rates of Uganda.....	67
Table 3.1 - Literacy Rates by Regions .....	78
Table 3.2 - Summary of Country Profile: Uganda. ....	83
Table 3.3 - Regions and the Major Languages spoken in Uganda.....	84
Table 3.4 - The Estimated Population of Moyo District over a 10 year Period.....	85
Table 3.5 - Heads of State since Independence.....	87
Table 3.6 - Percentage distribution of Population by School Attendance Status by Age Group and Region.....	94
Table 3.7 - Percentage of Population aged 5 years and above that Attended and Left School in 2002 .....	95
Table 3.8 - Recommended Subjects and the weekly Periods for Primary School .....	96
Table 3.9 - School Factors likely to Affect Primary School Performance in Uganda .....	98
Table 4.1 - Features of Qualitative Research .....	105
Table 4.2 - The Pillars of Social Research .....	120
Table 4.3 - Sample and Sampling Technique.....	127
Table 4.4 - Research Field Activities. ....	133
Table 4.5 - Steps and Descriptions in Analysing Qualitative Data .....	145
Table 4.6 - Types of Code .....	148
Table 5.1 - Pupil Enrolment for 2012 in the Urban Primary School.....	155
Table 5.2 - Summary Profile of the Urban Primary School.....	156
Table 5.3 - The Previous PLE Results of the Urban School, 2008-2011 .....	156
Table 5.4 - The PLE Results of the Semi-Rural Primary School 2008-2011 .....	159
Table 5.5 - Enrolment Chart of the Rural Primary School for 2012 .....	161
Table 5.6 - Summary of the Rural Primary School.....	162
Table 5.7 - Particulars about Headteachers in the Three Schools .....	164
Table 5.8 - Headteachers' Knowledge about Parents.....	165

Table 5.9 - Issues often Discussed in PTA Meetings.....	169
Table 5.10 - Headteachers' Forms of Encouragement/Motivation to Parents .....	171
Table 5.11 - Headteachers' Knowledge about Pupils' Home Background.....	172
Table 5.12 - Headteachers' Views about External Support to Parents .....	175
Table 5.13 - Primary Six Class Teachers' Professional Details.....	179
Table 5.14 - Factors Hindering Pupils from Getting Prepared for PLE.....	184
Table 5.15 - 15 Teachers' Knowledge about Parents.....	185
Table 5.16 - Educators' Responses to Question 1 above .....	187
Table 6.1a - Features of Families with Educated Parents - F1 Urban .....	218
Table 6.1.2a - Features of Families with Educated Parents - F1 Semi-rural.....	218
Table 6.1.3a - Features of Families with Educated Parents - F1 Rural.....	233
Table 6.1.1b - Family of Parents with Average Education - F2 Urban.....	235
Table 6.1.2b - Family of Parents with Average Education - F2 Semi-rural.....	236
Table 6.1.3b - Family of Parents with Average Education - F2 Rural.....	237
Table 6.1.1c - Families of Parents with Less/No Formal Education - F3 Urban.....	238
Table 6.1.2c - Families of Parents with Less/No Formal Education - F3 Semi-rural .....	239
Table 6.1.3c - Families of Parents with Less/No Formal Education - F3 Rural .....	240
Table 6.2 - Parents' Occupation .....	227
Table 6.3 - Parents' Levels of Education .....	228
Table 6.4 - Demographic Information about the Senior Community Members .....	229
Table 6.5 - Pupils who Repeated Classes before Primary Six .....	230
Table 6.6 - The Experience of 90 Pupils of their Parents' Involvement in their Education ...	234
Table 6.7 - Types of Support Parents Provide for Pupils and Types of Support Pupils Expect from their Parents .....	236
Table 6.8 - Pupils' Perceptions.....	238
Table 6.9 - Pupils' Views about their Parents' Regard for their Education.....	241
Table 6.10 - Ways in which Pupils Think they Contribute to their Own Academic Progress	242

Table 6.11 - How pupils Perceive their Readiness to take their PLE .....	243
Table 6.12 - Progress Review of Pupils Studied showing Classes Repeated in Primary Cycle .....	250
Table 6.13 - Progress Review of the Nine Pupils from Primary One to Seven .....	251
Table 6.14 - Pupils Expectations .....	254
Table 6.15 - Summative Mapping of Pupils' Capabilities in Academic and Related Literacy Tasks.....	255
Table 6.16 - Speaking the Local Language as Reported by Respondents .....	266
Table 6.17 - Levels of Speaking English for the 9 Families .....	268
Table 6.18 - Reading Skills in Ma'di and English .....	272
Table 6.19 - Expected Parental Responsibilities in Relation to their School going Children.	282
Table 6.20 - Civil Employee Payroll for Moyo District.....	300
Table 6.21 - Basic Requirements for a P.6 School going Child.....	302
Table 6.22 - Summary of the Challenges Facing Parents Studied in Moyo District .....	305
Table 6.23 - Roles Parents Engage in as Observed by Senior Community Members .....	310
Table 6.24 - Non-school Factors Affecting Pupil Performance in School.....	312
Table 6.25 - Factors that Hinder Pupils from getting Pupils prepared for PLE .....	313
Table 6.26 - External Help for Parents.....	314
Table 6.27 - SCMs' Views about the Impact of Parents' Education on their Children's Educational Achievement.....	317
Table 6.28 - Parental Roles .....	318
Table 7.1 - Challenges Faced by Category of Families .....	330

## List of Figures:

Figure 1.1 - The Main Characteristics of the Context of the Study .....	8
Figure 2.1 - The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) towards Independent Performance ..	24
Figure 2.2 - The Influence of Parental Education .....	28
Figure 2.3 - The Impact of Household Income on Achievement.....	30
Figure 2.4 - Primary Six Pupils attending a Lesson, Seated on the Ffloor .....	52
Figure 2.5 - Literacy as the Basis for Educational Development.....	58
Figure 2.6 - Literacy, a Gateway to Success in other Academic Areas. ....	60
Figure 2.7 - Global Adult and Youth Literacy Rates by 2009 .....	64
Figure 2.8 - Mothers' Literacy and Schooling Status in the Niger, the Lao PDR and Bolivia, 2000.....	66
Figure 2.9 - Home Parental Academic Support. Janani Okot, 45, and Sindrela Atyang, 8 .....	70
Figure 2.10 - Children Learn together with Parents.....	72
Figure 3.1 - Map of Political Uganda Source: Encyclopaedia of the Nations .....	77
Figure 3.2 - Moyo District Demographic Information.....	77
Figure 3.3 - Poverty Rates in Uganda. ....	78
Figure 3.4 - Rivers and Lakes of Uganda. Source: From Google Earth .....	80
Figure 3.5 - Children's Means of Transport.....	81
Figure 3.6 - Major Ethnic Groups in Uganda.....	83
Figure 3.7 - Structure of Decentralisation Governance System in Uganda .....	89
Figure 3.8 - Education Structural System in Uganda.....	92
Figure 3.9 - Universal Enrolment Trends in Uganda .....	93

Figure 4.1 - Qualitative Research Components.....	103
Figure 4.2 - The three Study Context (SC) in Moyo District in Uganda. ....	123
Figure 5.1 - School Administrative Structure. ....	155
Figure 6.1 - Age of Participating Pupils by School Location .....	217
Figure 6.2 - Urban pupils' Perception of Parent's Education .....	239
Figure 6.3 - Semi-rural Pupils' Perception of Parent's Education.....	239
Figure 6.4 - Rural Pupils' Perception of Parent's Education .....	240
Figure 6.5 - Pupils' Views about their Parents' Education Across three Schools .....	241
Figure 6.6 - Language and Writing Difficulties .....	258
Figure 6.7 - Parental Emphasis on a Common Language .....	269
Figure 6.8 - Pupils' Sample of Home Timetable.....	275
Figure 6.9 - Role of Grandparents.....	279
Figure 6.10 - Implications of the Main Challenges for the School-going Child.....	307
Figure 7.1 - Summary of Challenges and Effects .....	356
Figure 7.2 - Display of Relationships: Parental Education, Personal/Basic Household Needs and Achievement of the School Child.....	357

## List of Photos:

Photo 4.1: Freshly Baked Corn Cakes for Breakfast with Tea (F3, urban). .....	110
Photo 4.2 - Research Immersed in the Family's Joint Activities.....	110
Photo 4.3 - Joint Activity by a Father and Son; Rebuilding a Pit-latrine.....	115
Photo 4.4 - Village Pit-latrine.....	115
Photo 5.1- Urban Primary School. Pupils clean up before leaving school. ....	154
Photo 5.3 - Children of P.2 waiting to be orally examined in the local language.....	158
Photo 5.4 - Pupils of P.6 Being Coached by their Teacher under a Mango Tree. ....	160
Photo 5.5 - A multi-storage Classroom in the Semi-rural School.....	177
Photos 5.6 - College Ggirl in the Orocess of Distilling Beer to Raise Money for her Education .....	198
Photo 6.1 - Poor Light Sources for Children’s Study.....	233
Photo 6.2 - Family (F1) House in the Urban Area .....	244
Photo 6.3 - Children Drawing Water using Wheelbarrows.....	245
Photo 6.4 - Family (F1) House in the Semi-rural Area .....	245
Photo 6.5 - Cooking on Open Fire .....	246
Photo 6.6 - Homestead of an F3 Urban Respondent .....	247
Photo 6.7 - Homestead of an F3 Rural Respondent. ....	248
Photo 6.8 - Domestic Responsibilities of Pupils. ....	260
Photo 6.9 - A Cognitive Activity: Siblings Play “Ludo” on Papyrus Mat.....	261
Photo 6.11 - Diverse Domestic Responsibilities on Children.....	287
Photo 6.12 - Family Literacy Evidence .....	293

Photo 6.13 - Semi-Rural F2 Household Solar Equipment .....	296
Photo 6.14 - Inadequate Resources .....	297
Photo 6.15 - Poor Storage of Learning Leading to Waste.....	298
Photo 6.16 - F3 Household.....	298



## **List of Boxes:**

Box 5.1 - Interview Guide for Senior Community Members.....	186
Box 5.2 - Evidence of Food Insecurity.....	209
Box 6.1a - Case 1: Toy-car Celine’s Family (Professional, urban, 31.8.2012) .....	270
Box 6.1b - Case 2: Toy Baby, F3 (rural).....	270
Box 6.2 - Family Literacy Event.....	274
Box 6.3 - Family Literacy Writing Activity.....	276
Box 6.4 - The Lion and the Twelve Beautiful Girls (folk story).....	277
Box 6.5 - Anthony’s Struggle for School in the 1930s .....	320
Box 6.6 - Probing Children to Think Logically: Why Houses have Windows? .....	323

## **List of Abbreviations:**

ABEK:	Alternative Basic Education for Karamoja
ACP:	African Convention Principal
ATM:	Automated Teller Machine
ATUS:	American Time Use Survey
BEUPA:	Basic Education for Urban Poverty Areas
CCT:	Centre Coordinating Tutors
CD:	Computer Disc
CHANCE:	Child-Centred Alternative No-Formal Community Education
CMS:	Christian Missionary Society
COPE:	Complementary Opportunities for Primary Education
CPA:	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
DC:	District Commissioner
DEO:	District Education Officer
DFEE:	Department for Education and Employment
DP:	Democratic Party
DRC:	Democratic Republic of Congo
ECCRN:	Early Critical Care Registered Nurse
EFA:	Education for All
ELSE:	Empowering Lifelong Skills Education
EPRC:	Education Policy Review Commission
ESIP:	Education Sector Investment Plan
ESSP:	Education Sector Strategic Plan
ESSR:	Education and Sports Sector Review
EST:	Ecological System Theory
FAO:	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FEWNET:	Famine Early Warning Systems Network
GDP:	Gross Domestic Product
GOU:	Government of Uganda
GWP	Government White Paper
ILO:	International Labour Organisation
IPDs:	Internally Displaced Peoples
IWGIA:	International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs

LABE:	Literacy for Adult Basic Education
LC:	Local Council
LD:	International Literacy Day
LEA:	Local Education Authority
LG:	Local Government
LGO:	Local Government Ordinance
LRA:	Lord's Resistance Army
MDGs:	Millennium Development Goals
MFPEd:	Ministry of Finance, Planning, and Economic Development
MHM:	Mill Hill Missionaries
MOES:	Ministry of Education and Sports
MTC:	Moyo town Council
MTE:	Mother Tongue Education
NALSIP:	National Adult Literacy Strategic Investment Plan
NAO:	Native Authority Ordinance
NCDC:	National Curriculum Development Centre
NCHE	National Council for Higher Education
NER:	Net Enrolment Ratio
NFE:	Non-Formal Education
NGO:	Non-Government Organisation
NHES:	National Household Education Survey
NICHd:	National Institute of Child Health and Human Development
NLNW:	National Literacy and Numeracy Week
NLS:	National literacy Strategy
NRM:	National Resistance Movement
NTC:	National Teachers' College
OECD:	Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development
OPM:	Office of the Prime Minister
PAF:	Poverty Action Fund
PARUDA:	Participatory Rural Development Agency
PC:	Personal Computer
PDR:	Peoples' Democratic Republic
PEAP:	Poverty Eradication Action Plan
PLE:	Primary Leaving Examination

PRB:	Population Reference Bureau
PTA:	Parents Teachers Association
QDA:	Qualitative Data Analysis
RC:	Resistance Council
ROSS:	Republic of South Sudan
SACMEQ:	Southern African Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality
SCM:	Senior Community Member
SCT:	Social Cognitive Theory
SES:	Socio-Economic Status
SHS:	Sacred Heart Sisters
S-I:	Symbolic Interactionism
SMC:	School Management Committee
SSA:	Sub-Saharan Africa
SST:	Social Studies
SWAP:	Sector Wide Approach
TBA	Traditional Birth Attendant
TBS:	Trans-Nile Broadcasting Services
TDMS:	Teacher Development and Management System
TTC:	Teacher Training College
UACE:	Uganda Advanced Certificate of education
UBEDCD:	Uganda Business Education Certificate and Diploma
UBOS:	Uganda Bureau of Statistics
UCE:	Uganda Certificate of Education
UGX:	Uganda Exchange Rate
UIA:	Uganda Investment authority
UJTC:	Uganda Junior Technical Certificate
UK:	United Kingdom
UN:	United Nations
UNCDC:	Uganda national Cultural Development Centre
UNEB:	Uganda National Examination Board
UNESCO:	United Nation Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation
UNHCR:	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNHS:	Uganda National Household Survey
UNICEF:	United Nations International Children's Fund

UNPF:	United Nations Population Fund
UNTU:	Ugandan National Teachers' Union
UPC:	Uganda People's Congress
UPDF:	Uganda Peoples' Defence Force
UPE:	Universal Primary Education
UPEAP:	Uganda Poverty Eradication Plan
USA:	United States of America
USAID:	United States Agency for International Development
USB:	Universal Serial Bus
UTECDHDs:	Uganda Technical Education Certificate, Diploma and Higher
WB:	World Bank
WFP:	World Food Programme
WHO:	World Health Organisation
ZPD:	Zone of Proximal Development



# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **General Introduction**

### **1.1. Introduction**

This study explores the relationship between parental education and literacy skill levels and their children's academic attainment in primary school. The main rationale derives from poor literacy abilities among universal primary school children in rural Uganda, which has led to persistent poor school performances. The study examines how parents' education and literacy skill levels impacts on the academic development and achievement of their Primary Six (P.6) children in their home setting.

In order to explore this in detail, the study undertakes a broader review of pertinent literature in the related fields of parental education, everyday literacy practices, and pupils' motivation. The study explores this in terms of the practical literacy activities parents engage in with their children, the quality and amount of available literacy related resources in the home environment, and challenges parents face in providing for their primary school children's education - all of which underpin the three research questions that guided the study.

Related studies consistently indicate that if parents have well developed literacy skills and practices, and adequate literacy resources at home and in the community, they will positively impact upon their children's education (Feinstein et al., 2008; UNESCO, 2006; Hoff, 2003; LABE, 2011). Conversely, when parents lack such social and educational capital, they face challenges that are likely to impact negatively on their children's educational achievement (Bourdieu, 1977; Biddulph et al., 2003; Ardila et al., 2005). This study attempts to explore this phenomenon in a developing world context, notably the Moyo district in Uganda. It is a study based on the Ma'di people of the north western part of Uganda, in the West Nile Region.

### **1.2. Rationale**

Raising educational achievement in school is the responsibility of all stakeholders in the education of children. However, the role of parents has and continues to exist on the margins of the education system in Uganda (Moutilton, 2000).

The rationale behind this study is multiple:

1. Needs driven (poor primary leaving examination (PLE) performance);
2. Professional (teaching) experience and desire to understand pupils in a holistic way;
3. Personal experience of growing up in the rural, and;
4. Religious commitment to serve the poor and the less privileged

### ***Needs driven***

The persistent poor performance among primary school going pupils in rural Uganda including Moyo district has raised concerns among stakeholders at various levels (NAPE, 2011). Although Uganda is one of the commonwealth countries, which pledged commitment to avail of UPE with the aim to eradicate poverty, the increased enrolment into primary education after the inception of UPE in in Uganda – 1997 seemed not to have kept pace with the quality of education. Persistent poor performances continue to dominate the 81.8% of all primary schools located in the rural areas compared to 6% in the urban areas (MOES, 2005:28). In addition, it is also indicated that 83.3% of all primary schools are funded by government with 93.3% of these children are day scholars compared to 0.5% in boarding schools, which indicates that the majority of primary school going children in Uganda reside with their families at home in the rural domain. Yet, concerted efforts by both the Ministry of Education and Sports, implementing bodies and researchers towards finding ways to improve the education standards in the primary sector, have focused on school-based factors and not on pupils' home background. Major efforts to improve education quality in the primary sector are presented below.



**Table 0.1 - Main Reforms in the Primary Education Sector in Uganda**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Implementing Efforts</b>	<b>Emphasis</b>	<b>Source</b>
1989	The Education Policy Review Commission (EPRC)	Curriculum, recommended Universal Primary Education	Mbabazi (2008)
1992	Government White Paper (GWP)	Proposed free education for achieving UPE	Mbabazi (2008)
1997	The Universal Primary Education	access primary education for all school age children with government support in paying tuition, teachers' salaries, providing teaching and learning materials	Mbabazi (2008)
1997	The Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP)	Provision of basic education, further expenditure on education sector	PMO (2008)
2003	The Education Sector Investment Plan (ESIP)	Infrastructure to ensure access to primary education	Mbabazi (2008)
2004-2005	The Education Sector Strategic Plan. (ESSP)	promotion of quality and efficiency in primary education and enhancement of access and quality at the post primary education	Mbabazi (2008)
2007	The Thematic Curriculum	Ensure quality in primary education, improve pupils' competences in literacy, numeracy and life skills, use local language as medium of instruction for P1-3, teach English as a subject	NAPE (2011)

Other important efforts included teacher development and management system (TDMS) programmes to reduce the number of undertrained/untrained teachers, construction of teachers' quarters, and sanitary facilities. Little attention has been paid to pupils' home backgrounds, yet studies elsewhere have shown that pupils' home backgrounds have considerable influence on how well a child performs in school (Zimmerman, 1995; Bonfrenbrener, 1986). Far less attention is directed to exploring parental involvement in the context of other studies, such as (Chevalier, 2004; Feinstein et al., 2008) in the UK, Virginia Purcell-Gates (1996) (Ryan et al., 1995) in the United and Delgado-Gaitan (1990; 1995) in Latin America among the Mexican families. This high population of primary school going

children, who persistently perform poorly in Uganda's rural areas, is the reason behind the need to embark on this research.

### ***My teaching experience***

My personal teaching (6) and administration (7) years of experience in the field of education in the rural area of Uganda exposed me to the challenges and needs of school going children. There appears to be a range of difficulties, which primary school going children seem to be grappling with; from language diversity, family issues, health, scholastic materials to poor literacy abilities. As noted above, concerted efforts have concentrated on school-based variables, which are undoubtedly valuable. However, it is felt that it is not enough to strengthen the teaching and learning from institutional contexts, exclusively from the home context. The study therefore, attempted to understand the pupils' underperformance in holistic way; and that necessitated a broader investigation including the home backgrounds. Drawing on Vygostkian theory (1978), the study envisaged that, if the child is understood in his/her social and cultural context, then school and its administration will be able to develop appropriate interventions that can enable the child to fully realise his/her educational potentials. The next rural experience pertains to the researcher's own life experience, which also forms one of the basis for the study.

### ***Personal life experience***

As a child born and raised in the rural village, I have often wondered why my siblings and I seemed to have made it to higher levels of education (apart from my two sisters who due to their lack of cooperation did not complete their education) and the other children did not. As I indicated in my personal account later in the thesis, I started school with seven (7) girls and about ten (10) boys in the village in 1970s, but I have no contemporaries in third level education. I have often wondered trusting that those pupils were equally smart, perhaps even cleverer than I was. In retrospect, I recalled in my village at that time, my mother was the only qualified woman with a teaching job, and my father, was also on government paid job. Therefore, both had regular income for the family. In contrast, the parents of the other children, as I observed were peasant farmers, and most of them were illiterate or may have had some basic formal education but without professional skills. The differences in household equipment were revealing. For instance, literacy related environment in the house, and the use of multiple languages (local, Acholi, English and Swahili) in the home was normal. Later, these differences in our homes made me reflect deeply when one time a woman who decided

to abandon her husband and children and married off to another man remarked, “Alice, your mother managed this home because she had a certificate. For us who did not have one, it became impossible to cope”. Her behaviour disturbed me so much so I asked her about what she had done, and that was her blunt response. What did she mean? She had a husband and children. Nevertheless, this utterance kept haunting me; it led me to question wonder how a mother’s certificate makes a difference, and in what ways?

### ***My religious commitment***

I belong to the local religious congregation of the Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. We are committed to evangelise the people of God, especially, the poor of the poorest. We are convinced that we can make meaningful evangelisation through education. This takes different forms:

- a) education in the formal sense as all levels: in schools, institutions and non-governmental organisations;
- b) education in the health services, especially mother and child care through maternity services in both government hospitals and church dispensaries including our own;
- c) education through social work: For example, caring for orphaned children from birth to 14 years old in two of our orphanages (Moyo Babies Home and Redeemer Children’s Home), and also development work among the poor through our none governmental organisation (NGO), participatory rural development agency (PARUDA) in Arua district, and;
- d) education in other areas of service where there is need. For example, recently, following the years of insurgency in northern Uganda, we got involved, together with the organisation of World Vision in Gulu in the rehabilitation of formally abducted children by the Lord’s Resistant Army (LRA). Our members help these children to recover from their trauma by teaching them life skills such as tailoring, catering, agriculture and home economics. Most importantly, by counselling the teenage girls who were made to become mothers prematurely to accept the children begotten through force and rape by their captors, and persuade them to forgive these men and start a new life.

As a member of this congregation, I perceived my work of evangelisation through education in the formal institutions, especially concerns about the education of the poor members of society, hence the site of this study; the rural district of Moyo in Uganda.

### *Evidence from literature*

The importance of the relationship of home and children's educational success is widely acknowledged. Literature acknowledges parents are probably the first teachers of their children and therefore can be the most influential, not only in the general welfare of the child, but also in their academic life (Feinstein et al. 2008; Chevalier, 2004; UNESCO, 2005). Understanding pupils' home backgrounds in relation to their parents' education and literacy skill levels can shade light on parents' literacy practices at household level, if any, which enhances the performance of the primary schooling child. This will be of benefit to policy and practice in the education system towards improving achievement for pupils in the rural primary education. The next section presents the wider context in which the study was conducted.

## **1.3. Background and Contextual Information to the Study**

### *Background*

Poor performances in public primary schools in Uganda have been a point of contention for many years. For example, in a recent meeting of the Ugandan National Teachers Union (UNTU), concerns were expressed regarding performance disparity between private and state schools (New Vision, 2014). Teachers decried the state of public schools and their poor performance as opposed to private schools. Yet, Uganda is one of the Commonwealth countries that pledged commitment to avail universal primary education (UPE) with the goal to eradicate poverty in the country (MFPED, 1999). If the majority of the population do not achieve, then hopes to eradicate poverty through education remains a distant goal. Moreover, there is ample opportunity to exploit in terms of the increased primary enrolment which has tripled in the 2000s as a consequence of attempting to meet the MDGs, but poor literacy abilities among primary school children in government aided schools, especially in rural Uganda have led to poor school achievement continue to persist (NAPE, 2011, 2012).

Successive efforts to improve the quality of education to meet the MDGs have mainly focused on school-based factors. These include concerns about teacher education, instructional

materials, infrastructures, in terms of construction of more classrooms to meet the growing universal primary education (UPE) enrolment, pit latrines and teachers' houses (MFPED,1999). Little attention is paid to considering pupils' home backgrounds and how they might influence their school success. This study, therefore, extends to explore pupils' home backgrounds and has parental education and literacy skill levels as measures of parental influence in the quality and nature of their involvement in their children's education.

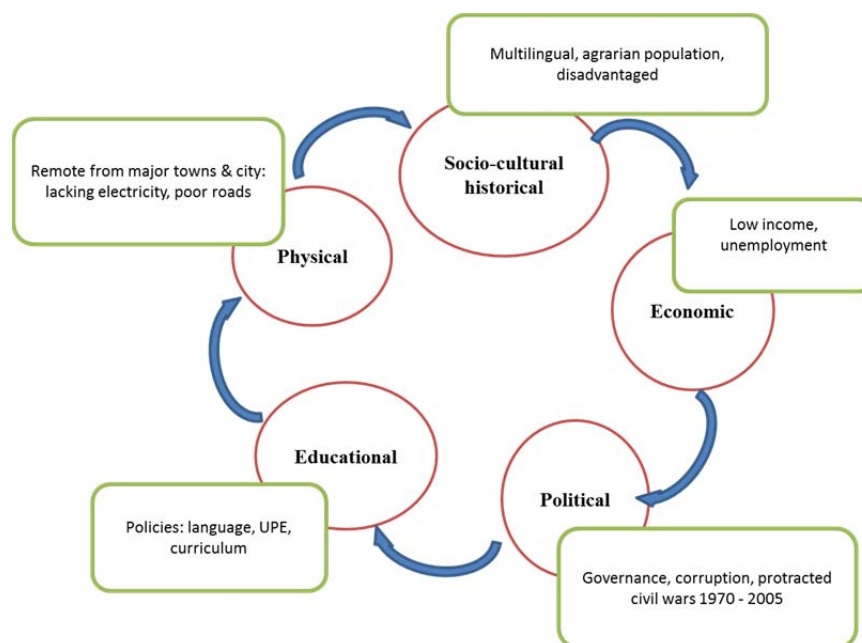
While the government through the Ministry of Education and Sports have made efforts to understand pupils' poor performance in terms of school-based factors as mentioned above, the socio-economic, political and cultural context cannot be eliminated and this is examined below.

### ***Contextual information***

Bateson once said:

‘...Without context, words and actions have no meaning’. (Bateson, 1978:15)

Acknowledging Bateson's (1978) views, the study was conducted in Moyo district, in the north western part of Uganda referred to as the West Nile Region. This study involved a community of the Ma'di people where families have to educate their children for life in a society where English is the official language but never the home language. Out of over 40 languages spoken in Uganda, the Ma'di community speak Ma'di, which has no relationship with English in terms of grammar, phonology or accent. Families largely subsist on agriculture and rudimentary fishing from the river Nile. Homes do not have running water or electricity, and people, including children, walk long distances on foot, or if well off, on bicycle or motorbike. Public means of transport is rare and expensive. Ordinary daily tasks of a typical child aged between 11-18 in the homes studied included cleaning the compound, walking to school (during school terms), working in the fields, cooking for the family, minding younger siblings, minding family animals, working for money after school. Further information regarding the wider context is provided in chapter 3 but for now figure 1.1 below provides a summary of the main characteristic features to enable our understanding of the context of the study.



**Figure 0.1 - The Main Characteristics of the Context of the Study**

From this background, attempts to investigate the role of parents as stakeholders in the education of their children become relevant. This arises from the conviction that the success of the pupils does not rest on school efforts alone and that parents' involvement is important (Macbeth and Ravn, 1994; Georgiou, 1999; Hung, 2007; Denessen, 2007; Mandy, 2010; Onwughalu, 2011). This is reinforced by the notion that '... little can be done in school if nothing is done in the home and in the world...' (De Mello, 1997:153). There is an implication that parents have a central role to play if they are considered to have a significant stake in the education of their children. For example, Mandy (2010:iii), former chairman of the Uganda National Examinations Board (UNEB) and with long experience in the field of education in Uganda, cautions parents that 'educating your child at your home is not a part time engagement but a full time personal project'. Thus, as researchers such as Denessen (2007:238) succinctly summarised, "...the basis for educational success lies in the home. These notions highlight the important responsibility expected of parents in relation to their school going children, more specifically parents' unconditional duty to ensure their children succeed in school in terms of both providing for their school needs and well-being and engaging in their academic activities. It also points to the mutual relationships between home and school that tend to be interdependent.

Research studies such as this, which are based on the home environment, require a framework that will be able to penetrate the social network in the natural setting.

## **1.4. Theoretical Frame**

Vygotsky's (1962, 1978) sociocultural-historical theory provided the framework for the inquiry. The concepts of the zone of proximal development (ZDP), mediation and inter-generational transmission of educational success underpin the conceptual model. Parental influence based on their education and literacy skill levels are treated as variables for assisting children's learning through mediational interaction in both formal and informal communication (Rogoff, 2003) to illustrate the praxis of the social-cultural theory in both direct and indirect ways. By virtue of this theory, there is implicit suggestion that the adult must be more knowledgeable than the learner. Bourdieu's (1966) cultural capital helps to illustrate such intergenerational transmission of culture as well as educational opportunities from parent to child that may occasion the success or failure of the primary school going child in the study (Feinstein et al., 2008). Bourdieu's (1966) notion of cultural capital posits that one's home background can exert influence on pupils' failure or success in school. This discourse is relevant because it highlights what an individual child derives from her home and what parents in particular households, class or culture are able to transmit to their children to determine their educational outcomes.

### ***Philosophical perspective***

The study is informed by Symbolic Interactionism (S-I) (Mead, 1964; Blumer, 1969; 1998). This view holds that human interaction is mediated by the use of symbols, by interpretation, or by ascertaining the meaning of one another's actions. The most important symbolic system regarded by interactionists is 'language' - the main tool of socialisation, which ensures social interaction (Svejcer, 1986:33). These approaches help our understanding of both Vygotsky's sociocultural theory on the theme of mediation as means of the learning process between the child and adult (parents/guardian/grandparents/older siblings) and interaction in collaboration as discussed in chapter 2.

In considering parents' education and literacy levels as a measure for their involvement in the education of their children, literacy forms the basis for assessing this study. The study treats literacy as an indicator of formal education especially in the developing world context. This fits in with UNESCO's (2006) acknowledgement that literacy is a key outcome of education - difficult to separate the right to literacy from the right to education. This necessitated the link with the concepts of New Literacies (Baynham, 1995; Barton and Hamiltown, 1998) and how it can be transmitted to children for educational success in ordinary everyday life situations.

### *Literature review*

As the focus of the study is the home setting, this necessitates some definitions of what family is and what role parents are expected to play. This draws on the definitions provided by studies on family interactions (Fitzpatrick and Badziski in Knapp and Miller, 1994), which identify three models of what in their view, constitute family.

The study focuses on parental levels of education, and what this means for their school going child. Formal education in this study is determined by the number of years a parent spends in schooling and the qualifications obtained as a result. Therefore, formal education is understood in terms of whether or not parents are able to read and write, understand text and use it in their everyday life. Pertinent literature around this topic appear to suggest that when parents are educated their pattern of influence on their children's education in various ways tend to differ from parents with low or no formal education (Feinstein et al., 2008; Chevalier, 2004; Kalil et al., 2012; Desforges and Abouchar, 2003; Brown and Shrinidhi, 2008; UNESCO, 2008; Biddulph et al., 2003). The belief that when parents are educated they acquire certain skills from schooling which influence their practices, beliefs and attitudes is summarised in Wertsch's (1985) words:

A student is involved in learning a set of complex relationships general cognitive techniques, ways of approaching problems, different genres of talk and interaction and an intricate of values concerned with communication, interaction, and society as a whole. (Wertsh, 1985: 35-6)

This is in contrast with informal education, which also plays an important role often taken for granted. The study acknowledges likely factors such as personal, internal and external effects that may influence children's education besides parental education. Nevertheless, such studies conducted by Feinstein et al. (2008) indicate that parents are better able to enhance their children's educational achievement if they are educated. However, the lingering question remains as to whether or not this holds for every context is a central subject in this study. The study aims to explore this in a particular setting, the Moyo district in Uganda.

## **1.5. Justification of the Study**

First, the importance of the relationship of home and children's educational success is widely acknowledged. Literature acknowledges parents as probably the first teachers of their children and therefore can be the most influential, not only in the general welfare of the child, but also in their academic life (Feinstein et al. 2008; Chevalier, 2004; UNESCO, 2005; Mandy, 2010). This also supports the belief that, improving children's educational quality is not limited to



schools and its administration. Therefore, investigating the nature and the extent to which parents contribute towards the success of their primary school going children based on their own education and literacy skill levels is important. This will be of benefit to policy and practice in the education system towards improving achievement for pupils in the rural primary education.

Secondly, as mentioned earlier, Uganda's education agenda was to eradicate poverty by offering education to all children, especially the disadvantaged children as a priority (MFPED, 1999; Ford, 2005).

However, despite claims that 81.8% (MOES, 2005) of the total of primary schools are located in rural areas under the universal primary education (UPE), and supported by government, the highest level of underperformance of children are also found in these areas compared to the low numbers of primary schools, totalling 6.1% and 11.5%, which are located in the urban and peri-urban areas respectively (MOES, 2005). Moreover, the signs of inequalities between urban and rural pupils are significant. For example, Ford (2005) noted that out of every 100 who go to school in the urban areas, 68 complete primary school compared with only 46 who complete primary school in the rural areas.

It is important, therefore, to account for this high number of pupils in the rural environment and their success in school. Their academic achievements or lack of it could have significant impact on the future of the country at large. As Gokah (2006) asserts, there is need for effective policy, and changes in resources and culture in order for children to stay healthy, grow and learn to become responsible citizens. Thus, this study considers the underperformance of the pupils in the Moyo District in Northern Uganda as an important cause for concern not only for the schools they attend but for all stakeholders including the country as a whole. In addition, at the launch of the Irish Aid Education Policy Seminar, Nserenko and O'Sullivan (2006) pointed out that "quality is a challenge, with generally low achievement levels in literacy and numeracy" in relation to the Ugandan situation about Basic Education. They also added that a comprehensive programme to tackle quality will target districts with the lowest performance, and Moyo District in Northern Uganda appears as one of the target districts with underperformance in primary leaving examinations (PLE), hence this study. Perhaps, a personal statement can help to highlight the previous life experiences of the researcher which led to her undertaking this study.

## **1.6. Personal Statement**

I am an educator, and a member of a religious order involved in the education of young people at secondary education levels in the disadvantaged rural part of Uganda. I consider the success of the secondary school student depends on the firm foundation of his/her primary education. Therefore, the success of any primary school going child is important, as it is a pre-requisite to success in subsequent educational career (see further details on researcher's personal experience in section 1.2).

These experiences often made me question whether the education of my parents made the difference in my success in school or not? Could it explain why the other children dropped out of school before completing their educational career? What links, if any, exists between their discontinuity with school and their parents' education and literacy skills levels? What attitudes might such parents have towards education in general, and about supporting their children in primary school? These questions underpinned my interest in this inquiry.

## **1.7. Research Questions**

This study was guided by the following research questions.

1. What difference does parents' education and literacy skill levels make, if any, in their children's achievement in school?
2. What literacy related evidence exists in the home and in the community to support the school going child?
3. What challenges, if any, parents face in supporting their children in the primary school?

In order to address these research questions, a methodological design considered suitable was developed.

## **1.8. Methodology**

### *Design*

The study used a mixed-methods design (Sarantakos, 2013; Cohen et al, 2000; Mason, 2002; Loxley et al 2008; Boeije, 2010) with an ethnographic element (Hammersley and Atkinson,

1983; Bryman, 2008) with an overall sample size of 119 including 9 families who were interviewed and observed in their homes.

### ***Methods***

The methods used for collecting data over a period of 10 weeks from July-September 2012 were:

- questionnaires
- observation
- interviews, and;
- documents

Questionnaires were specifically used for pupils and educators in their respective schools (see chapter 4 for details). After the pilot study, it was decided that parents would not be served questionnaires as some of them were illiterate.

### ***The Participants***

Participants were selected from across three sites (cases): urban, semi-rural and rural divides. Numerically they were:

1. Parents (9 families; 3 from each site) categorised as:
  - Professionals/employed (high literacy levels)
  - Semi-skilled (average literacy levels)
  - Unskilled (low or illiterate)
2. Children of 11-18 years old (6<sup>th</sup> grade in 3 schools)
3. Educators (8): 6 from 3 schools, 1 District Officer and 1 National Education Officer – the Deputy Commissioner for Primary Education, and;
4. Senior community members, one from each site were also included.

Further information on methodology is provided in chapter 4.

This combination of participants agrees with Blaikie's (2004) description of sources of data which can be primary, secondary or tertiary and where the setting can be natural or unnatural. This study used the natural setting where the researcher entered into the social setting of the participants (Horgan et al., 2009) [see chapter 4 for further information].

## **1.9. The Chapter Layout**

Overall, there are 8 chapters in this study.

Chapter 1 introduces the whole thesis.

Chapter 2 explores the literature reviewed, and the underpinning framework which draws on the sociocultural theory of Vygostky (1962, 1968). It highlights the principles of the zone of proximal development (ZPD) as a strategic process by which adults, in this case parents, assist their children to succeed in education. From related literature, the chapter posits that if parents are educated and have access to literacy resources, these will influence children's educational outcome (Desforges and Abouchar, 2003; Milevsky and Schlechter, 2007). However, if parents are not educated, and have no literacy skills, they will face challenges that will compromise their involvement in assisting their primary child leading to poor school outcomes. This view is underpinned by Denessen's (2007:238) contention that '...the basis for educational success lies in the home. The chapter links the socio-cultural theory with the second theoretical perspective considered for this study - the notion of New Literacies (Bynham, 1995).

The background and the context of the study are highlighted in chapter 3. This chapter is intended for those who are not familiar with Uganda and with the Moyo district in particular, in order to make sense of what they are reading. It serves to explain new terms local to the Ugandan context.

Chapter 4 discusses the methodological aspects of this study focusing on the design, methods, participants, data management and analysis. This includes the ethnography of families and ethical issues arising from qualitative research approaches.

While chapter 5 presents the first part of the findings from the three schools selected for the study (urban, semi-rural and rural) and responses from key educators in those school, chapter 6 provides findings from parents and their children and the senior community members. This helps to corroborate reports from the educators in order to be able to assess similarities and differences in the findings.

Chapter 7 discusses themes that arose from the findings and compares these to evidence in the literature.

Finally, conclusions are drawn in chapter 8, with some recommendations directly arising from the field inquiry.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1. Introduction**

This chapter discusses the role parents play in their children's education as a result of their own education and literacy levels or lack of them. The purpose of identifying the key factors in parents' practices is to ascertain whether their education makes a difference in the nature and quality of their involvement in the academic activities with their children. The role of parents in a child's life is undeniable (UNESCO, 2004, 2005; Kelly 2007). Parents are probably the single most influential factor in the life of their children and that includes concerns about how well their children achieve in school (Stich, 2009). Section 2 provides definitions of terms: family, education and literacy as used in this study. The theoretical frame and the conceptual framework are presented in section 3, while section 4 provides the philosophical perspectives adopted for this investigation. Section 5 reviews a body of literature that demonstrates both the direct and indirect impact of parents' education and literacy skills on the achievements of their children. The home learning environment is treated separately in section 6. In section 7, other external factors likely to influence children's education are discussed, while section 8 explores literacy as the basis for assessing this study. This highlights the importance of literacy for both parents and their children if the latter are to benefit educationally. This necessitates an overview of global literacy levels in both developed and development world contexts provided in section 9, with particular reference to Uganda as the country of investigation. Section 10 draws the chapter to a conclusion.

#### **2.2. Definitions of Terms**

The primary influences on children take place in the family; there is therefore a need to understand what family means as the contextual setting where parents and children interact.

##### ***Family***

The term family can be defined from different angles. The Oxford dictionary of sociology defines family as, 'an intimate domestic group made up of people related to one another by bonds of blood, sexual mating or legal ties' (Marshall, 1998:222). However, this is not conclusive; other studies explore different family forms. For example, from a symbolic interactionist perspective, family is 'a unity of interacting persons' (Burgess, 1926:5). This is

based on the understanding that ‘the unity of families is based not on legal or cultural prescription but on the shared meanings that emerge from the interactions of family members’ (Reynold and Herman-Kinney, 2003:511). Fitzpatrick and Badzinski (1994:727) further identified three models for understanding the term family: a) family structure, b) task orientation and c) transactional process.

***a) Family as structure***

Family, as viewed from the perspective of family structure can be defined in two ways: (i) when the unit of family is for procreation – a direct reference to the couple and children – termed as the *nuclear family*, usually restricted to individuals living in the same house but may not necessarily be blood relations. For example, in the case of adopted children, step-children or step parents, and (ii) when individuals are related by blood or marriage involving such persons as parents, and siblings, grandparents, aunts uncles and cousins. This is referred to as a *family by origin*. From this definition, a family by origin includes the extended family, or any group of individuals that has biological roots or social legitimacy by virtue of shared genetics, marriage or adoption. But this definition does not say much about the subjective experiences of the members, who live in the same household, and how they relate with each other and this is described in the second definition – task orientation.

***b) Family as task oriented***

This definition incorporates the psychosocial aspect of the members. It emphasises how tasks of family life are performed – by whom and for whom and why. According to Fitzpatrick and Badzinski (1994:727 see also Burgess, 1926), the principal concerns of *task orientation* definitions are the primary functions of the family. Family is seen to be a psychosocial group, consisting of at least one adult member and one or more other persons that work towards mutual fulfilment, nurturance, and development for the young. A typical feature of this definition places responsibility for the socialisation [and also education] and nurturance of children (Lerner and Spanier, 1978) on the adults in the family. The adults involved in the tasks of nurturing of children may not necessarily be biologically related to them, thus the role of other caregivers is implied. It is likely that in the absence of the biological first parents either due to work or death, one or more grandparents may assume responsibility for the children. This extends the structure of the family as the primary focus for raising the children. This definition is relevant to this study as it is interested in finding out the extent to which parents/caregivers/ other adults are involved in the education of the children, and whether or

not the nature of their involvement in caring, nurturing or guidance enhances or inhibits children's performance in school. However, this task oriented definition tends to eliminate young couples who have not yet had children, and also older couples who have already raised their children from being counted as a family. Furthermore, the couples who are biologically childless as well as spinsters and bachelors who might have custody of younger children for various reasons are similarly left out of this definition. Nevertheless, this does not interfere with the goal of this study as its focus is on adults who assume parental responsibility for children in their care.

Overall, this definition on the functions of the family tends to underestimate the fact that the family is an entity far from being homogeneous. Each family faces different challenges, especially depending on the wider social environment and also when the children become young adults. Meeting their different needs is illustrated in the third definition – transactional process.

***c) Family as transactional unit***

The third definition of family places importance on identity, a sense of belonging and interpersonal processes within the family:

...a group of intimates, who generate a sense of home and group identity, complete with strong ties of loyalty and emotion, and experience of a history and a future. (Fitzpatrick and Badzinski, 1994: 728)

From this definition, two concepts of intimacy are presented; i) intimacy as interdependence and ii) intimacy as commitment.

Intimacy as interdependence is where individuals in the household have an impact on each other and thereby influence one another's feelings, thoughts or behaviours (Kelly et al., 1983). It is believed that in interdependent intimate relationships an individual has a progressive effect, either directly or indirectly, on the others' behaviour or attitude (Lewin, 1948: see also Levinger and Huston, 1990). Applied to the topic of this study, parents and children are expected to influence each other's feelings, thoughts and behaviours. It is yet to be explored if there is a difference in such intimate influences between educated parents and less educated parents. However, such interdependence does not necessarily mean that there are always warm and positive influences, free of setbacks. As Fitzpatrick and Badzinski (1994) noted, any natural society is likely to have issues of interest, power, control or equality occurring.

Secondly, intimacy viewed as commitment means family members are committed to one another's well-being at both the personal and structural levels. Such personal commitment is said to derive from the satisfactions an individual experiences by being a member of a family (Fitzpatrick and Badzinski, 1994; Rusbult and Buuk, 1993). In as far as this study is concerned; the commitment to relationship between parents and children at both micro and macro-social levels becomes essential. Although early studies on parents-child relationship viewed children as a passive partner in the socialisation process, awaiting parental moulding (Hartup, 1978), later studies acknowledge that children do contribute to the family (Peterson and Robins, 1987). This more child-centred approach is referred to as a 'mirror reverse' orientation because children's behaviour may change and influence parents' attitudes (Fitzpatrick and Badzinski, 1994: 748). This concept, if applied to this study, could point to such cases as when a school going child shows a keen interest in his/her school matters; it could motivate his/her parents to support him/her more. Lerner and Spanier (1978) went as far as to suggest that this reverse relationship may not only be realised when children reach adolescence or adulthood but even infants can equally influence a wide variety of family processes. For the purpose of this study, it should suffice to say that both the social moulding and the mirror reverse orientations between parents and children are acceptable as they simultaneously and mutually influence one another. As Cappelo (1987) states, each family member serves as the stimulus for the other's behaviour. Again, this should not be viewed as an interdependent interaction that is conflict free. Families, and those who subsist in them, live in a wider social framework and this is likely to influence family processes both within individuals (intra-interaction) and outside of the individuals (inter-interaction) (Saville-Stroike, 2006) but often these are mediated and influenced by the adult communication in the family.

Another intimacy worth noting is that which exists among siblings (Bengtson, et al., 2005). According to Fitzpatrick and Badzinski (1994), 80% of the human population live the first third of their lives in families with siblings. Bowerman and Dobash's (1974) study show that children's interactions with their siblings have a significant influence on the personal happiness that they experience in the family growing up. Khan (1982a, 1982b) asserts that for the most part siblings share time, space, and personal history to an extent unlikely to be found in peer relationships. Importantly, siblings influence one another at every stage in the development of their personal identities. This is apparent, for instance, when siblings are often seen to compare themselves with one another on a number of dimensions - attractiveness, intelligence, accomplishment and so forth (Tesser, 1980). This can be beneficial for their



learning experience when parents are able to intervene and moderate their interactions. It is the interest of this study to ascertain how parents, as a result of their own different levels of education could moderate and mediate such comparisons and competition among siblings for a healthy development in the family unit.

From these definitions of family, it is evident that parents, through moderation and mediation processes, have influence on and responsibility for the children within the household (Salkind, 2008). Parental mediator variables, according to Salkind (2008) serve to explain the relationship between the predictor variable and outcome. In the first case, for example, a positive family influence functions as a protection for the child in instances of adversity so that the child is not exposed to harm (Bengtson et al., 2005). For instance, she notes that a lack of monitoring by parents [moderator variable] in risky environments can be physically detrimental to the child and can also affect his schooling. In the second variable, family can be mediators when, for example, parents get involved in the education of their children, which is believed to be a positive factor. It is likely to benefit children's performance in terms of 'high attendance and test results, improved homework completion, and decreased violence and substance abuse' (Salkind, 2008:397). She also noted that family influences through lack of parental monitoring, for example, can exacerbate the effects of already existing negative contexts. This study questions whether parents' education would make a difference and so the meaning of education as used in this study is provided below.

### ***Education as skills acquisition***

Craft et al. (1980) posit the question as to which parents are the ones likely endowed with the power to engage in the academics of the child:

...none but the articulate, the concerned, the middle-class mothers and fathers who already dominate the work of parent-teacher associations; who are first in the queue for interviews with the children's teacher on open days; and who contribute generously to the swimming pool appeal or sponsored walk (Craft et al., 1980:14)

This expression points to the attributes of informed, literate parents who demonstrate both an appreciation of the value of education and their concerns for their child's education. The levels of education referred to in this study draw on the traditional assessment of education as measured by the number of years of schooling or the educational qualifications gained (Feinstein et al., 2008). 'Educated parents' here refers to those parents who have attended

formal education to varying levels. Parents with high levels of education are described as professionals. These are those who attended formal education, and acquired qualifications with particular job skills through specific training. The average educated parents (semi-skilled) are those who attended formal education through primary and secondary education but did not train in any specific trade, while the less educated parents (unskilled) are those who completed basic education only/or started basic education but did not complete it, and/or never attended formal education at all. Although Feinstein et al. (2008) contend that measuring educational participation in this way does not account for the quality of that schooling or of other important features of development that occurred during those years of learning. Nevertheless, they are in agreement that measures of educational participation by qualifications gained can also be highly correlated with the length of educational attendance. It should be noted that the parents under investigation in this study have a different home language other than the language of instruction in school. Uganda adopted English as its official language and English is used for educational instruction in schools and institutions (MOES, 2005; NAPE, 2011, 2012). Saville-Stoike (2006:4) defines a ‘second language’ as “typically an official or societally dominant language needed for education, employment, and other basic purposes”. It is therefore important to note that parents described in this study as having attained high levels of formal education are those able to use English in their everyday interaction, are able to read, write and understand texts. In addition, they are also able to assist their school going children in literacy related matters for their schooling.

### ***Education as cognition***

The term cognition here means:

...the knowledge, beliefs, thoughts and ideas that people have about themselves and their environment... the mental processes through which knowledge is acquired, including perception, memory and thinking. (Hogg and Vaughan, 2008: 151)

This definition points to the link between parents’ education and the influences that education have on them leading them to behave, think and believe in ways which have a bearing on their own children’s school education (Eccles, 2005; Feinstein et al., 2008). In other words, parental education as cognition modifies their beliefs and values they place on education and in turn how this influences their educational practices at home towards their primary school going children. This is why this study uses literacy as a basis for assessing the education and literacy skills levels of parents as a measure for helping their school going children at the primary school level. For example, Eccles (2005), like Feinstein et al. (2008), believe that parents with more education also have higher expectations for their children’s education, which in turn,

predicts greater educational attainment for their children (see also Hang and Ho, 2005). Overall, parental education as cognition refers to attitude formation. While acknowledging that genetic factors play an influential role in children's attainment arising from their natural endowments such as intelligence, motivation, temperament; for the purpose of this study, parents' levels of education and their literacy skills are selected for analysing their impact, if any, on children's achievement in school.

### ***Education as context***

Education defined as context refers to the institutional aspects such as schools, colleges, institutions and other learning settings including family and community (Feinstein et al., 2008). Understanding education from this perspective implies there are important social relations that impact on the experience and development of the individual and again, language becomes an important tool for socialisation (Bateson, 1978). For him, 'without context, words and actions have no meaning' (Bateson, 1978:15) and this precisely consists in interactions with other individuals; parents, teachers, peers or others. According to Feinstein et al. (2008) such interactions have a bearing on the formation of the cultural and personal identities of the learner [child], social groups, and society as a whole. In their view, these features of the educational context may result from explicit and deliberate learning experiences that are part of the social interaction that occur within it or outside of it (see also Delgado-Gaitan, 1990). This is succinctly summarised in Gieryn's (2000) view about the home-place that a home nested in a definable space, is the crucible from which a person's social identity emerges, transforms, and is internalised and sustains over time.

### ***Education as process***

Education as process refers to the explicit experience of curricula-led learning, where a teacher takes the student through the stages of educational practices intended to develop key skills, capabilities, knowledge and values (Feinstein et al., 2008). This process, Feinstein and colleagues argue, is not only explicit and deliberate but also implicit and may not be determined. Accordingly, their expression is that, the experience of learning is a multidimensional interaction of learner, teacher, and other learners in a specific form of social transactions. These dynamic relationships also involve individuals' experiences of cognitive, affective and behavioural development as learners engage in cognitive processes. This process will also involve the learner's self-regulation, attention and reflection about what has and has not been learnt as required by the task of learning.

## *Literacy*

In this study, the traditional meaning attached to literacy as the ability to read and write (Holme, 2004; Baynham, 1995; NLNW, 2004) is adopted but with the addition of listening and the ability to understand aspects (DFEE, 1998; Baynham, 1995). Baynham (1995) contends that although literacy has varied meanings, this theme tends to run through the different expressions. He believes that literacy can best be explained where it fits in social life as well as its roles in constructing social life and one of these pathways is from the ideological perspective which is contextualised. As Graff (1979:2) concurs, 'literacy is all around us' – it is 'a basic human right', 'a tool for productive citizenship and for fulfilling life'. Consequently, social activists such as Paulo Freire tend to define literacy from the point of view of empowerment – a tool to awaken the human consciousness (Freire and Macedo, 1987).

The definition of the UK National Literacy Strategy's (NLS) seems to shed further light on what literacy could mean. It asserts that literacy unites the important skills of reading and writing but that speaking and listening are also part of the Literacy Framework (DFEE, 1998). Holme (2004) concurs with this view and thus argues that to be literate is no longer about just being able to read and write; but it is about speaking and understanding the more elaborate form of language that literacy allows us to create and draw meaning. From this perspective, this study adopts the term literacy as practice and therefore involves the 'concrete human activity', not just what people do with literacy but also what they make of what they do, the values they place on it and the ideologies that surround it (Baynham, 1995:1). In this study, therefore literacy practices refer to parental literacy skill levels which enables them 'to do' for their children in day-to-day situations of the home. This is summed up in UNESCO's (2006) simple but inclusive description of who can be reckoned as literate, 'one who can, understand, read and write a short simple statement on his or her everyday life' (UNESCO, 2006).

In all of the various definitions, there is a social aspect to the term and this makes it appropriate to consider the theoretical frame, which explores the literacy practices of parents with their children in the family home context.

## **2.3. Theoretical Frame of the Study**

*“What do I think? Why do I think what I think, and how do I think the way I think?” (Palmer, 2001:35)*

These questions underpin Vygotsky’s socio-cultural historical theory adopted for this investigation. Vygotsky’s (1962) sociocultural – historical theory derives from the understanding that the human ‘mental functioning in the individual can be understood only by going outside the individual and examining the social and cultural processes from which it derives’ (Adrchivili, 2001:35). This theory is deemed suitable because it connects with some of the basic fundamental issues regarding social studies of family, that is, the contextualisation of the study rooted in Pepper’s (1970 [1942]) world hypothesis of family theories.

### **2.3.1. Understanding the Sociocultural- Historical Theory**

The theory posits that children develop higher cognitive functioning through practical activity in a social environment with the assistance of adults (Vygotsky, 1978; Kosulin et al., 2003). The cultural-historical means that the factors determining the individual’s life activity derive from the individual’s historical development in a particular culture (Vygotsky, 1978).

The theory postulates that age periods are to be understood as historically and materially constructed – historically because the functions are constructed through the history of human practices, and materially because the functions are developed as a consequence of tasks and interactions with others (Kozulin et al., 2003). In this view, it can be surmised that the social situation of development provides a path to characterise the interaction between historically constructed forms of practice and the child’s interest and actions. This is relevant to the study as it explores the educational practices of parents in relation to their school-going children among the Ma’di people of Uganda.

In addition, the theory is also cognisant of the fact that ‘the child is not a passive recipient of an objective environment’, he/she is active about what is being learned (Kozulin et al., 2003:48). As illustrated in his work:

*...the social situation of development represents the initial moment for all dynamic changes of any age, one must first explain the social situation of development. (Vygotsky, 1998b:198)*

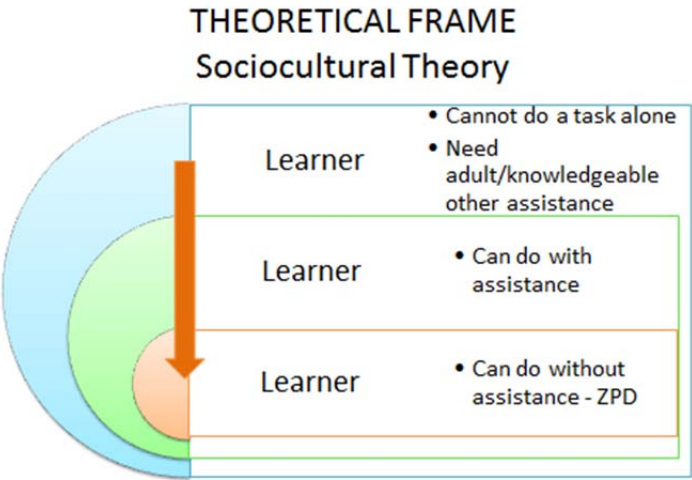
Vygotsky believes that each age period has a characteristic central new-formation in relation to which psychological functions develop (Vygotsky, 1998b). Effectively, this new-formation is expected to be organised in the social situation of development by basic contradiction

between the child’s current capabilities (as revealed in the actually developed psychological functions), the child’s needs and desires, and the demands and possibilities of the environment (Kozulin et al., 2003). In response to the environment, the child engages in different concrete tasks and specific interactions, which can result in the formation of new-functions (or enrichment of the existing functions). Consequently, new-formation produced for a given age period is a consequence of the child’s interactions in the social situation of development with relevant psychological functions but these are not yet mature (Kozulin et al., 2003).

Vygotsky also explains the causal-dynamic of how and why there is a qualitative change in the psychological structure for each age period. Using a given period (1-4 years) of time, he points out that from infancy to adolescence, the child’s development is demarcated by shorter periods of crisis (Kozulin et al., 2003). Central to the theory of sociocultural-historical theory is the concept of the zone of proximal development (ZPD) of the child.

**2.3.2. The Concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)**

The conceptual framework adopts a set of a loosely connected assumptions and abstract concept that help us to understand particular concepts such as the zone of proximal development (ZPD) (Bengtson et al., 2005). The ZPD is defined as ‘the distance between a child’s ‘actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers’ (Vygotsky, 1978:86; see also Kozulin et al., 2003; Palmer, 2001). This is illustrated in figure 2.1 below.



**Figure 2.1 - The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) towards Independent Performance**

The concept of the ZPD posits that the child's specific actions in daily life do not need to be directed to confronting the contradictions in the social situation, referred to as 'predominant activity' (Kozulin et al., 2003:47). Rather, the critical functions required for a transition to a new level of personal psychological development are the situations when the child engages specifically in actions relevant to this contradiction. What this means is that, each period has a 'leading activity', the pivotal source of development in each stage (Vygotsky, 1967:15-16). The idea of leading activity thus denotes the particular relations in the social situation of development that are likely to contribute to the development of the functions that lead to the structural reorganisation of a child's psychological functions. It should be noted that the activity itself is not developing the child; instead, in order to realise the leading activity, the child must engage in actions that serve to develop the psychological functions needed for that activity (Kozulin et al., 2003). Accordingly, in Vygotsky's (1998b:198) mind the new-formation is a product, not a prerequisite, of an age period.

Williams and Gregory (2009) would argue that the development of the zone of proximal development is likely to result in what they term as "dissonance" or "assonance" in gaining access to the wider symbolic capital. This describes children who are brought up in a disadvantaged or an enabling home respectively in terms of a home rich in literacy related resource environment or devoid of it. The role of parents in this process is undeniable as they are probably the immediate single most influential factor in the life of their children, and that includes concerns about how well their children do in school.

According to Vygotsky, in addition to collaboration and communication with adults, the child's zone of actual development to individual activity should be noted (Kravtsova, 2010). Vygotsky explains that this transition in some children occurs smoothly and, others, it may remain unrealised. The possible reasons depend largely on the role played by other experts, for example, capable classmates, peers, siblings, parents or grandparents who are more knowledgeable than the learner. The basic intention is to expand the learner's zone of capabilities for independent performance.

The relevance of this theory for the study is its belief and understanding that when adults assist children through what Vygotsky refers to as the zone of proximal development (ZPD), such a child will be capable of succeeding in the same task alone tomorrow (Kozulin et al., 2003).

### ***The Socio-cultural Perspective of the ZPD***

As has already been mentioned, Vygotsky believes that ‘mental functioning in the individual can be understood only by going outside of the individual and examining the social and cultural processes from which it derives’ (Palmer, 2001:35). In the context of this study, this will include such things as the role of language, oral tradition, songs, dance and belief systems of the Ma’di. This is elaborated by Bourdieu’s (1966) social and cultural capital inculcated in the individual’s life pattern. This is supported by the belief that when children enter the school system, they already possess the said capital resources from their socio-cultural historical background and are likely to meet with a different symbolic capital in the education system (Bourdieu, 1966). The formal institutionalised forms of education may have entirely different social and cultural capital as already mentioned of parents in this study who did not attend formal education and may not use English (new capital) for communication. In addition, the formal education may also be entirely alien to their existing culture, which is predominantly oral. A brief examination of the theory from philosophical dimensions may be useful.

#### **2.4.Philosophical Perspectives of the Study: Symbolic Interactionism**

Symbolic interactionism is one of the first theoretical perspectives to engage in a systematic examination of families (Howard, 1981; LaRossa and Reitzes, 1993) and as the family is the focus of this study, it is considered relevant. The socio-cultural historical theory of Vygotsky (1978) that links with George Mead’s symbolic interactionism (Blumer, 1969, 1998) is considered relevant for this study. Burgess’ (1926:5) definition of family as ‘a unit of interacting persons’, portrays interaction as the element intrinsic to human society that allows for the mutual influence of the individuals and groups that compose it. For Burgess, family members may relate to one another as individuals, but essentially, they also become aware of the various roles that each person plays both in the family and outside of it (see also Turner, 1962). This is elaborated in Blumer’s (1998) three fundamental premises on which the symbolic interactionism operates. These are:

- i. human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings the things have for them;
- ii. the meaning of such things is rooted in the social interaction that one has with one’s fellows, and;
- iii. these meanings are handled in, and modified through, an interpretative process used by the person in dealing with the things he/she encounters.



This view of symbolic interactionism agrees with Vygotsky's theory in the sense that it sees meaning as arising in the process of interaction between people. As Blumer (1998:4) states, 'symbolic interactionism sees meaning as social products, as creations that are formed in and through defining activities of people as they interact'. In addition, it is reinforced by Bourdieu's views on the practice of symbolic capital when he compares human interaction with an exchange of gifts emphasising that:

...the improvisations of everyday strategies... owe their infinite complexity to the fact that the giver's undeclared calculation [*intentionality*] has to reckon with the receiver's undeclared calculation [*response*] and hence satisfy his expectations without appearing to know what they are. (Bourdieu, 1990:112)

The focus on interaction and reciprocity between individuals in these views relate to the interest of this study in terms of the important parents-child interactive activities which are being explored. In practice, this is made clearer by John Locke's theory about the duty of parents and the role of the family towards their children as reviewed by Kelly (2007). According to Kelly (2007), Locke claims that parents have a duty of care towards their children and it is on the basis of this duty that they claim power over their children. This comes from the understanding that 'parents have an obligation to nurture and protect their children as a result of the basic natural law to preserve others as much as possible' (Kelly, 2007: 85). Locke's views about parental duty towards their children is a general duty and not based on a special moral claim that children can make. In addition, this duty falls on everyone in the nuclear family and not just the biological parents but includes guardians and foster parents. The family (nuclear and extended) is important in Locke's theory where it is seen as the primary 'institution through which child care and nurture is provided and as an institution that is prior to the introduction of political society and authority (Kelly, 2007: 85).

Overall, Burgess (1926) was in agreement with others writing in the field, that changes taking place in the surrounding community and society can be expected to have an impact on family members' attitudes, values and interactions and this is important to note in the context of parental involvement in the education of their children. The kinds of parents Craft et al. (1980) described as the ones likely to have more impact on the education of their children requires further exploration and this is presented in the next section.

## 2.5. The Impact of Parental Education

Having defined the terms family and education, the role played by parents relative to their school going children became apparent. As Salkind (2008) has portrayed:

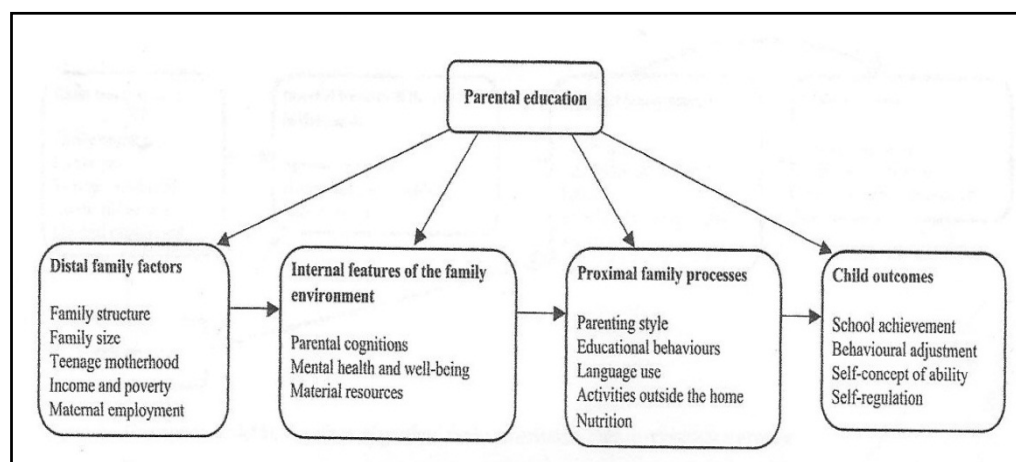
...parents have numerous roles and responsibilities to teach, model and socialise with their children in order for them to learn and adapt in their social environment. (Salkind, 2008:397)

This quote depicts a further reinforcement of the convention on the Rights of the Child that spells out that one of the aims of education should be:

...the development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential. (UNESCO, 2005:31)

However, the development of the child in all aspects does not start from school, neither can school do everything to ensure desirable outcomes (Macbeth and Ravn, 1994). The home, seen as the primary setting in which the child is first reared even before reaching school age, prepares the child for subsequent school success (Mandy, 2010). Studies reviewed seem to suggest that the contribution of parents to their children's education require some level of education.

A wealth of studies have indicated that parents with high levels of education influence their children in different ways, which enhance children to perform better in school than parents with low or no formal education (Feinstein et al., 2008; Sammons et al., 2007; UNESCO, 2004, 2005, 2006; Macbeth and Ravn, 1994). Feinstein et al. (2008), for example, have notably focused on parental education and how it influences a number of different measures in the educational experiences and development of a child including their school achievement. The figure below illustrates this scenario.



**Figure 2.2 - The Influence of Parental Education**  
*Source: Adapted from Feinstein et al. (2008:26)*

This model outlines three distinct categories of family level influences, namely, distal family factors, internal features of family environment and proximal family processes which can be moderated and mediated through parents education for a desirable outcome for the child. This is based on the belief that when parents are educated, they learn something during schooling that influences the ways in which they interact and deal with their children (Eccles, 2005). In other words, parents education tends to influence their skills, attitude, beliefs, values and knowledge of the educational system, which in turn, influences their educational practices at home. One example from each of the categories helps to elaborate the parental education model although these may vary from culture to culture.

### ***Teenage motherhood***

Distal family factor refers to ‘the more general (global or descriptive) factors that characterise the wider environment of the child and provide an index of a family’s demographic or socio-economic situation’ (Feinstein et al., 2008:25).

Taking teenage motherhood, as an example, which is a common occurrence in rural primary schools in Uganda, Feinstein et al. (2008) conducted a study by stratifying parental background, and established that there is substantial evidence that children’s education level and cognitive development are positively related to the education of their parents (see also Wolfe and Haveman, 2002; Chevalier, 2004). Their study investigated whether parents who left school before the age of 15 years have effect on their children’s education or not. It was found to have a strong negative correlation with the probability that the young person will stay on at school themselves beyond the minimum age required (see also Bynner and Joshi, 2002; Feinstein et al., 1999; Gregg and Machin, 2000). Whereas a lower educational level of parents negatively affects their children’s likelihood to complete their education, other evidence shows that mothers’ educational qualifications are positively related to children’s school readiness (see also Christian, et al., 1998; Seefeldt et al., 1999; Hill et al., 2001; Joshi and Verropoulou, 2000). These results concur with Chevalier’s (2004) study of parents’ education on their children. In other words, parents’ education mediates the impact of the wider contextual factors on the experience of the child.

### ***Material resources***

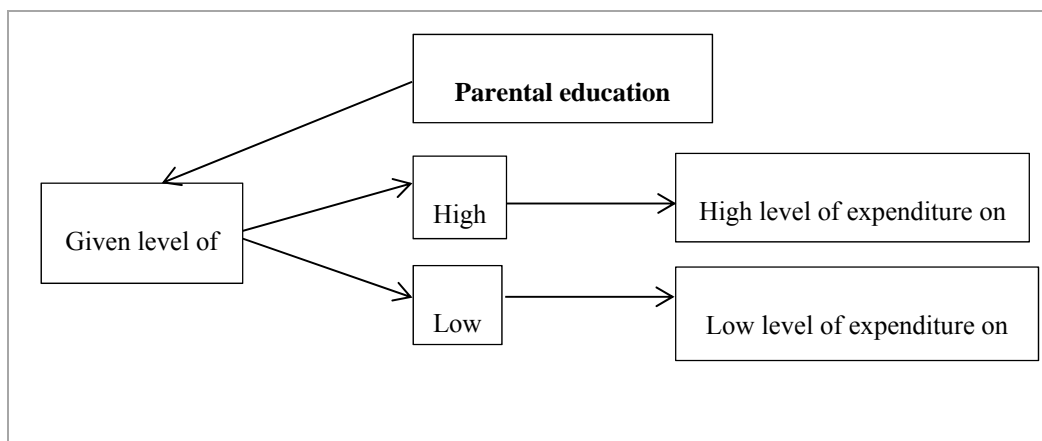
The second category refers to the ‘Internal features of the family environment’. This is the context within the family, which is associated with the immediate influencing variables or

factors, which in turn influence the child. Two hypothetical strands are drawn upon when stating the importance of parents' education in this area.

- 1) It impacts on (that is, it is mediated by) other important factors, which in turn influence children's development; and
- 2) It moderates the effects of these other factors, that is, it changes the way in which they operate. (Feinstein et al., 2008:27)

Similarly, these enriching and stimulating materials and activities influence children's education (Gottfried et al., 1998; Delgado-Gaitan, 1990; Mandy, 2010). In addition, the availability of human resources such as parental cognitions in terms of mental well-being (attitudes, aspirations, expectations, values and beliefs) exhibited by parents. For instance, the United Nations acknowledge that school-age children perform better if their parents have an education and if books and other reading materials are available at home or in the community (UNESCO, 2008). If parents are well educated, they are likely to be employed and earn money, which can predict the extent of provision of a literacy-stimulating environment in the home.

Family income has a direct connection with parents' education levels and indirectly impacts on the school going child (Glewwe et al., 2001; see also Feinstein et al., 2008; Hanushek, 2007; Hoff, 2003a, 2003b; Guo and Hans 2000; Ardila et al., 2005). In the study of Ardila et al. (2005), highly educated parents were able to send their children to attend private schooling, which is better resourced than public schools. This is most likely because parents who had higher education levels were employed and could afford private schooling for their children than those children whose parents had low levels of education and had to attend public school (Ardila et al., 2005). In addition, they also observed that children whose parents had higher income may also derive greater developmental advantages from the high income. The income effect is illustrated in the diagram below.



**Figure 2.3 - The Impact of Household Income on Achievement**  
*Source: Adapted from Feinstein et al. (2008:28)*

As the figure indicates, family income is linked to parents' education levels and has a bearing on the child's school achievement through mediation (Salkind, 2008). According to Feinstein et al. (2008), parents' education has a direct effect on family income and, in turn has an effect on children's achievement. This influence can be in the form of such things as good housing, a more enriched family environment, attendance at better schools, having better sleeping places, enough space to study, to mention but a few (Gormley, 1999). Other studies have shown that parents with higher education are likely to create a more intellectually stimulating environment for their children (Hoff, 2003a, 2003b). However, income levels across families is not equal as Bassey (1999:54) observes, for example, in many developing parts of Africa, 'family differences and home environments affect poor children disproportionately'.

### ***Parenting Style and Children's Achievement***

The third category of parental influence is the proximal family processes. This refers to ways in which parents rear their children, behave, use language, engage in activities outside of home and the type of food they eat and provide for their children.

Both psychological and sociological research has found that parents with different educational levels raise their children differently (Hill and Stafford, 1974; Lareau, 1989). Parents' education as a predictor of social class, has been linked to more enhancing parenting behaviours across a range of domains including more authoritative parenting styles (Pinderhughes et al., 2000). It is also linked to more sensitive and responsive mother-child interactions (NICHD ECCRN, 2004), greater language stimulation (Hoff, 2003), and greater levels of parental management and advocacy (Lareau, 1989), which are thought to improve children's achievement.

Research has demonstrated the importance of distinguishing between parental, psychological control and behavioural control (Barber, 1996; Barber & Harman, 2002). Psychological control refers to control that attempts to intrude into the psychological and emotional development of the child (for example, thinking processes, self-expression, emotions, and attachment to parents). Psychological control, including parental intrusiveness, guilt induction, and love withdrawal, interferes with the child's ability to become independent and to develop a healthy sense of self and personal identity. The subject of mathematics, for example, served as an example for examining psychological control in a study conducted by Aunola and Nurmi (2004). They found that a high level of psychological control exercised by mothers predicted slow progress in mathematics. This kind of control can be linked to an authoritarian form of

parenting style as Lola and Shrinidhi's (2008) study indicated as compared to the positive authoritative form of parenting style, which has been associated with children's educational achievement. Lola and Shrinidhi (2008) conducted a study on 'Parenting Styles: The Impact on Student Achievement'. They assert that parenting style significantly influences achievement and performance of children as described by both parents and children in clinical as well as school settings. Because student achievement involves all aspects of learning including cognition, decision-making, and adjustment, parenting style has mediating factors that are confounding to students, parents, and educators alike. In their findings, authoritative forms of parenting tend to support children's achievement and impacts the areas of learning, instruction, school environment, and family conditions. In such situations, the impact of student achievement on society can be of importance when considering the ramifications for the next generation.

### ***Educational behaviours***

There is evidence that mothers with college education tend to talk more, use a richer vocabulary, and read more to their children than those mothers who have not attained higher education (Hoof-Ginsberg, 1991). Frequent interaction between parents and child tend to create confidence and freedom which can result in parental control of behaviour being more easily accommodated by children, hence their commitment to schooling and school related activities. Portes, Cuentas, and Zady (2000) conducted a study that assessed the relation of parent-child interaction to children's intellectual achievement. The results revealed that although interaction characteristics are related to children's intellectual achievement, that relation is moderated by context factors which may vary in each culture.

### ***Language use***

Hoff et al. (2002) similarly demonstrated that highly educated parents (professionals) have a different way of interacting with their children particularly in respect to their language use. This is seen to be particularly important during toddlerhood (12-35 months) (Halliday, 1973) as at this stage, babies are capable of initiating and maintaining social interactions and acquire the capacity for representational thought, and they begin to engage in 'symbolic' or pretend play. It is noted that engaging in pretend play not only reflects children's increased capacities but also promotes their cognitive and social skills, including attention, memory, logical reasoning, vocabulary, creativity, and behavioural and emotional regulation (Bergen, and Mauwer, 2000; Berk, 2001; Elias and Berk 2002, Ruff and Capozzoli, 2003).

Underpinning this mode of development is the sociocultural theory that contends that toddlers learn most during play when a parent or other adult facilitates and structures their activities (Rogoff, 2003; Karen et al., 2005). Thus, Wells (2009) suggests parents (or caregivers) need to cultivate the patience, listen and spend time with their children, especially for language development, which is essential for literacy skills.

As can be seen from the examples above, parental influence, as a result of their education may take direct forms as the following studies indicate: Sticht, 2010; Chevalier, 2004; Kalil, et al., 2012; Soprano, 2003; Ardila et al., 2005; Berk, 2001; Sayer, 2004a, 2004b; Salkind, 2008. Or, it may take an indirect forms as in the following studies: Glewwel et al., 2001; Hanushek, 2007; Hoff, 2003a, 2003b; Guo and Hans, 2000. Following these two pathways, the next sections explore different situations and elaborate how they influence their children's school outcomes.

## **2.6.Direct and Indirect Impacts of Parents' Education**

The influence of parents' education as mentioned in section 2.5 operates in both direct and indirect ways (Salkind, 2008) which impacts on the school achievement of the child. The direct impact refers to the ways that parents' influence children's school achievement through their own educational skills. This occurs when they engage directly in their children's academic activities such as reading, helping with homework, discussing academic related matters, use of language and joining in shared activities at home (Chevalier, 2004; Feinstein et al, 2008; Biddulph et al., 2003; Kalil et al., 2012; Ardial et al., 2005). Whereas indirect influences are those relating to parents' dispositions such as belief, attitude, values and knowledge of the educational system, which in turn, influences their educational practices at home (Eccles, 2005; Feinstein et al., 2008; Glewwel et al., 2001; Hanushek, 2007; Hoff, 2003a, 2003b; Guo and Hans, 2000). This also includes the resources (human, material and financial) and the use of them for the benefit of the child's education as may be mediated and moderated by parental education (Hanushek and Wößman, 2007). Overall, Feinstein et al. (2008) identified six elements that summarise their hypothesis on the impact of parental education and transmission to children's educational success:

- 1) imparting proximal processes such as teaching practices and educational behaviours in the home;
- 2) moderating the effects of proximal processes, changing the nature of their influence;

- 3) impacting on the internal features of contexts and, in turn, on proximal processes;
- 4) supporting individuals and families in managing a set of characteristics and hence moderating the effect of characteristics;
- 5) impacting on key distal factors such as income; and/ or
- 6) protecting the effect of each distal factor, that is, by acting protectively and providing resilience in the family. (Feinstein et al., 2008:29)

The following sections discuss each in turn.

### **2.6.1. Direct impacts of Parents' Education on Children's Education**

The role of parents in their children is undeniable. A body of studies has identified parents as probably the most single influential factor in the life of their children, including concerns about how well their children achieve in school (Salkind, 2008; Sammons et al., 2007). In this study, this may be reflected in the ways parents' education informs skills children have to model, as well as the parents' own ability to intervene in the educational system, in terms of parents-child communication, time, language use, reading, and working together at home, that impact on the school going child (Altschul, 2011). According to Feinstein and colleagues (2008), through such involvement parents transmit cognitive competence to children even some times without their [parents] knowledge (Delgado-Gaitan, 1990; see also Sammons et al., 2007).

#### ***Transmission of cognitive competence***

Parental involvement theorists have proposed that the effects of parents' participation on cognitive competence with their children are long lasting – it positively influences children's future education (Chevalier's, 2004; Feinstein et al., 2008; Brown and Shrinidhi, 2008; Epstein, 1991; Keith et al., 1989).

Chevalier's (2004) research on educational choices in the UK succinctly explains this scenario of parents' transmission of cognitive competencies to their children. His findings showed that each year of education undertaken by the parental generation increases the probability of their children staying on after post-compulsory education by 3 to 4 percentage points'. He disagrees with Hanushek and Wößman (2007) in that the positive effect of parental education is not due to the higher wages more educated parents may earn. Rather it is precisely because of the education of the parents. However, the findings reveal some interesting parallels; while



a mother's schooling appears to have a greater effect on her daughter's education, fathers education tend to influence their sons more than their daughters. It is not clear why this gender characterisation exists.

Parental involvement theorists who have proposed that the effects of parents participation are long lasting, point to the fact that parents involvement affects not only the student's current learning but also builds a foundation for future success (Epstein, 1991; Keith et al., 1989; Allen and Daly, 2002). For instance, Epstein (1991) reports that teachers noted that parent involvement significantly increases a child's reading skills for primary school-age pupils. In addition, Keith et al. (1998) reported that parents involvement, defined in terms of parents' aspirations for their children and their communication with their children about school activities when measured among 8th grade, had a significant effect on pupils' 10th grade score point average. Feinstein and Symons (1999) similarly report that parental interest in their children's education was the single greatest predictor of achievement at age 16 years. Allen and Daly (2002), in a much broader sense found that children whose parents are involved in their schooling tend to display greater social and emotional development. As indicated in Chevalier's (2004) study, the achievement of children tends to follow the level of parents' educational levels though there are differences in the gender performance. The foundation of the intergenerational competence from parents to children also depends on early foundations of education.

### ***Early reading***

Early exposure to literacy is another means through which parental education enhances children's achievement (Denessen, 2007). This is a direct influence by the parents through their early engagement with children. Denessen's (2007) research on early literacy programmes is a good example. The study emphasises the role parents play in supporting their children's early literacy development by stating that the basis of educational success for children lies in the home. For example, Denessen's (2007) study asserts that the effectiveness of early literacy interventions requires a family component not just a school component. Otherwise, it would seem to be relatively low as a result of the lack of home support for children's emergent activities. This evidence confirms the importance of direct educational influences at home in such activities as access to literacy objects; books, TV, radio or newspapers are essential for the school going child in the home environment but this needs to be supervised by parents (Biddulph et al., 2005). This was also demonstrated in Altschul's (2011) study, which illustrated that, largely, parents involvement impacts effectively prior to

eighth grade. This finding tallies with increasing focus on, and evidence for the effectiveness of earlier interventions including parental involvement to improve children's academic outcomes (Camilli et al., 2010). This is further elaborated by findings in the US.

The US National Centre for Education Statistics (NCES) (2000) through the National Household Education Survey (NHES) made an important discovery based on two studies (1991 and 1996) relating early reading to parents' levels of education. Findings indicated that family participation in reading activities enhances developmental experiences for young children. In addition to developing an interest in reading, children who were read to, told stories, and brought to visit the library tended to start school better prepared to learn than other pupils who did not have the same chance. The study also indicated that engaging young children in reading activities at home also enabled parents and other family members to become actively involved in their children's education at an early age to their benefit. For example, their study noted that children ages 3–5 whose parents had completed a bachelor's degree or higher education were more likely to have been read to in the past week or to have visited a library in the past month than children whose parents' highest education level was a high school diploma or less.

Of similar view is Farver (2005), who further asserts that in readings involving a child and adult, the child learns to become the storyteller, and the adult-child interaction develops with a focus on teaching new vocabulary, grammar and narrative, as well as improving overall verbal fluency. With verbal fluency, children are likely to handle the other subjects in the curriculum better. Biddulph et al. (2003) note that the home language can enhance children's achievement especially if it is also the language of instruction in the school. Their study in New Zealand established that children whose home language is English attain higher achievement in institutions where English is the medium of communication and instruction than do children whose home language is other than English. This means that children in the latter category may require extra help from parents in terms of providing reading materials and being able to explain matters to children in both the home and school languages. This is true of countries whose first language (L1) is other than English but who use it as their official language, as is the case in Uganda (UNESCO, 2008). Language(s) is one of the most important and direct tools with which parents interact and transmit cognitive competencies to children. It may occur sometimes even without parents realising it (Wells, 2009; Halliday, 1973). This can take place if parents and children are able to spend time together either in reading or in the field, especially for the children in the rural parts of Uganda.

### *Joint activities*

In her study of Mexican families, Delgado-Gaitan (1990) noted that there has been little attention paid to parents' role in the home learning environment. She believes there exists a wealth of literacy activities for parental input to children's literacy acquisition primarily through 'sociocultural process' (Delgado-Gaitan, 1990:84). In her view, the way children are socialised to literacy in the home influences children's performance in school. In particular, she asserts that there are a variety of activities which engage children at home out of school. For example, in an African environment such joint activities would include, cooking (for girls), cleaning the compound (for boys), sweeping the home compound, collecting firewood for the cooking, washing children, working in the garden, and much more. As the well-known author Ngugi (1986) narrates his own experience of learning, not only of language, in the ordinary course of the day in a Kenyan context:

...I was born into a large peasant family: father, four wives and about twenty eight (28) children. I also belonged, as we all did in those days, to a wider extended family and to the community as a whole. We spoke Gikuyu as we worked in the fields. We spoke Gikuyu in and outside the home. I can vividly recall those evenings of story-telling around the fireside. It was mostly the grown-ups telling the children but everybody was interested and involved. We children would re-tell the stories the following day to another who worked in the fields picking the pyrethrum flowers, tea-leaves or coffee beans of our European and African landlords. (Ngugi, 1986:9)

The reference to who [adults] tells the story, and the retelling [children] of the story to others clearly illustrates the teaching and learning activities occurring in Delgado-Gaitan's (1990:85) 'moment-to-moment' family interaction between parents and children as they spend time together (see also Ardila et al., 2010; Kalil et al., 2011). Ngugi further narrates:

...the stories, with mostly animals as the main characters, were all told in Gikuyu. Hare, being small, weak but full of innovative with cunning, struggled against the brutes of prey like lion, leopard, hyena. His victories were our victories and we learnt that the apparently weak can outwit the strong. (Vietnam against USA war is a good example). (Ngugi, 1986:9)

Nevertheless, the stories in which one species of truly human beings had qualities of courage, kindness, mercy, hatred of evil, concern for others; and 'a man-eat-man two mouthed' (Ngugi, 1986:10), while other stories had qualities of greed, selfishness, individualism, and hatred for what was good for the larger co-operative community, contained values passed on to the children informally and orally. Co-operation as the ultimate good in a community was a constant theme that the children had to learn for their daily survival. For Delgado-Gaitan

(1990:85), ‘family interactions during such kinds of activities, and especially in the evening hours reveal a great deal about the role of parents as educators’. She uses the term ‘moment-to-moment business of maintaining a sense of family and accomplishing daily household tasks together (Delgado-Gaitan, 1990:85).

Furthermore, Gaitan-Delgado (1990) believes that families can use dinner-time not only to share with each other what occurred during the day, but also to reinforce social values as parents comment about the children’s activities as well as their table manners.

However, this proposal may not be compatible with some cultures for two reasons. First, for example, among the majority of black Africans, including the Ma’di tribe in Uganda, normally food is served for the household members separately; the men folk and the women folk and children. The men are served separate food, sit in a separate area, and they may eat their food either communally by dipping hands in the same bowl or in individual plates but still in a different setting from the women and children. Secondly, at meal times, conversation is not permitted, especially for children. Once food is served for children, talking is considered bad ‘meal-time’ manners. Note; the noun ‘table’ is not used deliberately as most meals in the ordinary sense are served not at tables but at any site convenient at the time. For example, during the dry season, many families would prefer to eat outdoors under the shade of a tree or on a veranda instead of indoors. In these cases, parent-child interaction is experienced more in other family activities such as fieldwork, family events (birth or funeral, marriages), religious and national events rather than at meal times. Whether at meals or working in the fields, the important point is that parents spend time with the child.

In another study, parents can participate in raising their children’s cognitive competence when they experience learning together with their children in an informal sense (Thomas and Pattison, 2007). However, although the setting is not the same as in this study, they observe that learning as a joint venture in the classroom provides opportunities for discussion, exploration, experimentation and brainstorming. In the home environment, Thomas and Pattison (2007) contend that as parents and children interact in the home context, it is different from the kind of interaction with teachers at school. The difference is that when a child wants to know something, the question emerges quite naturally from the child during the course of conversation with parents in the home context. This, in their view, provides an opportunity for parents [depending on their level of education], to fill the gaps deliberately, whenever appropriate, or simply by contributing to their child’s thinking through their own comments or questions. Such an interaction would require time and presume a level of education on the part

of the parent to be able to prompt the child's level of knowledge. One study that specifically focused on the time parents spend with children as a result of their education was conducted by Kalil et al. (2012) as presented in the next section.

### *Time and parents' education*

Another aspect of the direct impact of parents' education levels and literacy skills on children (and their subsequent achievement at school) relates to the time parents actually spend with children. Parental time spent with their child is considered a key resource for child development, especially during the early childhood years (Fuligni and Brooks-Gunn, 2004; Sayer, 2004a; Sayer et al. 2004b). The study carried out by Kalil et al. (2012) investigated mothers' time spent in four parenting activities with reference to maternal education and child age subgroups. He used data from the 2003-2007 American Time Use Survey (ATUS) (Guryan et al., 2008). Previous research on a similar topic held the position that highly educated mothers spend more time in active care of children than less educated mothers. However, this study extended the hypothesis to state that highly educated mothers not only spend more time in active child care compared to less-educated mothers, but also enrich the composition of that time to suit children's developmental needs more than less-educated mothers. This finding confirms the argument that children have divergent destinies: if born to the most-educated women versus the least-educated women, and such disparity may have serious educational implications for long-term patterns of attainment and achievement. This links with Bourdieu's (1977) notion of cultural capital. Overall, the findings supported the hypothesis that highly educated mothers are not only investing more time in basic care and play with infants or toddlers as previous studies suggested but also when the children are older. In fact, results show that highly educated mothers invest more time in management activities with 6-13 year olds than when they were younger, and differences across education groups in management are largest among mothers with school-aged children. This scenario demonstrated that the education factor of mother's time with children is clearly characterised by signs of development in children. Although Harris' (1998) study showed that parental influence on children decreases past infancy while that of peers exert greater effect, Vandell (2000) asserts that there is considerable evidence that parental influence continues to be strong well past infancy.

On the same theme, the study of Kalil et al. (2012) noted that highly educated mothers spend more time with their children than less educated mothers. If the same hypothesis can be applied to this situation, in the sense that the highest 'poor family time' prevalence was

observed in the group of children who attempted smoking, suggesting that the mothers of smoking-attempting boys and girls were less involved in shared familial activities. Correspondingly, they engage in less collectively spent family time resulting in children being more prone to try smoking.

In comparison with children who spent more time with their parents (indicated as 'good family time'), the boys, who spent less time with their parents (indicated as 'poor family time'), were 2.15 times more inclined to start smoking (95% CI 1.09 – 4.27). The girls, who spent less time with their parents, in comparison with children who spent more time with their parents were 4.48 times more inclined to start smoking (95% CI 0.92 – 21.82). An analogous, although weaker, association was detected among children who attempted to try alcohol. There was a strong inverse relationship determined between the collectively spent family time and parental smoking and alcohol use habits. For example, mothers from the families where 'good family time' was indicated, reported generally smoking less frequently, as compared to mothers from the families, where 'poor family time' was indicated (15.0% and 23.7% respectively). The results also indicated that parental education did make a difference in the time they spent with their children thereby reinforcing positive habits which later augers well for their health and achievement in school. This is a good example of role modelling, for good or bad habit formation.

Consequently, not all the time parents spend with their children can be seen as beneficial to the children if the parents have abusive habits. Research conducted by Germiene et al. (2006) in Kaunas, Lithuania, during the school year 2004–2005 examined the importance of time spent by parents with their children but in joint family activities. They also added other measures such as health-hazardous behaviour modelling possibilities in the families by parents, which has the potential to draw children into the habit of smoking and consuming alcohol. The results showed that family time spent was associated with both smoking and alcohol consumption by either children or parents.

Another study, which investigated the impact of parents' education levels and children's achievement specifically, examined 'the development of executive functions' in Mexico and Colombia (Ardila et al., 2005:540). The results showed a marked difference between types of schools pupils attended, whether public or private. The term Executive Functions refers to the field of Neuroscience that relates to the functions of the brain (Ardila et al., 2005). Based on this research, Ardila et al. (2005) sampled 622 participants, ages 5 to 14 years (276 boys, 346 girls). The most important finding in this study was the robust difference observed between

children in private and public schools on executive function test scores directly related to the level of parents' education. Just as parents' education is found to predict the kind of school the child attends, a stimulating environment at home largely corresponded to parents' educational levels. Overall, the results suggested that the differences in test scores between the public and private school children depended on some conditions existing outside the school, such as parents' level of education. As has been illustrated, this takes place, for example through time parents spend in the learning process of their children (reading, writing, listening and talking), or through creating a literate environment as well as provision of space and learning resources for the child at home. The next section explores some of the indirect impacts of parents' education on the child, in terms of increased educational opportunity.

### **2.6.2. Indirect Impact of Parental Education**

The second aspect of parents' education identified by Feinstein and colleagues (2008) as influencing children's educational achievement is by way of increasing children's educational opportunities. As Feinstein et al. (2008) have observed, parents' education has a direct effect on family income, which in turn has an effect on children's achievement. This influence is reflected in such things as good housing, a more enriched family environment, better schools, a better sleeping place, enough space to study to mention but a few (Gormley, 1999; Salkind, 2008; Altschul, 2011), which is why it is seen as indirectly influencing children's achievement. Lola and Shrinidhi (2008) have identified three pathways of influences of parents' education on children's educational achievement:

- 1) transmission of cognitive competencies;
- 2) increased opportunities, and;
- 3) transmission of parental beliefs and attitudes concerning the value and utility of education (Lola and Shrinidhi, 2008). These areas are developed and discussed further in the subsequent sections beginning with the direct influences.

#### ***Increased opportunities and children's achievement***

One of the indirect pathways which influence children is through parental income. Research shows that school success is highly valued in any society because of its long-term and diverse benefits such as high socio economic status (SES), health and well-being (Oreopoulos, 2007). This implies that parents who are highly educated are likely to get employment and therefore have higher SES which can influence the child's school achievement. This can occur through the mediation of provision of resources.

Children's increased educational opportunities based on an indirect parental education level is further elaborated by Thomas and Pattison (2007):

...parents mediate both learning processes and the informal curriculum itself. They do this by providing the circumstances and tools by which children can, for themselves, explore the informal curriculum. In practical terms this means taking them out and introducing them to the world and providing the wherewithal for them to engage with the artefacts of their culture: toys and books, pencils, paper, TV, computers, money, household equipment, kitchens to cook in, gardens to grow things in... in addition.... Parents put effort into introducing their children to places, people and opportunities which they felt would be of interest and/or benefit to them. They join groups, libraries and clubs, go to museums and on outings, seek out sporting and social opportunities. (Thomas and Pattison, 2007:72)

These are attitudes Feinstein and Colleagues (2008) refer to as parental cognition. By carrying out these activities, parents are acting as mediators, providing their children with access to new areas of information; both informal and formal (see also Mandy, 2010). In this role parents, especially, of the older children, describe themselves as facilitators (Thomas and Pattison, 2007). In other words, the parents exhibit a pattern of behaviour which supports or makes it possible for their children to pursue their own education with interest by providing such things as transport for school/tours, finances for meals, equipment for games and sports, which in turn contribute to their educational achievements.

Research on increased opportunities as a result of parental education and their subsequent benefits for their children's success in education have been supported by other studies. Guo and Hans (2000) concurred with the effect of income on attainment. While Jackson's (2003) study on mothers employment found that there was a correlation with their children's maths scores. Basing his study on the child developmental outcomes in early school years among African-American welfare recipients and their young children, showed that children whose mothers had some employment, even inconsistent, were more likely to have higher math scores than those whose mothers were consistently unemployed. In addition, Jackson's (2003) study also indicated that mothers' higher educational attainment effectively led to having small family size, which was associated with higher reading scores.

This research supports the view that parents education does increase opportunities for disadvantaged children. Further indirect impact of parental influence relates to their beliefs and attitudes which are presented below.



### ***Parental beliefs and attitudes and children's achievement***

The third impact identified by Feinstein and colleagues (2008) is parental beliefs and attitudes as examples of indirect influence. They assert that children's aspiration and motivation for education hugely depend on how parents view and value education themselves. A wide range of cultural studies have shown that parents' own behaviour, as well as joint family activities do influence children's academic motivation and behaviour (Alnabhan et al., 2001; Cherian, 2001; Davis-Kean, 2005; Hill, et al., 2004; Jackson, 2003; Livaditus et al., 2003; Tavani and Losh, 2003). These studies have observed that parental beliefs and attitudes about education make a difference in their involvement in their children's education. This is precisely because such parents believe in the important of education for their children and so compels them to encourage them to do well in school.

For example, using a sample of 868 children between the age of 8-12 years old of which 49% were non-Hispanic European American, and 47% African American, Davis-Kean (2005) found that for both groups, parents education influenced child achievement indirectly through its impact on the parents achievement beliefs and character-building home behaviours. From the African-American sample, in addition to parental education, educational expectations and positive parent-child interactions were found to be directly related to children's achievement in school. This was also testified in the study conducted by Biddulph et al. (2005) in New Zealand where rich home learning environments with positive contact and interaction among the extended family/whanau, and especially varied language and literacy experiences (oral and written), together with meaningful mathematics experiences, are associated with higher achievement.

### ***Parental attitudes and student aspiration/ perception***

Similarly, Hill et al. (2004), who used a longitudinal model to examine parental academic involvement, behavioural problems, achievement, and aspirations in a sample of 463 adolescents from 7th - 11th grades, found that, among the higher parental education group, parent academic involvement was related to fewer behavioural problems, which in turn were related to achievement and then aspirations in the children. For the lower parental education group, parent academic involvement was only related to aspirations but not to behaviour or achievement. These findings indicate that parents' education enables them to view education positively. In addition, parents with high education levels tend to engage more in the academic

activities of their children thereby being exemplary than parents with lower levels of education.

Even from a cultural point of view, parental education was found to play an important role in the lives of the children (Hill et al., 2004). Young and Park's (2010) study of Korean students is a good example. Their study examined the factors that contribute to the high educational achievement of South Korean students. The result showed that although the Korean government spends significantly less per student, class sizes are relatively larger, cooperative learning is emphasised, and students have lower self-concepts, yet they outperform their Western counterparts in reading, mathematics, and sciences (National Centre for Statistics, 2000; OECD, 2003). This evidence was based on the general belief of the Korean parents who:

- view education as a part of self-cultivation that is pursued for its own sake and as a way to achieve personal, social and occupational success;
- see success as persistent effort and discipline and not innate ability, hence;
- attribute students' success to their effort and failure to lack of effort and ability;
- view parents as key role players in maintaining a strong relational bond and influencing children's achievement throughout their lives;
- believe emotional support, rather than informational support as most important;
- acknowledge external pressure, parental expectation and pressure as having positive impact on children's academic achievement (while Western theories assume guilt and external pressure to have a negative consequences. (Young and Park, 2004)

Thus, the Korean cultural belief and value system tends to cherish relationships, not so much the individual, as the basic unit for self-worth. This is also supported by Young and Park (2004), who observed that the parent-child relationship provides the basis for development of the self particularly where parental devotion, in the form of sacrifice and support is the important feature that still remains in modern Korea. For example, a mother's job was to use her close relationship with her children to encourage them to expand their relationships and become successful in life. Furthermore, the mother becomes a mediator between the home environment and the outside world by socialising appropriate values and norms. Finally, as children join formal school, they are expected to transfer their identification and loyalty from mothers to their teachers, resulting in good behaviour and the achievement equation. However, the study does not state the level of parents' education even though they place high expectations on their children's education.

As can be seen, parental belief and attitude has impact on the children's commitment to schooling. Further studies that demonstrate the direct ways in which parents' education and literacy skills impacts on children's achievement are explored in the following sections.

The effect of parental attitude is also noted in parent-child relationships which develop through shared activities and discussion in the home setting where parent-child interaction occurs in free and informal communication (Rubin and Chung, 2006). In a qualitative study of parental experiences of providing sex education for their children in Europe, Walker (2001) explored how parents talk to their children about sex education, and how this interaction could be enhanced. I have chosen this example because the children involved in this study in Uganda are teenagers and teenage pregnancies is one of the recurring problems for primary children dropping out of school before completion (NAPE, 2011).

The result from Walkers' study showed that factors that were found to enhance or limit parent-child communication were interrelated. These included parents' perception of the child, their role as parents and their perception of sex education from school and health agencies. The gender of the parents and their own experience of sex education clearly influenced provision. Mothers tended to be the main educators although a few fathers shared the role. This implicitly implies mothers education about sex education is suitable for the young. It was not clear why there were fewer fathers reported in the role of the provider of sex education. Whether they were absent from the family or whether it is a role handled better by mothers is a question that remains unanswered. Interestingly, parents were found to possess many skills as educators, for example, taking opportunities, establishing an open communication or responding to ideas progressively and appropriately during their child's development. Furthermore, the participating parents were found to be willing to welcome access to sources of information, support and good communication within the school and health care settings. However, despite parents being found with competent skills as educators, they expressed uncertainty and embarrassment about aspects of their role in talking to their children about sex education.

The emerging educational implications pointed to educational programmes that could be directed to boost parents' capacity to address key issues, the lack of which generally prevented them from communicating with their children about sex education. The study recommended that such programmes needed to be tailored to increase parents' capacity around the knowledge and interpersonal skills to help them in two important ways. First to overcome embarrassment and develop confidence, and secondly to create awareness in their roles as sexual health educators. This could be a difficult step for many parents, especially in rural

African settings where talking about sex openly is regarded as taboo, and talking to their children about sex is even unthinkable. In order to address such sensitive issues, Walker (2001) suggests that professionals could focus on practical ways of reducing the inhibiting factors and promoting the facilitative factors by incorporating such activities into health education matters either in the school or in community programmes.

### ***Parental attitudes and culture***

From a cultural perspective, parental education also plays an important role in the lives of their children. The Nobel Peace prize laureate (2004) winner, the Kenyan founder of the Green Belt Movement, Wangari Muta Maathai, in her book, *The Challenge for Africa* defined culture for the African people as an all-encompassing reality of life:

... [Culture] is the means by which a people expresses itself, through language, traditional wisdom, politics, religion, architecture, music, tools, greetings, symbols festivals, ethics, values, and collective identity. Agriculture, systems of governance, heritage, and ecology are all dimensions and functions of culture – for instance, “agri-culture” is the way we deal with seeds, crops, harvesting, processing, and eating. (Maathai, 2009:160)

According to her, the African people still have not fully recognised their cultural heritage in the sense of who they are. The question is whether education can enable them to recognise and value it by making a shift in their belief patterns. For example, when Hechter (1993) defines ‘value’ as the internal criteria or principle for evaluation in selecting that which is good (or better or best) among objects, actions, ways of life (social), and political institutions and cultures, there is an indication of making deliberate choices in life. From the family setting, he characterised cultural value as:

- one that provides us with some explanations that can help us to understand family life;
  - guide posts of family functioning because they provide direction for individual and group socialisation and identification;
  - providing directions for behaviour and parameters for acceptable and unacceptable behaviour with groups,
  - telling us what to expect of ourselves and what to expect for others within our families.
- (Hechter, 1993:15)

By linking culture to values that guide people, Hechter is in agreement with Maathai (2009) that what parents believe about education, can influence children’s perception towards their own education. This can be both directly or indirectly through processes such as parents’

engagement in cultural or informal educational activities (Ngugi, 1986; Feinstein et al., 2008; Noach, 2004; Thomas and Pattison, 2007). For example, Ardila et al.'s (2010) study examined earlier showed that children from parents with higher education not only tend to have a larger vocabulary, more rapid language development, perform better on cognitive tests, but also have higher school attendance (Ardila et al. 2010; see also Ganzach, 2000). Consequently, a child's commitment to schooling, motivation to schoolwork and subsequent success in school may arise from parents' attitudes, and beliefs in the importance of education, which is indirectly associated with parents higher education levels. Hence, Schlechter and Milevsky's (2009) emphasise that parental involvement in enhancing their children's school experience may be responsible for providing an expectation of educational excellence associated with higher academic achievement and the pursuit of higher education prompted by societal expectations.

Hortacsu (1995) also investigated the relationships between parents' education levels, parents' beliefs concerning children's cognition related to themselves and their relationships, and academic achievement in a sample of Turkish 4th grade children. Similar to Jackson's (2003) findings, Hortacsu's (1995) findings revealed that a mother's education was directly related to child perceptions of external control and academic achievement. The level of fathers' education was directly related only to child perception of efficacy. These differences in results between mother and father were not specified. These are empirical examples where children are motivated by what they observe, first from parents and from those significant in their surroundings. From these examples, it can be surmised that parents are role models by virtue simply of going about their daily business in the proximity of their children. They model the use of certain skills and certain behaviours, sometimes without any intention to teach or even any expectation that their children will learn, but simply as part of their own lives.

In line with this argument was Hang and Ho's (2005) longitudinal research involving four ethnic groups in the US. They found that indirect effects via the mediation of student educational aspiration were consistent across all four ethnic groups and for both initial achievement status as well as subsequent academic growth. In particular, parental involvement in terms of communication and aspiration were key to improving students' educational aspiration. The results suggest that improving a student's aspiration is key to enhancing their academic achievement. The study also established that the more often parents and children communicated about school studies, activities, and high school programme plans the greater the parents' hopes and expectations for their children's education, the greater the educational aspiration of the student and, consequently, the higher the student's academic achievement.

According to Hang and Ho (2005) this result suggests that parent participation in the forms of attending school meetings, school related events, communication with teachers and counsellors (presuming parental knowledge about school) have become part of parents' educational culture and they effect students' educational aspiration. Although Altschul's (2011) study showed the positive impact of parents' involvement in academic studies occurs through home-based involvement rather than school-based, the two settings are interdependent. As Onwughalu, (2011:280) speaks of the theory of Epstein's (2001) overlapping spheres (home, school and community) as key influencing factors of children's education that 'none of the environments can adequately educate children alone, because there is no "pure" time out of school or home for any school-aged child; time spent in either affects what happens in the other'.

However, sometimes parental involvement can be greatly influenced by their culture as in Hang and Ho's (2005) study. They also found that parental supervision in the forms of close monitoring of students' homework, time watching TV, and time going out with friends appears to negatively impact the educational aspiration of the adolescent students (Grades 8–12). This could be due to children feeling under pressure from parents. Further indirect parents education influences may be related to the health of the child.

### ***Parental education and children's welfare***

Insufficient food provided for children was found to have adverse consequences for their educational outcomes (Aliamo et al., 2001; Weinreb et al., 2002; Belachew et al., 2011). The effects of food insecurity on children was researched by Aliamo et al., (2001) who investigated the associations between food insufficiency and cognitive, academic, and psychosocial outcomes for US children and teenagers ages 6 to 11 and 12 to 16 years. The results showed that food-insufficient children had significantly lower arithmetic scores and were more likely to have repeated a grade, have seen a psychologist, and have had difficulty getting along with other children. Variations were noted between food insufficiency and children's outcomes by level of risk.

A study conducted by Belachew et al. (2011) in Ethiopia hypothesised that food insecurity could result in children not reporting to school and they are likely to obtain lower grades after one year compared to their food secure peers. The findings indeed pointed to the fact that adolescent and household food insecurities were positively associated with absenteeism and a lower educational attainment. This result confirmed evidence from the literature that shows

optimal cognitive and physical functions in children and adolescents who secure access to food of adequate quantity and quality at all stages in life. For example, USAID (2010) expressed concern about the recurrent food insecurity in Ethiopia, which may result in malnutrition with resulting developmental impairments such as poor learning capacity in children. Other observations testify to this concern (Frangillo et al., 2006; Tyoti et al., 2005). Thus, the study concluded that food insecurity may not only jeopardise the right to health but also has serious implications on education and the schooling of adolescents. Therefore, secure access to food may enhance school attendance and overall health and well-being through decreasing use of negative coping strategies (Jukes et al., 2002; FAO, 2010). This is because the study reported that food insecure adolescents had a higher frequency of illness than food secure children (Belachew et al., 2011; Hadley et al., 2008).

On another level, Weinreb et al. (2002) conducted a study highlighting the independent relationship between severe child hunger and adverse physical health and mental health outcomes among low-income children. The findings indicated that for school-age children, severe hunger was a significant predictor of chronic illness which grossly interfered with their education.

In Uganda for example, one of the reports on the reforms for education emphasised that children learn ineffectively and drop out more frequently when their physical readiness for learning is impaired by poor health and /or hunger, and when the physical conditions of school are not healthy or safe (Moulton, 2000; Weinreb et al., 2002; Jyoti et al., 2005). Moulton further argues that while the Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES) in Uganda has made great strides in improving the quality of teaching and the terms and conditions of teachers, it fell short in ensuring the quality of school life for pupils and was even worse for girls (WFP, 2010). These conditions can be linked to children's experience in the rural home environment. If conditions at home are not healthy and safe, it affects the learning of the child and achievement is compromised (Frangillo et al., 2006). The report stressed that the health and safety conditions of pupils goes beyond what school officials can do, they are also a community problem (Moulton, 2000) or more positively, a community responsibility. Studies show that if parents have education, they will use different strategies where their children's health and safety is concerned.

Inadequate food can be as a result of a lack of money or resources, or even natural disasters such as draught or war (Andrews et al., 2001) but its effects remain detrimental to school-age children and their performance, and often socioeconomic status seems a likely explanation.

### **2.6.3. Home Learning Environment: Children's Achievement**

The term literate environment or home learning environment (HLE) is a flexible concept which offers ways to think about all the different aspects of promoting literacy in an integrated way (UNESCO, 2008). According to the report, such environments include what people write, read, produce, distribute in both text and materials, and how and why people do it. A 'literate environment' would address the institutions (including family) that promote literacy as well as the purposes, languages, scripts, modes and methods of literacy. A rich and vibrant literate environment was one of the three points that the 2006 Education For all (EFA) Global Monitoring Report developed as part of the literacy challenge. Thus, efforts to enrich the literacy environment was expected to provide such things as libraries, local language newspapers, book publishing and other related activities. This is believed to engage the community in ways that will not only enable them to acquire literacy competencies but have the means and the opportunity to use them meaningfully and sustain them (UNESCO, 2008). These features relate closely to the family income as already discussed in section 2.5 when examining the internal features of the family environment, under material resources. It is also worth mentioning that the geographical location of a family can influence the material resources and create an environment that either enhances or inhibits literacy related opportunities for school going children.

#### ***Geographical location of family***

Parents with adequate education seek employment in urban areas, and those who have low level of education often remain in the rural area where public infrastructures are poor.

For example, Zhang's (2006) study of sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) focuses on the learning disadvantage of rural primary school students (sixth grade) and aims to identify the factors underlying such disadvantages. According to his observation, rural education in many less developed countries is often synonymous with disadvantages for learning. Using data from 14 school systems which participated in the second study of the Southern and Western Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ II), he measured the reading literacy scores of rural primary school students in comparison to their urban counterparts in each of the school systems. He also looked at literacy scores across the participating countries, namely: Botswana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, mainland Tanzania, Zanzibar annexed to Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia. The study showed that rural-urban gaps in literacy varied tremendously



across the 14 school systems. The average rural sixth graders in all countries scored 50 points lower on the reading test than their urban counterparts.

Apart from reading scores, the other school systems with sizable rural disadvantages included Kenya (48points), Namibia (85points), the mainland of Tanzania (72points), and Zambia (57points). At the other extreme were Mauritius and Seychelles, where, on average, rural students scored only 10 and 7 points lower, respectively, below their urban counterparts, which was minimal indicating that there is little gap between the urban and rural setting in reading achievements among these sixth grade students. Despite these differences, the study provides evidence that children from rural areas in less developed countries are more likely to suffer a socioeconomic disadvantage than their counterparts in urban areas indirectly pointing to the likelihood of families with high SES in the urban area and low in the rural areas. This certainly seems to be the case for countries which participated in the SACMEQ studies.

One of the impacts of the influence of parental education as already seen relates to their choice of school and place of residence. The availability of basic resources such as sanitation, health services or water for children are good predictors of children's welfare. For example, the UN (2010) report shows that in Sub-Saharan Africa, the bid to half the number of people without improved drinking water reveals low coverage. Even lower coverage in sanitation with regards to MDG 7 is reported, which expects to ensure environmental sustainability by 2015 (UN, 2010). With poor sanitation and drinking water, children are likely to contract waterborne diseases such as intestinal parasites, for example, bilharzia which is common among the people of Moyo district living along the river Nile.

However, where parents are highly educated and have financial backing there is a likelihood of alternatives as compared with their low-income counterparts. Two examples of primary school pupils experience in Uganda provide a good insight into such problems. It is even worse where government policy and resource delivery does not reach the intended beneficiaries – the primary school going children.

In the first scenario, Okino (2011) reports on primary schools in the Oyam district - Northern Uganda, a distance of over 500 km from the capital city, Kampala. In this rural location, some schools are extremely under resourced as pupils are pictured cramped in a classroom below.



**Figure 2.4 - Primary Six Pupils Attending a Lesson, Seated on the Floor**  
*Source, (Okino, 2011:1)*

These pupils are grade six, who are preparing to take their final primary leaving examinations the following year, 2012. In this class, there are no chairs or desks on which to write (holding books and writing on their laps). Above all, there seems to be insufficient space for the pupils as they sit close to one another.

This situation arose, as reported, due to the national insecurity that prevailed in the area. It was reported that in 2004, when Oyam was under the Lira district, the school received 36 desks. These were, however used as firewood by both the Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) and the Uganda People's Defense Force (UPDF) during the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) insurgency. Critical of the government, Okino (2011) remarked that the Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES) kept a high profile by impressing on the public that resources are available and are reaching schools. Despite such claims, how can situations such as in the Barromo Primary school in the Oyam district in Northern Uganda be explained - learning under conditions that are unacceptable even by any educational standards. This is a condition UNESCO refers to as 'emergency education classes' (UNESCO, 2002:27) which are characterised by sometimes holding lessons in the open air, basements or in damaged buildings. Yet, adequate resources are important for children in order to enjoy their school life and thereby perform to the best of their abilities (Kasirye, 2009). This condition therefore goes against the mandates of Universal Primary Education, which promises quality education for children of all categories all over the world (UNESCO, 2005). The conditions under which they learn, not to mention the lack of reading and writing materials, which are central to their learning processes, may affect the academic outcome of these pupils. If their parents had a

choice of schools or place of residence, the situation for these children is likely to be different. But because they come from poor and low incomes backgrounds, their educational outcome appear to be highly compromised.

As Hang and Ho (2005) duly acknowledged, low achievement among pupils can be related to various factors, some of which may be linked to levels of human and material resources available both within families, and outside, such as concerns about transportation for school children reported by Kiwanuka (2011) in Uganda. Arguably, if parents were highly educated, they would have jobs, with paid salaries and be able to make a difference in their children's schooling. But where parents have no option, their children's life and education stands in great risk as illustrated in the next section.

## **2.7. External Factors and Children's Achievement**

As already seen in the definition of family, there are forces outside of the family, which can influence the family. These includes, security, neighbourhood, transport system, nutrition as well as natural disasters. How these factors affect the members of the family, especially the school going child may largely depend on the mental, moral, financial and educational stability of parents. Some of these are elaborated in the following sections.

### **2.7.1. Parental Education: Child Safety and Children's Achievement**

Kiwanuka (2011) features the plight of about 100 school-going children (aged 6-14) in the Northeastern corner of the Nakaseke district of Uganda. The children face transportation difficulties to get to the nearest school (4 km) involving taking a canoe to cross a 1 km stretch of water which is feared to harbor crocodiles. After crossing the river, they have to walk for another 2km to reach the school. The cost of this trip daily is Ush1.000 (equivalent to about €0.25) for the rickety canoes, which sometimes leak. The canoes can take only seven children at a time, meaning about 15 trips are needed to take all the children across. Because of the high demand for canoe space, the children get there as early as 6:30am so as to be on time for the classes which start at 8:00am.

These realities of life raise many issues in relation to the education of these children; walking long distances to school (physical stress), money for daily transport (economic constraint), and crossing a crocodile infested river (psychological and mental trauma) are all encapsulated in their daily experiences of school life in this area. Parents have expressed varied concerns

ranging from fear to helplessness about the condition of their children whom they see as not only risking drowning but are also prone to other real dangers such as being mauled by hippos and crocodiles teeming in the river. Kiwanuka (2011) reported that in fact, five children drowned in crossing this river (see figure 3.5). The area Local Council Five (LC5) recalled and summarised the educational implications of the incident in July 2011 when she stated:

...the risk becomes bigger during the rainy season when the water levels rise, and hippos and crocodiles become more active. During such periods, many children fear to cross the river, so they stay at home and miss classes for days, or even weeks. This conditional absenteeism directly affects the children's educational achievement. For example, parents complain that the canoes are too old and their minds are not settled whenever their children set off to school, because anything can happen to them while they are on those old canoes. Sometimes, the children get stuck at the landing sites of either side of the river when the four canoe operators are not available. (Kiwanuka, 2011).

There are multiple concerns raised by this local leader but it appears that of parents of these pupils have no choice in this situation. The pupils also expressed their fears about the situation. One of the primary seven (P.7) pupils quoted in the report expressed her feelings that she got so tense whenever she had to cross the river that she often got headache.

Teachers' concerns were that these children face many school-related problems including late arrival to school (they get to school after 9:00am, an hour after normal classes start; so teachers are compelled to delay classes until they arrive). This is in addition to having to leave home without breakfast because they leave home as early as 6:30am, and their attendance is irregular. Without doubt, these are experiences that do not enhance academic achievement. As a temporary measure, it emerged that the school administration assists primary seven (P.7) candidates from across the river by providing accommodation for them in one of the classrooms, this adds yet another stress – that of being away from family. Although this accommodation may be seen as a help, it is a little too late for these pupils who have only few months left before they sit their Primary Leaving Examinations (PLE). These are some of the examples of conditions for school going children, which can be at best discouraging and at worst contribute to a pupil's poor academic attainment. Worse still, if such conditions persist, it is understandable that some of the pupils opt to drop out of school before completing primary education because their lives are constantly put in danger.

Adequate resource provision therefore, for children in school is important (Biddulph et al., 2005). For example, transportation for children to get to school and back home, as depicted in the above situation, plays an important role in their educational experience but the parents of

these children seem to have no choice due to dire financial constraints. Closely related to parents' choices with subsequent influence on their children is the neighbourhood and the dominant language used.

### **2.7.2. Parental Education, Neighbourhood and Children's Achievement**

As already noted, parents education can mediate and determine family income thereby ensuring good housing (Gormley 1999), better schools (Ardila et al. 2010), better sleeping places, adequate living space and a more enriched family environment, and a choice to settle in good neighbourhoods (Howarth, 2002). This may not be an easy choice for rural populations such as in the developing world context. Howarth (2002) notes that neighbourhood images, as well as school ones, in terms of living in a stigmatised neighbourhood can engender low self-esteem. This presents particular challenges for schools in helping pupils to develop positive identities that can enhance their achievement in school and feel confident in society (Biddulph et al., 2003).

Studies in the UK and US have demonstrated also a significant relationship between neighbourhood quality and the well-being of children and youth (see Brook-Gunn et al., 1998; McCulloch and Joshi, 2000). McCulloch and Joshi (2000) defined neighbourhood quality in relation to poverty in their analysis of the British National Child Development Study Data. Their results showed a significant effect on cognitive performance for neighbourhood deprivation independent of other socioeconomic impacts, including the family, for British children aged 4-5 years. Explanations included opportunities offered by resources and services available, and the role models in more affluent neighbourhoods. Biddulph et al. (2003) also found that home language is related to children's achievement in that children whose home language is the language of school, have higher achievement in institutions which use the same language. For example, it is expected in countries where English is the medium of communication and instruction in schools, such as in Uganda, that if parents are able to use the English language at home besides the local language, then the children stand a better chance of doing better in school than do children whose home language is solely other than English.

In addition, parents' education can moderate social factors for the benefit of the child (Allen and Scher, 2002). This may include such social and emotional attributes as being more resilient to stress, greater life satisfaction, great self-direction and control, greater social adjustment and competence, greater mental health, more supportive relationships, more

positive peer relations, more successful marriages, and fewer antisocial behaviours (Desforerges and Abouchaar, 2003). According to Biddulph et al. (2005) this could be a possibility when a level of both human and material resources are available at family level which are often positively linked to children's achievement. They particularly highlight that children who live in families with high levels of parental (especially maternal) education, who have knowledge of appropriate pedagogy, and ability to access other resources such as the South Korean parents (Hang and Ho, 2005) for private tutoring for their children may enhance their children's achievement. Knowledgeable parents are likely to link up in a social network which according to Biddulph and colleagues (2005) can provide opportunities for children's further learning, particularly their development of cultural identity and sense of belonging that contribute to children's feelings of well-being. They also note that such social networks also provide important support for parents themselves and they learn from one another the best strategies to enhance their children's achievement. In addition, they also noted that access to community resources is crucial for children's achievement, especially when parents and children together are able to access local institutions such as libraries and medical facilities. Lastly, they also state that peer groups, if well monitored by parents can profoundly influence children's achievement, especially for the older children in lower secondary schools. This may arise from the type of parenting styles used in the family.

As observed in the earlier sections, that highly educated parents tend to keep closer ties with their children, employ strategies that develop children's capabilities than parents with less education, the next section examines why it is important for *both* parents and children to be literate. Literacy is treated as a basis in this study for assessing parents' quality and nature of influence on their children's educational achievement.

## **2.8. Literacy for Parents and Children**

Sticht (2010) makes one of the strongest arguments for literacy links between adults and children. He criticises governments and policies that strive to focus and promote better teaching of children at the expense of adult education, which he regards as a misguided belief that gives no credit to the real source of illiteracy. According to Sticht (2010), such beliefs stem from the understanding that the brain's intellectual capacity is developed in early childhood, and if children's early childhood development is not properly stimulated there is likely to be intellectual underdevelopment leading to academic failures, low aptitude, and social welfare dependency. Consequently, the belief system concludes, if rehabilitation of an

individual may be difficult to overcome in later adulthood, why invest in adult education? Such a belief, in his view can lead to inadequate strategies for improving literacy for both children and adults. The hallmark of Sticht's (2010) argument that links adult literacy to literacy for children is succinctly summarised in this statement:

... focus upon a single life cycle fails to recognise the key role that the education of adults plays in the transfer of literacy from one generation to the next. That is, adult literacy education may promote the development of literacy not only in one cycle but also in multiple life cycles, depending on how many children the adults have. From this point of view, the potential for developing literacy actually begins before birth in the dispositions, skills, knowledge, language, and literacy of the children's parents. (Sticht 2010:48)

Thus, Sticht (2010) believes that the value of adult literacy education is a worthwhile investment for improving the educability of children. While such claims may be true, it may not be the absolute truth. However, the benefits of literacy for adults are palpable.

### **2.8.1. Literacy as Foundation for Education**

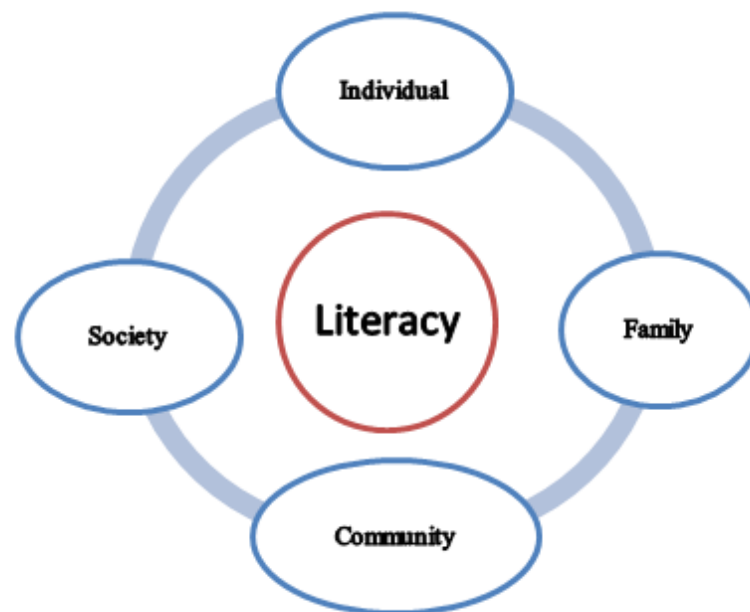
The definition of literacy has been provided in section 2.2. In this section literacy is discussed as an indicator of parental formal education in the context of the developing world. UNESCO (2006) regards the rights to literacy and education as inseparable. The ability to read and write is the basis for all other forms of education and literacy is necessary for an individual to understand information that is out of context, whether written or verbal (UNESCO, 2008; ProLiteracy, 2008) therefore, it is important for both parents and their school going child. Research evidence about the benefits of literacy overwhelmingly demonstrates the notion that to be able to get effectively involved in their child's education, parents need literacy.

Studies show that parental participation in their children's learning positively affects performance in school (Fan and Chen, 2001). In Fan's study, parents' aspiration for their children's educational attainment, as well as communication about school activities and studies, had a positive effect on students' academic growth. This can be attributed to their ability to read and write. Other research found that such academic growth continues from primary to secondary schools (Feinstein and Symons, 1999), which can lead to higher academic achievement, greater cognitive competence, greater problem-solving skills, greater school enjoyment, better school attendance and fewer behavioural problems at school (Melhuish et al., 2001). Parental literacy has also been identified as having parallel impacts on both the literacy level of their children and their educational competency generally. As

confirmed by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) (2010), specifically they emphasised the education of women as mothers:

... the education of parents is linked to their children's educational attainment, and the mother's education is usually more influential than the father's. An educated mother's greater influence in household negotiations may allow her to secure more resources for her children. ...educated mothers are more likely to be in the labour force, allowing them to pay some of the costs of schooling, and may be more aware of returns to schooling. And educated mothers, averaging fewer children, can concentrate more attention on each child. (UNFPA, 2010)

By stressing education for women, the organisation is emphasising the point that education is not only aimed at closing the literacy gender gap, but more importantly, it is a force for both social and economic development. In addition, with socioeconomic disparities and global crises over food, water and energy, literacy is seen as a survival tool in a competitive world (UNESCO, 2008). The all-encompassing importance of literacy from the U.S perspective as depicted by ProLiteracy (2008) emphasises literacy for the individual, family, community and society as illustrated in the diagramme below.



**Figure 2.5 - Literacy as the Basis for Educational Development**

The figure illustrates literacy as the basis for education not only for the individual, but for family, community and society at large and these are all linked, none is totally independent from the other. From the individual to family, it is noted that adults through literacy will be able to advocate for themselves, as well as for their families and avoid human rights abuses.



They can become aware of their rights in order to assert themselves and literacy gives them access to that information and thereby reduces gender inequality (UNESCO, 2008b).

In particular, UNESCO (2004) noted that the education and literacy of a mother can increase the probability of a child participating in or completing primary education because of the enabling factors accrued from literacy such as:

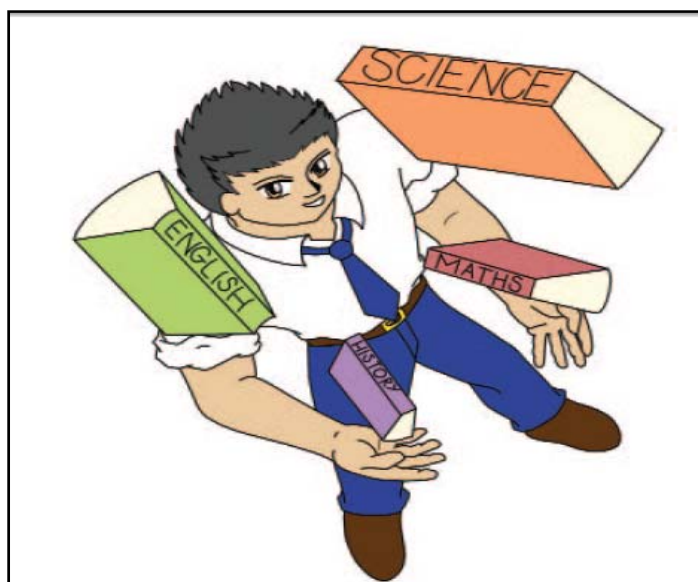
- increased income levels of educated women (Guo and Hans 2000);
- greater appreciation of the value of education (Feinstein, et al. 2008), and
- the ability to help children learn. (UNESCO, 2004; Ardila et al., 2005)

Furthermore, UNESCO (2005) reiterates that literate women are better able to care for themselves, their families and participate in economic and social change in their societies.

*Community:* For community participation, adults need literacy. The 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy, conducted by the U.S. Department of Education (ProLiteracy, 2008), showed that low literate adults are less likely to vote than strong readers, and become more active in their communities as their reading and writing skills improve.

*Society:* At societal level, there is a clear correlation between adult illiteracy and crime. The ProLiteracy (2008) indicate that more than 45% of all inmates in local jails, 40% in state facilities, and 27% in federal corrections institution in the US did not graduate from high school. It also emerged that inmates age 24 and younger are less educated.

Further studies on literacy for the family acknowledge that early reading experiences with their parents prepare children for the benefits of formal literacy instruction (Macbeth and Ravn, 1994; Bus, et al., 1995; Wells, 2009; Baker and Scher, 2003). Senechal and LeFevre (2001), for example, assert that parental involvement in their children's reading has been found to be the most important determinant of language and emergent literacy (see also Bus et al., 1995). Similarly, Baker and Scher (2003) report that parents who promote the view that reading is a valuable and worthwhile activity have children who are motivated to read, even for sheer pleasure, and through it, they build verbal competence. In addition, parents who introduce their babies to books give them a head start in school and an advantage over their peers throughout primary school (Wade and Moore, 2000; Salkind, 2008). Furthermore, Jordan et al. (2000) acknowledge that success in reading is a gateway to success in other academic areas, and indeed for further studies as illustrated in the picture below.



**Figure 2.6 - Literacy, a Gateway to Success in other Academic Areas**

*Adapted from Australian Government, Department of Education, Science and Training (NLNW, 2004)*

Parental involvement with reading activities with children at home can have significant positive influences not only on reading achievements and language comprehension but also in expressive language skills (Gest et al., 2004). This will also require a child's interest in reading, and positive attitudes towards reading and attentiveness during teaching (Rowe, 1991). In such cases, parents have the duty to encourage and motivate children towards reading, as reading for enjoyment is regarded as more important for children's educational success than their family's socio-economic status (OECD, 2002). Moreover, some researchers such as Flouri and Buchanan (2004) note parental involvement in their children's literacy practices as a more powerful force than other family background variables (for example, social class, family size and the level of parental education). While other researchers like Kalil et al. (2012) and Ardila et al. (2010) argue that it is because of the parents' high level of education that they actually get more involved in their children's literacy activities.

Research also shows that the earlier parents become involved in their children's literacy practices, the more effective the results and the longer lasting the impacts (Mullis et al., 2004; Farver, 2005; Dennesen, 2007; Camilli et al., 2012). But parents may not be able to get involved if they themselves are not literate, which is further compounded by the fact that as Desforges and Abouchaar (2003) contend, parental involvement in children's educational and literacy outcomes continues well into the teenage and even adult years. This is important as all school subjects and reading as a key component in literacy are most sensitive to parental influences (Senechal and LeFevre, 2002). Hence, success in reading is considered a gateway

to success in other academic areas as well (Jordan et al., 2000). This confirms the importance of literacy skills for both parents and children.

On a general note, about the importance of literacy for both parents and children, the worldwide reading campaign endeavours to promote reading for the whole community and to demonstrate the varied ways in which reading can inspire and sustain people to develop skills not only for themselves but also for greater social and emotional development (Allen and Daly, 2002; Desforges and Abouchaar, 2003). It thus amounts to saying that parents and caregivers need to be aware of the significant contribution they can make to their children's learning; first by spending time with their children on literacy related activities (Kalil et al. 2012; Altschul, 2011), secondly, by providing a stimulating environment (Biddulph et al., 2005; Gottfried et al., 1989) around language, reading and writing as well as supporting at home the efforts of school, both during the early years as well as the primary and secondary years of schooling for their children. Thus, it is important to understand what really underpins literacy for people in society. Literacy learning needs to be nurtured in a wide range of contexts and at all ages (UNESCO, 2005). Hence, the United Nation's call on the International Literacy Day (2011) for combined efforts, sufficient resources and commitment, strategies, and continued analysis of the developmental work, revised political will, and the devising of new approaches at all levels – locally, nationally and internationally. In view of its significance, it is helpful to understand how the term literacy is used in this study. The next section presents the basis for assessing parents' education in terms of the level of literacy and briefly highlights the link between literacy and its importance for adults [parents] and their children in society in general.

### **2.8.2. Literacy for Capacity Building**

Literacy has always been linked to the functions it enables humans to face in relation to the challenges of life and the demands of modernity. Hence, The International Literacy Day (ILD) had as its theme 'The Power of Literacy' (ILD, 2009). The following two years built on this theme by extending it to the importance of literacy for participation, social progress and citizenship. Literacy has been recognised by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) since 1965 and in 1990, the 8<sup>th</sup> of September was declared Literacy Day to create literacy consciousness, especially among the illiterates of the world. Doubtless, the term literacy is vast however, UNESCO's definition is:

... a literate person is one, who can, with understanding, both read and write a short statement relevant to routine, and capable of analytical understanding of men's

condition in the world. Literacy is a means of personal liberation and development and delivering individuals educational efforts. Literacy is a method of achieving faculties to develop their economic status and general well-being and inculcating values of national integration, conservation of surroundings ... and observance of standard family tradition. (ILD, 2009)

In addition, UNESCO (2008b) further emphasises the significance of literacy by not just limiting it to education but ascribing it as a unique and powerful tool which affects all areas mentioned in diagram 2.5. Beyond that literacy operates:

- to eradicate poverty;
  - for social and human progress;
  - for acquiring basic education for all;
  - for reducing infant mortality;
  - for scaling down population growth;
  - for reaching gender equality;
  - for ensuring constant development, peace and democracy;
  - a good basic education equips people with literacy potentials for life and further learning;
  - literate parents are inclined to send their children to school;
  - literate people are prone to access continuing education opportunities, and;
  - educated societies are better geared to keep pace with the pressing development.
- (UNESCO, 2008b; ILD, 2009)

From the above list, it is clear that literacy is important for the individual, family, community and society at large as illustrated in figure 2.5 earlier. Consequently, literacy is perceived as an effective way to transform a society and empower it to face the demands of life in an efficient and beneficial way, consistently aiming to elevate the level of personal living, create and enhance change in society (UNESCO, 2006). For example, the sixth meeting of the Working Paper Group examined the critical review of the state of literacy, and reiterated the importance of literacy as:

- a potential for learning opportunities that contributes to poverty reduction;
- it helps reach the EFA /MDGs;
- a recommendation for coordinated partnerships that includes integrated literacy programmes envisaged to enhance individual and social well-being. (UNESCO, 2005:1)

Thus the participants of the UNESCO (2005) meeting understood literacy as essential and beneficial on many fronts.

More so it is acknowledged that educated young people and adults are better able to identify their rights and responsibilities as well as options for change that affect them and their communities. In tune with this notion, UNESCO (2005) defines literacy as:

...the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute, using printed and written materials associated with varying contexts. Literacy involves a continuum of learning in enabling individuals to achieve his/her goals, develop his/her knowledge and potential and participate fully in community and wider society. (UNESCO, 2005:21)

This understanding provides insight into literacy as part of achieving full individual potential, learning for growth and change, communication within and across cultures and participation in social and economic opportunities. Consequently, UNESCO's call for urgent provision for quality education for all young people and adults, as well as children in school in order that they have the basic competencies they need to continue learning (UNESCO, 2008). In this case, literacy is also seen as a means for continuing education. Hence, UNESCO (2008:75-6) has noted literacy programmes being annexed to various organisations such as:

- AlfaSol, an NGO in Brazil;
- partnership in Norway;
- the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) which supports women's access to literacy on reproductive health;
- United Nations International Children's Fund (UNICEF) – supports adult (female literacy programmes and some contexts, not-formal, out-of-school adolescents' literacy and numeracy;
- Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) focuses on rural people and literacy among farmers and fishermen, linked with basic technical skills;
- United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) facilitates access for refugees to the local school system;
- World Health Organisation (WHO) and International Labour Office (ILO) deal with promoting literacy role in accessing information and work opportunities, and ;
- World Bank (WB), the largest external funder of education focuses on Universal Primary Education, thus engages with youth and adult literacy. Although more emphasis is placed on the education of the young, commitment to the instrumental role

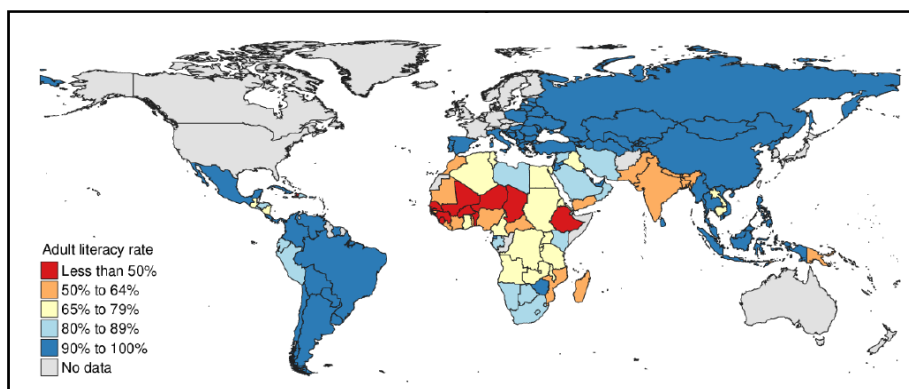
of adult literacy in expanding primary education and in the process leading to poverty eradication and economic growth is kept in focus.

Finally, the concept that ‘literacy improves adults’ commitment to their children’s education and is desirable in its own right’ (UNESCO, 2005:24) links Sticht’s (2010) belief about the value of adult literacy for the education of their children. Thus, there is ample reason to justify why parents need to be literate in order to be involved in their children’s education, especially in academic activities. It is thus important to review the extent to which the world’s population are literate or illiterate in order to understand the level of their contribution to society, particularly to their children’s development. The next section examines the global literacy and illiteracy levels.

## 2.9. Global Literacy Levels

A clear grasp of the existing literacy skill levels of the whole population and of different groups (developed and developing world contexts) within it, will help in understanding the rationale of the impact of parents’ education and literacy skills levels on their children’s education which in this study sets out to explore.

In spite of concerted efforts across the globe, literacy status is far from satisfactory. Recent UN analysis indicate approximately 4 billion literate people in the world while up to about 776 million adults and youth lack minimum literacy skills (ILD, 2009). It is alarming that about 75 million children do not access school, yet many more attend irregularly and are likely to drop out of school before completing primary education. A recent global literacy map show where the literacy levels are lowest and highest as illustrated in the figure below.



**Figure 2.7 - Global Adult and Youth Literacy Rates by 2009**

*Source: UNESCO (2011)*

The figure above indicates clearly developed countries and countries in transition have literacy levels close to 99% and together account for only  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the world's literate people. Nearly 35 countries have a literacy rate of less than 50% and a population of more than 10 million who are illiterate (UNESCO, 2004). Of the world's illiterate population (one-quarter of the adult population), 85% are found in the developing countries, and two-thirds are female with high concentrations in sub-Saharan Africa (UNESCO, 2004). This has serious economic and educational implication for these countries.

### **2.9.1. Literacy Levels in the Developed World Context**

In Europe, Dolton et al. (2009) attest that the acquisition of human capital has been and still is seen as a main route out of poverty both for the individual and for society as a whole. They further state that there is a relationship between education and inequality and wage inequalities in particular in Europe and North America. The authors suggest that education promotes economic growth, which could reduce inequality, though lessons from history suggest that 'the fastest growing countries are not necessarily the most equal in terms of income' (Dolton et al., 2009:1). Similarly, Checchin (2006:5) asserts that 'countries with higher educational achievements are also characterised by lower differences in educational achievement in the population'. He also suggests that income inequality tends to be lower in countries where average educational achievement is higher. For example, Ali's (2011) account of countries with the most educated population in the world: the Vatican, Andora, Finland, Greenland, Norway, and Luxemburg have literacy levels standing at 100% in 2010. In his assessment, these countries are also the most developed states in the world suggesting that education and literacy competences are key components to the development of any country.

This argument further supports Lola and Shrinidhi's (2008) third main route through which parents' level of education can influence their children's educational success, is through increased opportunities by means of increased wages. They believe that parents with substantial income are able to provide for their children's education, thereby increasing their chances of successful school attainment. In the next section, the literacy levels in the developing countries are examined.

### **2.9.2. Literacy Levels in the Developing World Context**

The literacy level in the developing countries is very low as shown in figure 2.7 earlier, although there are country differences (UNESCO, 2004). Even though it is observed that the education and literacy of a mother can increase the probability of a child participating in or completing primary education (UNESCO, 2004), their literacy levels in the majority of

developing countries is disturbing. Below is an illustration of three countries in the development context that offers some insight into the staggering levels of literacy, especially that of females even though various studies have cited the education of mothers as crucial to children’s achievement.



**Figure 2.8 - Mothers’ Literacy and Schooling Status in the Niger, the Lao PDR and Bolivia, 2000.** *Source: UNICEF (2000) MICS database.*

The graph indicates that where the percentage of mothers who are unable to read is nearly above 70% as found in Niger, the number of out-of-school children is high compared to Bolivia where mothers unable to read at all is only below 20%. Whereas, for Lao PDR where the difference between mothers who can read with difficulty and those who can read easily is small, the percentage of children out of school falls below 50%. This indicates that the education of mothers is important for school retention for children but yet their level of literacy is low in many developing countries. Further exploration of literacy levels in developing countries will focus on Uganda – the subject of this study.

**2.9.3. Literacy Rates in Uganda**

Overall, Uganda’s illiteracy rates appear moderately good compared to many developing countries in the world. UNESCO (2010) rates adult literacy in Uganda at 73% (see Chapter 3 table 3.2). However, this may be misleading as the rates in the rural areas could reveal a different figure. The table below presents Uganda’s literacy rate in comparison to that of Sub-Saharan Africa and the rest of the World.



**Table 2.1 - A Comparison of Population and Literacy Rates of Uganda**

<b>Total Population (in thousands of people)</b>	<b>Uganda</b>	<b>Sub-Sahara Africa (SSA)</b>	<b>World</b>
Youth Literacy Rate (ages 15-24), both sexes 2002	80%	79%	87%
Adult Literacy Rate 2002			
Female	59%	55%	75%
Male	79%	71%	86%
Population percentage			
Over age 65, 2002	2%	3%	7%
Living in Urban Areas, 2000	14%	34%	47%
Population Density (people per square km)			
2000	96.7%	25.3%	45.1%

*Source: Adapted from Earth Trends Country Profile*

In line with the view of involving parents as key stakeholders in the basic education of their children, the Ministry of Education and Sports in Uganda through the Education Act (Uganda Education Guidelines, Act 13, 2008:10) states clearly among other things the following points in relation to primary school going children:

- that the provision of education and training to the child shall be a joint responsibility of the state, the parent or guardian and other stakeholders, and;
- basic education shall be provided and enjoyed as a right by all persons.

In making these statements, the government acknowledges the contribution of parents. With the inception of universal primary education in Uganda in 1997, specific responsibilities for parents/guardians were prescribed by the Ministry of Education (MOES, 2001) and these constitute the following:

- ensuring that children go to school;
- meeting part of the cost of education;
- participating in the construction of buildings;
- participating in the planning process;
- participating in monitoring and supervision;
- participating in management of the school;
- contributing to school feeding programmes;
- contributing towards health facilities in the school;
- tendering advice;

- providing place and time for their children to study;
- monitoring school's finances;
- monitoring children's performance;
- building healthy parent –teacher alliance;
- managing family resources to enable children to go to school, and;
- maintaining school discipline (Education Act 13, 2008:12).

Although throughout Uganda's history of formal education, parents and community members have tirelessly contributed towards the construction of schools for the provision of education for their children, in terms of building funds] (MOES, 2001). Both parents and children continue to refer to these extra costs as school fees although UPE tuition is paid by the government. Nevertheless, the extent to which parents and guardians actually rise to some of the responsibilities assigned to them in the current UPE policy seem inadequate. Various reasons have been attributed to the ambiguities surrounding parental contribution, which include parental lack of knowledge about school matters and illiteracy. This study attempts to explore the reasons behind the gap, notably, the nature and extent to which parents support their primary school going children. Otherwise, the government of Uganda, through the Ministry of Education and Sport is responsible for the education of pupils in government-aided primary schools in the following areas:

- i. the provision of learning and instructional materials, structural development and teachers welfare;
- ii. setting policy for all matters concerning education and training;
- iii. setting and maintaining the national goals and broad aims of education;
- iv. providing and controlling the national curriculum;
- v. evaluating academic and standards through continuous assessment and national examinations;
- vi. registering and licensing of teachers;
- vii. recruiting and licensing of teachers;
- viii. recruiting, deployment and promotion of both teaching and non-teaching staff;
- ix. determining the language and medium of instruction;
- x. encouraging the development of a national language;
- xi. ensuring equitable distribution of education at institutions;
- xii. regulating, establishing, and registering of educational institutions;
- xiii. management, monitoring, supervising and disciplining of staff and students;

- xiv. ensuring supervision of performance in both public and school;
- xv. development of management policies for all government and government aided schools and private schools (Education Act 13, 2008:11).

There seem to be no explicit measures to ensure that parents actually do what they have been assigned. It thus brings to mind again, what sort of parents are able to carry out the kind of responsibilities ascribed to them by the Ministry of Education and Sports. In attempts to overcome the education deficit among parents, Uganda has invested in adult literacy, given the low levels of literacy in the country (Mbabazi, 2008).

### ***Adult literacy in Uganda***

In Uganda, the emphasis on adult basic literacy is related to raising the economic and social status of the households and the local community as a means of eradicating poverty through education (PEAP, 2005; MFPED, 2002). However, various Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) such as Literacy and Adult Basic Education (LABE) (Nyamugasira and Desmond, 2008), the Alternative Basic Education for Karamoja (ABEK), Complementary Opportunities for Primary Education (COPE), Basic Education for Urban Poverty Areas (BEUPA), Child-Centred Alternative Non-formal Community Based Education (CHANCE), and Empowering Lifelong Skill Education (ELSE) (Mbabazi, 2008) have integrated adult education with multiple targets. This includes the aims of empowering illiterate rural parents through education to overcome low primary school performances of their children, poor children's retention in primary education and poor learning outcomes in the rural districts of Northern Uganda (LABE, 2011a). In addition, the adult literacy is also to ensure access to basic education for disadvantaged groups, which is in line with the government policy to empower its citizens with education (PEAP, 2005), especially adults who would support their children in school. For example, LABE's work in Northern Uganda provides a good example although Moyo district was excluded. Positive results from LABE (2011b) have been realised, for example:

- high enrolment in the project schools as compared to non-project school. This was attributed to increased sensitisation of communities through radio programmes;
- families in the project were able to save money to buy solar lamps so that their children could have more time for reading as all these districts do not have regular electricity supply – apart from 4-5 hours from 7pm to 11pm from the town generators for those living in the town area;

- children in project homes had more time to access solar lights at home (change of attitude to accommodate modern technology for use);
- the project provided more reading materials to children to practice reading skills at home, where they could be helped by their parents.

The project also identified a strong positive correlation between literacy skills of parents and increased parental support to children (LABE, 2009). One such success story is provided below.

Case 1: Parents' education/literacy skills' stories in Northern Uganda



**Figure 2.9 - Home Parental Academic Support. Janani Okot, 45, and Sindrela Atyang, 8**  
*Adopted from LABE Report (2009: 13)*

Sindrela aged 8 had reading difficulty at school. She could not cope with teaching and learning in the mainstream classroom situation. Her father aged 45 who completed an adult training course with LABE on how to create a home learning corner started classes with his daughter at home. Her progress was slow but in the end she managed to finish primary two and she was the best pupil in her school at the final examination. Sindrela's father remarked, 'her success gives me inspiration to continue with teaching' (LABE, 2009:13). He extended his home teaching to the children of the neighbours who were interested in learning how to read, write and count. In Sindrela's own words, 'in school there are many students and sometimes when the teacher talks to everyone, I can't understand the lesson well. I like the "corner" because I can easily understand what my father is teaching me' (LABE, 2009:13).

Sinderela's story demonstrates the importance of a literacy environment at home, a parent who values education for his child, and one who is able to listen to the voice of his child and attend to her. It demonstrates that a parent who is literate, though at a low level, was able to assist his child to acquire skills she was unable to achieve by herself. This is a simple but effective example of parental intervention or mediation in extending the child's zone of capabilities (Kravtsova, 2009). Sinderela's statement is salient with a need for recognition, encouragement and support from home, which every child needs in order to appreciate learning and remain in school. From the economic literature, Patrinos and Psacharopoulos (2011) compare expenditure on education with investment in machines meaning that it is worthwhile for parents to take time and engage in their children's school activities. In other words, if parents are educated, they can contribute more to their children's education as well as to their general well-being to make them fit for learning.

Another success story from the adult literacy intervention worth mentioning is one where education enabled a change of attitude in parents. Rufina's story in northern Uganda illustrates this (LABE, 2011). Rufina Acan left school at primary 3 and had to take care of her blind grandmother. Her brothers continued with education. She married at the age of 14 and had 8 children. Due to social demands, she developed skills and practiced as a traditional birth attendant (TBA). All the while, she was not happy because she could not record her practices for the TBA professionals' review, she always relied on other people to record the data. When an adult basic education programme came to her village, she seized the opportunity and learnt to read and write as she reports, 'now I can write names of parents, record weight of children, day of birth – I used to go to the hospital with the mother after she delivered, now I go and give records to medical staff. I am very excited about reading and I don't want to stop' (LABE, 2011: ii).

Such stories help elevate the plight of illiteracy which remain a big problem, especially among women. Nyamugasira et al. (2005) particularly noted that the majority of women in Uganda continue to be marginalised and excluded from education because of their gender as the story of Acan above illustrates. Consequently, LABE's main efforts are 'designed to improve and widen opportunities for women by increasing their literacy skills', and making them permanent in such a way that empowers them for equitable development (Nyamugasira et al., 2005:6). The photo below captures the words of a parent educator involved on adult literacy who remarked, 'if parents and children can learn here, then the children will do better in

school, and the parents [illiterate] will benefit as well' (LBE, 2009:15). It demonstrates how parents and their children both can learn and benefit from educational opportunities together.



**Figure 2.10: - Children Learn together with Parents**  
*Source: Adapted from LBE (2009: 15)*

Home learning centre Ayikuru village, Ludara sub-county, Koboko District (West Nile Region)

Thus, literacy in Uganda is consistently understood as a means of empowerment at all levels: individual, family, community and nationally. The goal of this study posits that parents and their children both need literacy. Efforts made by government towards basic education of its citizens must be tailored to both parents [adults] and children.

## **2.10. Conclusion**

The chapter presented the literature related to the impact of parents' education and literacy skills internationally and also related to the context of this study. As the study investigated issues in the home background of the primary school going children, definitions of family, education and literacy were provided. The theoretical frame (Vygotsky, 1962), and the conceptual framework of Feinstein et al. (2008) was provided in the third section while section four accounted for the philosophical perspectives of the study. Section five demonstrated the impact of parents education on children's educational life in two major ways. The direct (UNESCO, 2004; Ardila et al., 2005; Feinstein et al., 2008), and the indirect (Guo and Hans 2000; Feinstein et all, 2008) ways. The indirect ways exemplified how parents' education can have a substantial influence by having a mediating and moderating across both pathways. It

was therefore deemed important that parents and caregivers need to be constantly aware of the significant contribution they can make to children's learning and subsequent achievement in school. As examined, parents and caregivers may perform this by consciously allocating time for interaction with their children (Ardila et al., 2005), providing a stimulating environment around language (UNESCO, 2005), reading and writing opportunities in the home so that what school does can be built upon and children can realise their full potential and enjoy schooling (Melhusia et al., 2001; UNESCO, 2004). By so doing, parents are able to transmit parental cognitive competence to their children (Chevalier, 2004; Feinstein et al., 2008). It was also noted that the practical involvement of parents related positively and directly to children's achievement. The section further examined the indirect influences of parent education on the family through such components as belief, attitude and value for educational systems, which in turn influences the child. The various ways influencing the child included the child's aspiration, motivation and behaviour towards schooling. In the sixth section the role of a home rich in learning resources was explored, while section seven discussed other external factors which if not responded to appropriately may negatively affect children's educational success. Section eight explored literacy as the basis of the study by highlighting the relationship between adult and child literacy, the general importance of the literacy spectrum ranging from literacy education and skills for the individual, family, community and society at large. This section linked the notion that for parents to be able to effectively engage and enhance their children's education for desirable achievements, they need literacy to some extent. This led to section nine where literacy levels in various contexts: global, developed and developing were briefly reviewed and, particularly the literacy situation in the study context – Uganda as part of a development agenda was examined.

Overall, it was evident that the education of parents is important in their involvement in the education of their children. This was made clear from the many studies reviewed. As Clark (1990) observed, in Uganda, after all, children spend 70% of their waking time out of school so home should do more to supplement school efforts and this begins with their own parents/caregivers. The chapter concludes with the conviction that the earlier parents get involved in a child's educational process, the more powerful the effects as studies have indicated (Wade and Moore, 2000; Snow, 1991; Bus, et al., 1995; Flouri and Buchanan, 2004). The next chapter provides some information about Uganda as the specific focus of this study.





## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **CONTEXTUALISING THE STUDY**

#### **3.1. Introduction**

The purpose of this chapter is to present the contextual study of Uganda and to highlight the education system with particular reference to the Moyo district in the West Nile Region. The first part explores and presents Uganda's background information in general vis-à-vis the Moyo district: geographical location, topography, climate and the population, as well as the political, social, and economic status. A brief overview of the infrastructure of Uganda in terms of access to lighting (electricity), roads and transport system, clean water and other service facilities for the well-being of the citizens and their possible impact on education of the primary school going children is provided. This information is deemed important for those readers to whom the context of this study may be unfamiliar.

The second section focuses specifically on the overall education system in Uganda. This will involve examining the country's educational development trends before and after independence, to the current structure of education in Uganda, and situating the current literacy levels in the country and in Moyo district. Regional differences in primary leaving examination (PLE) results are shown to highlight the rationale underpinning the prevalent underperformance in the Northern regions including Moyo district - the focus of this study. Section three outlines the Universal Primary Education (UPE) programme policy in Uganda against the core indicators of an effective education, namely enrolment, retention and completion trends. It will highlight stakeholders, specifically of parents/guardians as assigned by the Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES). This is important as it points to the extent of the role parents play in their children's education within the UPE programme in Uganda. As a second level education teacher, the researcher also noticed the poor performance of students in both primary and secondary levels and how students struggle in their educational endeavour. However, efforts to improve performance in the primary sector have focused on school-based factors such as teacher education, resources and increasing school infrastructures in terms of construction of teachers' houses, classrooms, pit-latrines for pupils, and expanding the primary sector. These efforts have paid little attention, if any, to the factors relating to pupils' home background and how they might affect their achievement in school.

## 3.2. Brief Background to the Study Location

This section presents the country profile in terms of geographical location, topography, climate, population, ethnic groups, languages, and people's livelihoods as deemed relevant to understanding the context of the study.

### 3.2.1. Geographical Location

The Republic of Uganda is a landlocked country in the East African plateau located in the Great Lakes Region of Africa (Library of Davidson College, 2002). It is skirted by the Equator in the south and lies between Latitudes 4° 12' N and 1° 29' S and Longitudes 29° 34' E and 35° 0' E (UNEB, 2011). It borders five countries namely, the newly independent Republic of South Sudan (ROSS) in the North, the Republic of Kenya in the East, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in the West and the Republic of Tanzania and Rwanda in the South, as shown in the map below.



**Figure 3.1 - Map of Political Uganda Source: Encyclopaedia of the Nations**

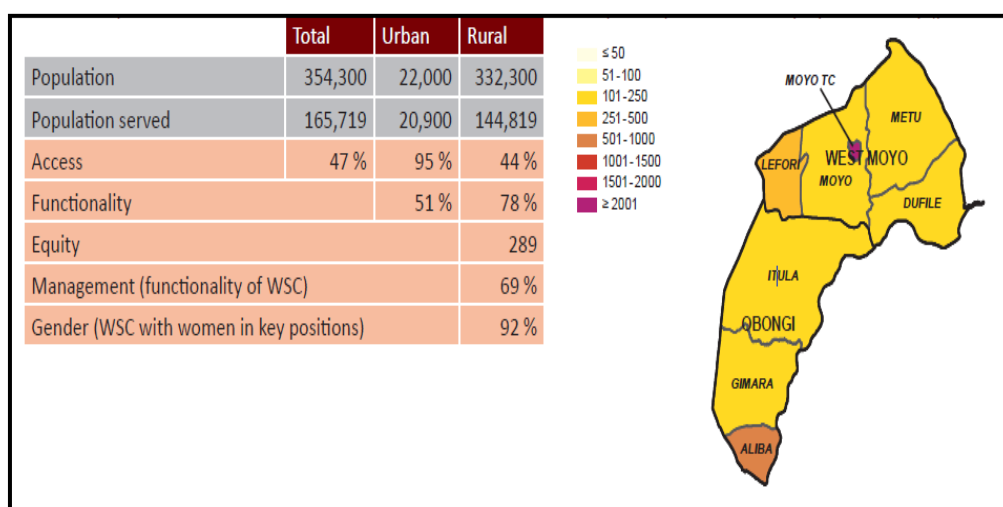
Overall, Uganda has a total land boundary of 2,698 kilometres (1,676 miles) (CIA, 2004), and the research area stands remotely at a distance of about 500km North West from the capital city, Kampala in the West Nile Region (see figure 3.1 above).

**West Nile Region**

The West Nile Region comprises eight districts which include Arua, Koboko, Yumbe, Nebbi, Maracha, Adjumani, Zombo and Moyo (Mulondo, 2014). The region is situated about 500 km from the capital city, Kampala and other major towns such as Entebbe (International Airport) and Jinja (industrial town). This region was annexed to Uganda from the Belgian Congo, currently known as the Democratic Republic of Congo in 1914 (Radio Network, 2014). This distance from major urban centres further isolates the region, including Moyo district, in terms of facilities and major service provisions including electricity, public means of transport and educational facilities. Accordingly, the Moyo district seems to be more disadvantaged as it is cut off by the river Nile from the Eastern border with Adjumani district.

**Moyo district**

Moyo district (see figure 3. 1) is located in the far North Western part of Uganda, in a region commonly known as the West Nile Region, which shares common features with the greater North of Uganda. Moyo is made up of two counties, Moyo and Obongi (Directorate of Water Development, Ministry of Water & Environment, 2010). Below are some of the development indicators based on safe water provision.



**Figure 3.2 - Moyo District Demographic Information**

Source: Directorate of Water Development, Ministry of Water & Environment (2010:265) [Accessed on 14<sup>th</sup> May 2012]

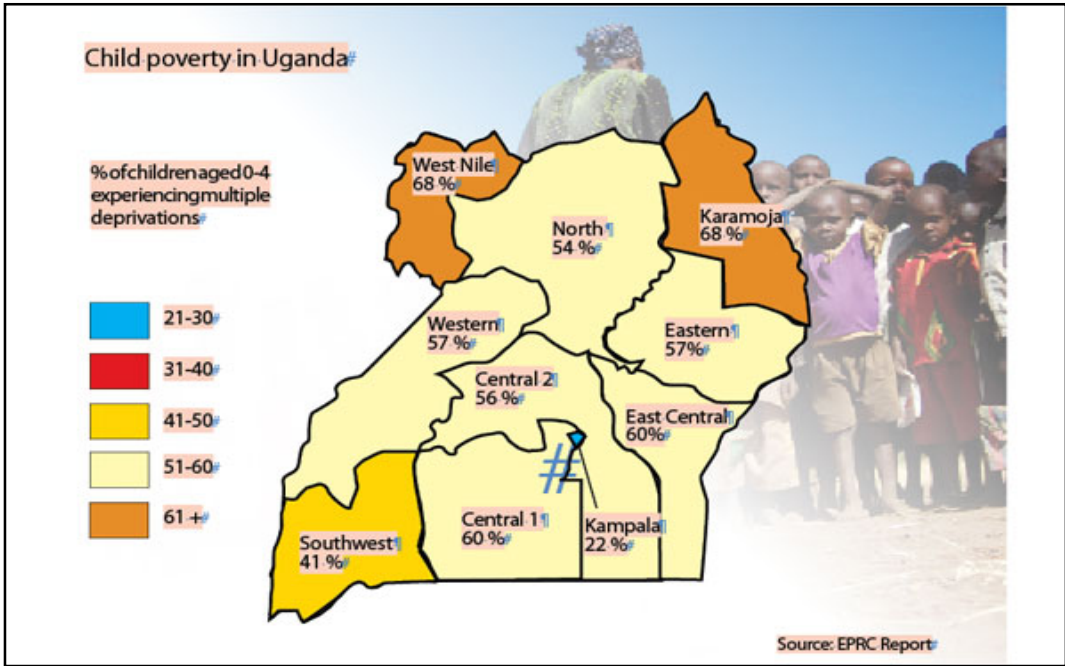
The literacy levels in the northern region is low but lowest among women: 33% in 2000 as compared to the male counterparts 64% MFPED (2003). The regional differences in literacy are illustrated in the table below.

**Table 3.1 - Literacy Rates by Regions**

Region	1996			2000		
	Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
Northern	-	-	54.4	64	33	47
Eastern	-	-	53.9	72	52	62
Central	-	-	74.5	81	74	77
Western	-	-	63.7	74	61	67
Uganda	73.2	50.2	61.8	74	57	65

Source: National Monitoring survey 1997 UNHS (2000) adopted from MFPED (2003)

Insecurity and widespread poverty in the region are seen as the main factors for the wide gap in literacy and in education in the Northern region. The figure below illustrates this pattern in Uganda.



**Figure 3.3 - Poverty Rates in Uganda.**

Source: New Vision, Uganda’s Daily Newspaper (2014:1; see also Sunday Monitor, March 1<sup>st</sup> 2015)

Recent research into children living in poverty conducted by Economic, Policy Research Centre (EPRC) in Uganda revealed that in the West Nile region, which includes Moyo district, child poverty rates are as high as 68% compared to 41% in the West and only 21-30% in the Central parts of Uganda (EPRC, 2014) as shown above. This suggests that if the majority of the population is poor, then they may be less likely to support their children in school. In

addition, when children's school needs are not adequately met, either by school or home, they are bound to perform poorly in their academic career (Wayne and Misskel, 2005; Gottfried et al., 1998). The climate and weather conditions are also important in relation to how they generally impact on the school going child.

### *Climate and Weather*

Although the climate of Uganda is tropical, its elevation on the great East African plateau (Library of Davidson College, 2002), and position on the equator results in small range in temperature differences, with no extremes. For example, in the capital city, Kampala, situated on the shores of Lake Victoria, temperatures range between 16°C - 18°C with a mean temperature of 27°C (Blanc, 2012). With varying altitudes, temperatures tend to drop significantly at higher altitudes, as permanent snow exists on the Margherita Peak in the Western Mountains of the Moon.

There are two rainfall patterns in the year except for the areas surrounding the lake regions. The short rains are experienced between March – May and the longer one between September - November, though this may vary with distance from the Equator. Around Lake Victoria, rainfall tends to be higher with at least 140cm spread throughout the year while the drier North East receives as little as 69cm (Gascoigne, 2001). This heavy rain ensures abundant water in the great lakes and rivers of the country.

Uganda has about 44,000km<sup>2</sup> area covered with fresh-water in the forms of lakes and rivers (Gascoigne, 2001). The largest lake is Lake Victoria, the largest in Africa, and the second largest in the world, surpassed on by Lake Superior in North America. Other great lakes include Lake Kyoga, Bisina, Albert, George and Edward. These major lakes are linked by numerous rivers, and the principal river is the River Nile, which flows out of Lake Victoria in the south and transverses the country as Victoria Nile, and exits Uganda in the North into the Republic of South Sudan as the White Nile and this is illustrated in the map below.



**Figure 3.4 - Rivers and Lakes of Uganda.**

*Source: From Google Earth*

With these large fresh water bodies and regular rainfall patterns Uganda’s agricultural activities are sustained. Food security is generally assured, including in the Moyo district, albeit with low technological advancement in this sector. However, there are advantages and disadvantages linked to these vast water bodies, in that school children often have to engage in agricultural activities for the family’s livelihood, especially among the poorer rural communities, and keeping children out of school in order to work on their family farms is common (IOB, 2008; Mafabi, 2012). On the positive side, the lakes and rivers have a number of waterborne plants such as papyrus reeds, lotus, water lilies which produce items of economic importance. Some of these details have not been recorded officially but as one who lives near the River Nile I have observed some of the characteristic behaviour and activities of the people along these rivers and lakes. For example, the papyrus reeds provide sleeping mats, and some of these are sold to earn money. Similarly, the water lilies produce seeds that are gathered, mostly by women, as source of food. Above all, the lakes and rivers produce various types of fish which is a good a source of food and that means children’s nutrition is secure with a balanced diet.

However, studies have shown that fishing activities among people living around these lakes and rivers tend to lure children out of school, leading to early dropping out of school in an attempt to fish for both the family’s consumption and commercial purposes (Mafabi, 2012). In addition, children who live near large water bodies in Uganda, especially, boys prefer to engage in fishing activities after school at the expense of their homework to earn instant cash.

Furthermore, the marshy and swampy shores of lakes and rivers are known for harbouring malaria-bearing mosquitoes. This results in frequent malaria attacks on the population that live alongside the riverside. Ill health can reduce children’s attendance at school and lowers adult potential to work and provide for their families (Hadley et al., 2008; Weinreb et al., 2002). Secondly, the rive Nile in particular is full of dangerous animals such as hippopotamus and crocodiles which make it unsafe for navigation especially with small manual canoes (Kiwanuka, 2011). This can be unsafe for children who have to cross from their villages to attend school on the other side (Kiwanuka, 2011). Below is evidence of transport problem where there are rivers to cross.



**Figure 3.5 - Children’s Means of Transport**

*Source: New Vision, Uganda’s Daily Newspaper (2011:1): Nakaseke district –Uganda*

It was reported (Kiwanuka, 2011) this leaking canoe can only transport seven children at a time, so most of them are usually late for school as they wait their turn to cross. A number of fatal accidents have been registered when crossing with poor boats like this (see detail in section 2.71). In 2004, Moyo district registered 10 people dead when their canoe capsized. This included a family of five some were school going children who were coming home for Christmas all perished in 2011. In a separate incident, two fishermen died in 2012 (Warom Okello, 2014). Where households are located near these large water bodies, it is potentially dangerous for school going children especially as technology is not advanced enough to provide safe navigations.

### 3.2.2. Demographic Context

There are varying figures regarding the demography of Uganda, however, recent population estimates indicate the Uganda's population stands at 33,425,000 with annual population growth rate of 3.2% (UNESCO, 2010), although some sources put it at 34.6million (Trocaire, 2011). The annual population growth rate of 3.2% is considered to be high compared to that of the world's average of 1.2%, and this could create a future crisis of land and resources (Walubiri, 2011) and issues for education. This is affirmed by the Ministry of Education and Sports when it observed that 'the high rate of population growth affects the country's effort to achieve and sustain quality education' (NAPE, 2011:1). Population projected to 2050 estimates Uganda' population to reach a total of 127 million (IOB, 2008). This development may have serious consequences, especially for the education system and provision to its people (IOB, 2008).

Uganda's population is primarily of African descent (NAPE, 2011), and has one of the youngest population in the world with up to 53% under 15 years of age (World Bank, 2013) although Ejuu (2012) puts this figure at 48.7%. This implies that there is high dependency on the working population within the country. Furthermore, this implies that the high number of children will place pressure on the available educational facilities. As a result, government may have to embark on child welfare programmes in order to meet the needs of this young population in terms of health and education.

Overall, there are over 40 ethnic groups, each with a different local language (NAPE, 2011; UBOS, 2006). There are four major ethnic groups; namely, the Bantu, Sudanic, Kuliak (Nilo-Himites) and the Nilotic, which form the diverse indigenous groups in Uganda (Lewis, 2009). This diversity along ethnic lines plays a major role in the cultural life of the people in the country (UBOS, 2006). The **Figure 3.6** below illustrates the major ethnic groups in Uganda.





**Figure 3.6 - Major Ethnic Groups in Uganda.**  
 Source: *Adapted and Modified IWGIA, 2012*

According to the International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA) (2012), the Batwa, also known as the *Twa* of South West, the Benet and the *Ik*, are also indigenous to Uganda. It is appropriate to situate the people of Moyo in this diversity of peoples in Uganda.

The summary of the country profile is provided in table 3.2 below.

**Table 3.2 - Summary of Country Profile: Uganda.**

Total population (000)	33,425	HIV rate (%) in adults (15-49 years)	6.5
Annual population growth rate (%)	3.2	Poverty (%) of population on less than \$2 a day	65
Population 1-14 years (%)	48	GDP per capita (PPP) US\$	1275
Rural population (%)	85	GDP Growth rate (%)	5.9
Total fertility rate (births per woman)	6.1	Total debt service a % of GNI	0.4
Infant mortality rate (0/00)	60	Children of primary school-age who are out of school (%)	9
Life expectancy at birth (years)	54	Adult literacy (%)	73

Source: UNESCO (2010; World Bank, 2014)

Large ethnic groups such as the Bantu, the Nilotics, the Kuliak and the Sudanic groups. Each of these groups have sub-groups among whom there can be some similarities (few words with the same meaning) in their languages and cultural traits but differences are exceptionally evident between the major ethnic groups. As some literature suggests every language, carries along with it a culture of the people who use it, as expressed by the Mazrui and Mazrui (1998):

... language use ... is not simply an act of communication and the acceptance of the sociocultural presuppositions that make communication possible, but also a means of signifying a certain relationship with the other with one's interlocutors... with the acquisition of any language, therefore, comes an entire set of cultural underpinnings. (Mazrui and Mazrui, 1998:57)

This confirms the social, linguistic and cultural diversity in Uganda, for which Mazrui and Mazrui (1998:69) describe Africa as 'a grand laboratory of languages, a microcosm of the linguistic world'. In addition, Djite (2008:23), on writing about the linguistic complexity in Africa elaborates this view by citing the biblical analogy of the Tower of Babel (Gen, 11:1-9) when he remarks that 'the problem that made it impossible to complete the Tower of Babel are projected onto the continent of Africa'. He further argues that the continent has such a multitude of languages that it is impossible for any African country to choose a local language as its national or official language, or as a medium of instruction. Either for political or economic reasons, this gave rise to the decision that many African states made by choosing Western languages as official language in their respective countries (Bayley et al., 2013), and English became Uganda's official language as a result and it is also used for educational instruction (Dagne, 2011; Lewis, 2009). Other countries such as Kenya, Nigeria, Ghana, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and more recently, Rwanda and the Republic of South Sudan use English language as their official language. The major languages spoken in Uganda are shown in table 3.3 below- the figure in brackets indicates the number of languages spoken in the region.

**Table 3.3 - Regions and the Major Languages spoken in Uganda.**

<b>Region</b>	<b>Major languages in Uganda</b>
North (8)	Acholi, Langi, Ngakarimojong, Thur, Alur, Kakwa, Lugbara, and Ma'di
East (11)	Ateso, Kumam, Kupsabiny, Lumasaba, Japadhola, Lugwere, Lunyole, Lusamya, Lusoga, Lulamogi and Kiswahili
Central (5+)	Luganda, Runyankore, Lululi, Runyoro, (plus all other languages in the city)
West (9)	Kinyaruanda, Runyankore, Riloga, Rufumbira, Lukhonzu, Lwamba, Rutooro, Runyoro

*Source: Adapted and Modified from NAPE (2011:2)*

Swahili is widely spoken but more localised primarily for trade purposes in major towns and the city, Kampala, and in government institutions such as in the army, police and some security units (UNESCO, 2008). English is the official language used for instruction in schools at all levels and in offices (NAPE, 2011; Dagne, 2011; Lewis, 2009; Library of Davidson College, 2002). Some literature on economic growth and potential, regard Africa’s high ethnic fragmentation along languages and cultures as exemplified in Uganda as being disadvantageous to economic growth (Easterly and Levine, 1997), and arguably, it can be problematic in the field of education.

With regards to Moyo district, the population was estimated to be 352, 900 (2010) (MFPED, 2003). This is summarised in **Table 3.4** below.

**Table 3.4 - The Estimated Population of Moyo District over a 10 year Period**

Year	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Estimated population in 1000	199	251	233	251	272	293	317	342	352	353

*Source: MFPED (2003)*

The table indicates that there is a steady rise in the population in Moyo, with a big difference between 2002 and 2003. This was the year when the Sudanese refugees moved into Uganda and some were settled in Moyo district (Mali et al, 2009).

The natives of Moyo district are the Ma'di who extend beyond the Ugandan border into Southern Sudan (see Figure 3.1). In Uganda, the Ma'di people live along both sides of the White Nile from Rhino Camp. According to the Joshua project-people-profile, originally the Ma'di group who live in Uganda came from the Sudan. They are now only a part of what used to be a large group of people stretching westward across Zaire and Northward parallel with Juba and Maridi in South Sudan. Several of the related groups, such as the Kaliko and Lugbara, still recognize themselves as Ma'di and call their languages "Ma'di Ti" although they are regarded as different people and their languages are no longer the same though there are some similarities. Grey (1979) argues that education under specific conditions has a major impact on people’s attitudes and this leads us to consider the economic context of the study.

**3.2.3. Economic Context**

Uganda’s economy was regarded one of the most promising ones in Sub-Saharan Africa, although it is dominated by agriculture, which accounts for about 42% of Gross Domestic Production (GDP) (World Bank, 1993; USAID, 1995). Much of this agricultural production

output comes from the subsistence sector (Sejjaaka, 2004; Dagne 2011). It employs about 78% of the work force and accounts for about 90% of export earnings and 23.4% of Uganda's Gross Domestic Production (GDP) (Dagne, 2011). The main export crops are coffee (Uganda is Africa's largest coffee producer), cotton, tea, and fruits (Balat et al., 2007), and cassava, banana, and maize as food crops. Unfortunately, the sector is found to account for 80% of unpaid women workers who normally work on family farms for subsistence (Ellis et al., 2006). Services account, for only 15% of GDP and commerce at about 13% and the manufacturing sector stands at 9%, while fishing processing and textile and garments are among the sectors selected by the government of Uganda as strategic exports (Ellis et al., 2006). Ellis and colleagues note that during the British protectorate period (discussed in section 3.2.4) the manufacturing sector was neglected in favour of agriculture. The main exports are coffee, tea, fish, electrical products, iron, steel, gold, flowers and horticultural products. Exports go to Kenya, Belgium, the Netherlands, France and Germany (IOB, 2008). The economy suffered in the years of political unrest, 1971-1985, and crop production has been hampered by insecurity over protracted period, especially in the North and West of the country (IOB, 2008; Jeal, 2011). However, recent security improvements in these areas have allowed a number of farmers to return and resume normal cultivation (USAID, 2010).

As most districts in Uganda, the Ma'di in Moyo district are primarily farmers and fishermen. Over 90% of the population in the district are involved in agricultural activities, with 86.6% of the population involved in some form of subsistence production (MFPED, 2003). Most agricultural production is for household consumption. Some of the agricultural produce is sold, particularly maize, cassava and sesame, locally called *simsim*. The main crops grown in the district include sweet potatoes, sorghum, cassava, ground-nuts (pea-nuts), millet, maize (sweet corn), peas (black eyed peas, cow peas), and beans (brown, kidney, runner and soya beans). The Nile River is the main source of fish within the district. Few animals such as cattle, goats and poultry, mainly chicken, are kept, and most of these are on a subsistence level. Bee keeping, for honey production, is gaining popularity in the district (MFPED, 2003). Generally, it is clear that the population of Uganda is largely agrarian but the political conditions can influence this position.

#### **3.2.4. Political Context**

Unlike many other African countries, Uganda was not colonised by the British but they made Uganda a British protectorate from 1894 until October 9th 1962, when it received its independence (USAID, 1995; Library of Davidson College, 2002; Aguti, 2002 Sejjaaka,

2004). It is documented that the main goal of Britain in Uganda was to exploit its fertile soil through enforced production of major crops such as cotton, coffee and tea (Library of Davidson College, 2002).

Before the British administration, Uganda’s political structure was dominated by three major kingdoms: Buganda, Bunyoro and Ankole (Tidy and Leeming, 1981) of the Bantu speaking peoples. The Eastern part of the Northern region was affected by the kingdom’s administrative system. Whereas in the West Nile, Acholi and Karamoja people were ruled by chiefs and had little in common with the people of the kingdoms (Tidy and Leeming, 1981; Jeal, 2011)

When Europeans entered Uganda in the nineteenth century, mainly as explorers, they witnessed the scourge of the slave trade operated by the Arabs, and political interest became inevitable (Jeal, 2011). Consequently in 1890, an Anglo-Germany agreement was deliberated which brought Uganda under British influence and in 1894, Uganda was declared a British Protectorate with Sir Hesketh Bell as the governor (Jeal, 2011).

Uganda gained independence in 1962 (Tidy and Leeming, 1981; Jeal, 2011). Dr. Milton Obote, the leader of the Uganda People’s Congress (UPC) became prime minister of a coalition government with the Kaba Yeka. At independence, the country adopted the official name of ‘The Republic of Uganda’, from ‘British Protectorate’ (Gascoigne, 2001; Lambert, 2012). Although the country retained a unitary system of government with Kampala as its capital, Mr Obote gradually imposed control over both his own party and his coalition partners. This move led to the 1966 political unrest, which escalated in the 1980s and with every successive head of the state in Uganda. This violent transition from one political leader to another since its independence in 1962 (Lambert, 2012) has seen 10 leaders in a span of 24 years and is illustrated in the table below.

**Table 3.5 - Heads of State since Independence**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Head of State</b>
1963-1966	President Edward Mutesa 11
1966-1971	Prime Minister Apolo Milton Obote
1966-1979	President Apolo Milton Obote1
1971-1979	President for Life, Idi Amin Dada (see other titles below)
1979-1980 (three heads of state) period	President Yosuf Lule, Godfrey Binaisa, Paolo Mwangi
1981-1985	President Apolo Milton Obote 11
1985-1986	General Tito okello
1986-to-date	President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni

*Source: Country Profile: Uganda (Library of Davidson College, 2002:132ff)*

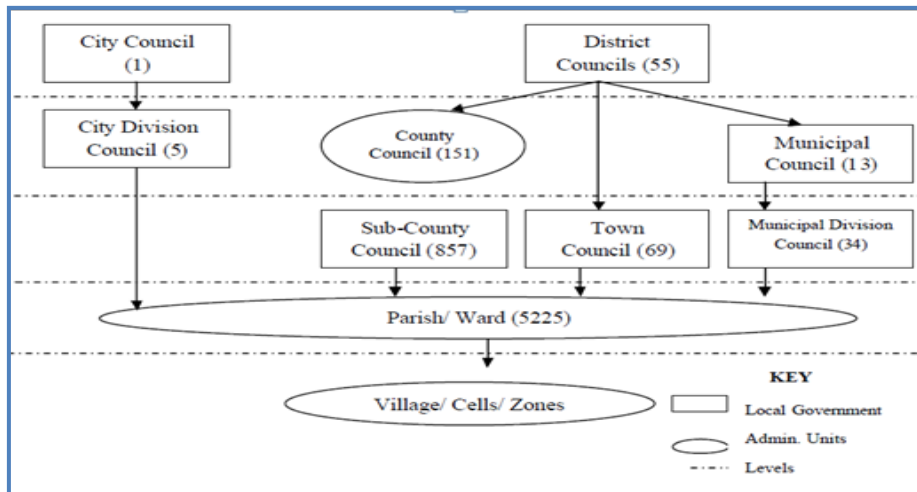
Gazetted titles of General Amin:

Field Marshal, Al-Hajji, Dr. Idi Amin Dada, Victoria Cross (VC), Distinguished Service Officer (DSO), Military Cross (MC), Conqueror of the British Empire (CBE), Last King of Scotland (LKS), Commander in Chief (MC), and the Life President of the Republic of Uganda. (Information from a reliable informant, 8<sup>th</sup> September 2012)

Although under the National Resistance Movement (NRM) Uganda has experienced relative peace, the North was not been spared from Joseph Kony's operations until, 2005 (UNHCR, 2009). Generally, the country has not had peaceful political transition right from the time of the kingdoms (Lambert, 2012; also see Tidy and Leeming, 1981), and each successive government was marked by armed conflict and wars with consequences of human suffering and often times death, loss of property, disruption of family harmony, displacement and exile into another countries for refugees (UNHCR, 2009). This political turbulence negatively affected all forms of development in the country: social, economic, education and spiritual.

Uganda is also a member of the East African Community and enjoys friendly regional relations with fellow members, particularly Kenya and Tanzania. However, it has had tense relations with neighbouring Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in the West since the 1990s (Balimwikungu and Mukasa, 2009; Bariyo, 2012). Widespread allegations 'accused Uganda of exploitation of natural resources in the region' (Rogier, 2002; Dagne, 2011:16). Subsequently, Uganda retreated its troops out of Congo in 2003 under international pressure (Balimwikungu and Mukasa, 2009; Rogier, 2002). Security is vital for any development and more so for young children attending primary education - the principal concern of this study.

Despite coming from a turbulent political history, Uganda's recent strength has been its administrative unity since the NRM government system of decentralisation Steffensen, et al., 2004). This entails a well-structured central government system to the grassroots level as illustrated in the Figure 3.7. below.



**Figure 3.7 - Structure of Decentralisation Governance System in Uganda**

*Source: Onzima (2013:4) adapted from Steffensen Steffensen, Tidemand, and Ssewankambo (2004)*

The aim of the decentralised system of governance is to empower citizens to participate in the process of development and to improve their livelihoods (MFPED, 1999; Saito, 2000). This objective is geared towards reducing poverty and enhancing inclusiveness (Bitarabeho, 2008; Bashaasha, et al., 2011). Kritika et al. (2010:1) note that Uganda, having learnt from its turbulent past of dictatorship and civil war, suspended the existing sectarian multi-party system and embarked upon the ‘no-party system’ built around the principles of national governance of democratic reconciliation. Since the decentralisation system of governance, the country has been sub-divided into 112 districts, from 87 in 2010, which is an increase of 29% (NAPE, 2011) and primary education came directly under the authority of the decentralised government and education officials. However, there is a weakness in the decentralisation system. This pertains to the nomination of the local council one (LC 1), who in most cases are illiterate, and therefore are not able to mobilise or debate in favour of education. Moreover, local councils 1, 2 and 3 who serve at the sub-county level are expected to account to the local councils 4 and 5 at the district level but in the event that they are not conversant about the needs of the people on the ground, little can be realised for any form of development including education.

### 3.3. Education in Uganda

In most African countries, the establishment of schools as learning institutions and, indeed, the formal education system was initiated and monopolised by religious groups during European colonial rule (Basse, 1999; Aguti, 2002; IOB, 2008). Prior to a formal system of education, informal or traditional education system was practiced through oral commutation and lifestyle.

These two systems can be identified in the periods before and after the country attained independence.

### **3.3.1. Education Before Independence**

Traditional African education was mainly practiced before Uganda got independence. It was seen as providing equal educational opportunity for all since it was community-based (Bassey, 1999). According to an African elder:

... before the coming of Europeans to our country, no aspect of our life, no boy or girl was ever neglected by our educational system because it was constantly being innovated to make it relevant to the needs of all students. Every person had an opportunity for education, today, we are told that only so many can go to school. Why so many only and not all? (Bassey, 1999:22)

In the same vein, Dominic T. Ashkey's characterisation of the traditional African education (Bassey, 1999:25) echoes the view of the old man.

- a) Traditional African education was community-oriented. There were no formal buildings or a specialised cadre of teachers who were removed from the productive activities of the society. Everyone was a producer and consumer, and the goal of the system was the full development of the individual into a useful and considerate member of his/her society.
- b) The educational system was concrete and pragmatic. It was acquired through total involvement and active participation. A child learned about fishing... while fishing with his elders; and in the evenings he/she learned about the elements of geography, history, cultural science, morality, linguistics, and other subjects while listening to the folk stories and experiences of the elders.
- c) It was a comprehensive system of education that transmitted relevant skills, knowledge, values and attitudes for the development of the individual and his or her society.
- d) It was a democratic system of education oriented towards an egalitarian society.

However, this elevated notion about the African traditional view of education leaves much to question regarding girls' education in many parts of Africa. When formal education was declared as a right of the child encapsulated in the Millennium Development Goal's (MDGs) charter (UNESCO, 2000), access to education for girls was at stake. It is arguable that if African education was open to all children, what could have accounted for the restriction of girls' access to formal education calls for discussion. The reasons may vary from region to region even within the same country. For instance, among many ethnic groups in Uganda, including the Ma'di (focus of this study), initially formal education favoured boys only. For various cultural reasons, opinions and attitudes, girls were initially prohibited from attending formal schooling because girls were not considered as heirs but those who would be married



off to another family so why allow them to avail of education (UNHS, 2000). Secondly, girls are seen as sources of wealth (Orlando (2012), if they attended school it would delay their marriage and so parents may lose the benefit of a dowry often paid after their marriage (Ellis, et al., 2006). Finally, Western education was also looked on with suspicion, especially for girls. There was a suspicion that if a girl attended formal schooling she would acquire foreign life-style, habits, including becoming a prostitute and therefore, hopeful parents will be deprived of her bride price, as she may not get an honourable suitor in society (Ellis, et al., 2006; See also Barack Obama's 'Dreams from my father'). Despite these obstacles, formal education took root even before independence through the efforts of the missionaries and developed in both scope and activities in Uganda.

### **3.3.2. Education after Independence**

Formal education continued to thrive under various missionary groups; the protestant Christian Mission Society (CMS) and the Roman Catholic missionary groups under various religious orders, namely The White Fathers (Missionaries of Africa), Mill Hill Missionaries (MHM), and the Comboni Missionaries (Verona Fathers) (Muhwezi, 2003). Under the governance of the missionaries, education was not only aimed at acquiring basic reading and writing skills, but it was a huge development from the initial intentions for education, which related to reading the bible. Bassey (1999:63) noted that 'education became the sole determinant of the political', and indeed, of economic, social and cultural, of what was to become the 'elite status in Africa' as a whole. Educated Africans became clearly aware that education was the key to their continued political development and participation in civil society. Such aspirations have shaped the aims and objectives of secondary education in Uganda (MOSE, 2001). Indeed, as Tidy and Leeming (1981) noted, the major historical transformation that swept through Africa in the 1960s and 1970s (which urged for self-governance) were largely the by-products of the educated minority. This category of the elite few included Africa's national activists – abroad and within, organisation innovators, ideologists or members of the literary class (Bassey, 1999) – all of whom had received one type or other of formal rather than traditional education.

Although many of the Ma'di people have shown great interest in formal education, remoteness and displacements by wars have meant that they have had little opportunity for advancement. Emigration within the country or entirely outside of Uganda have been a major feature for the educated few among the Ma'di. Some are found in Kampala, Nairobi, Juba and even Khartoum or abroad.

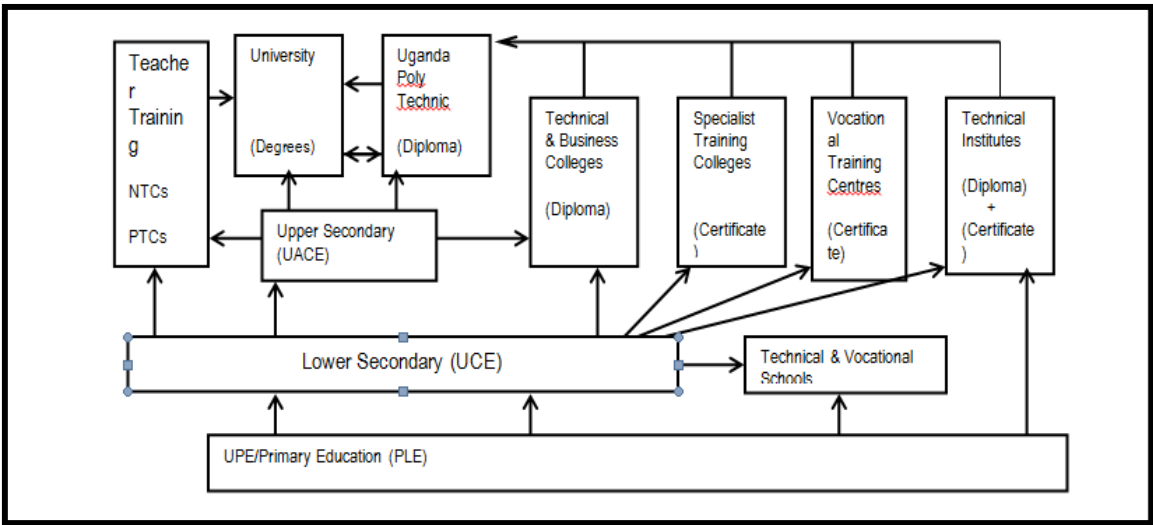
The following sub-sections provide an overview of the general structure of the education system in Uganda, with particular attention to the primary sector as it is the main focus of this study. Specific areas highlighted include enrolment, attendance and retention, curriculum, performance levels and factors seen to affect the education quality for Moyo as well.

**3.3.3. Current Education System in Uganda**

Uganda inherited a small but highly organized education system for its citizens, recognized as one of the best in sub-Saharan Africa, although this tradition of excellence has declined since the mid-1970s, largely due to political and civil disturbances, and subsequent economic deterioration (USAID, 1995). Overall, the major boards governing the education system are:

- The Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES)
- The National Council of Higher Education (NCHE)
- The National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC)
- The Uganda National Examinations Board (UNEB) (Uganda Education White Paper, 1992; Uganda Education Guideline, 2008; Winkler and Sondergaard, 2008)

The current structure of formal education system in Uganda is four tiered: 7:4:2: 2-5, which translates into seven years of primary education, four years of lower secondary referred to as ordinary level (“O” Level), two years of upper secondary referred to as advanced level (“A” Level), and two to five years of tertiary education (Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2006; IOB, 2008; Winkler and Sondergaard, 2008; Kasirye, 2009). This is illustrated in the figure below.



**Figure 3.8 - Education Structural System in Uganda**  
*Source: Adapted from Muhwezi (2003:1)*

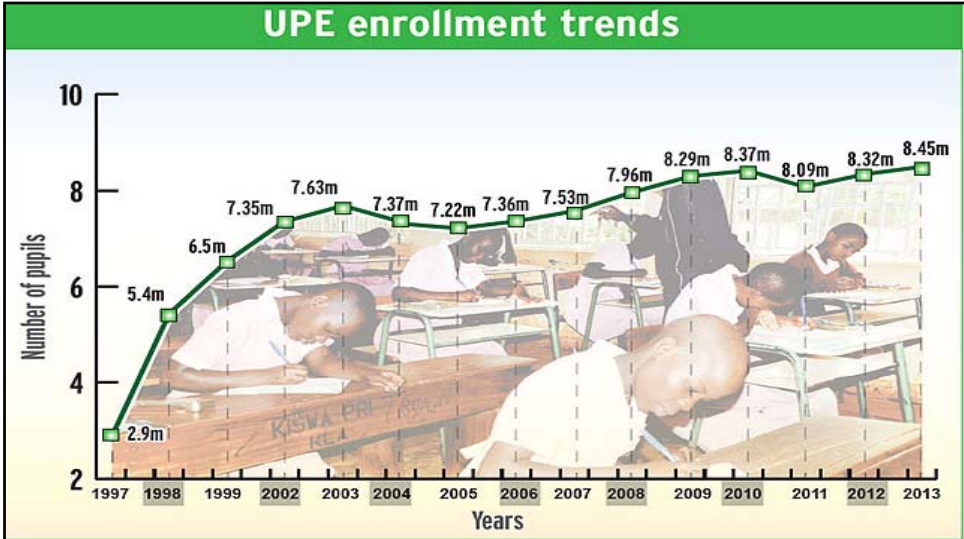
There is a non-mandatory, pre- primary education programme attended by three to five year olds before joining primary school. Since it is fee paying, most children, especially children from low-income families (both rural and urban) in Uganda do not attend the programme.

**Primary Education**

The primary cycle runs for seven years and the age set for starting this stage is 6 years old. The demand for this sector of education has increased with the introduction of free primary education under the Universal Primary Education (UPE) programme (Muhwezi, 2003; Winkler and Sondergaard, 2008).

**Enrolment**

The Ugandan constitution stipulates that education is a fundamental right for every citizen (Muhwezi, 2003; Namakula and Bisasso, 2010). In response to the 1990 World Conference on Education for all (EFA) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the Government of Uganda (GOU) introduced the UPE programme in 1997 for all its citizens (Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2006; Kasirye, 2009). As a result, enrolment increased steadily but with disappointing quality (Mungai and Kimani, 2011). The trend of enrolment in primary education since its inception is shown in the figure below.



**Figure 3.9 - Universal Enrolment Trends in Uganda**  
*Source: Kwesiga (2014:4)*

About 3 million children were enrolled in 1998, then figures rose steadily in 2003 to about 7.63 million pupils. Then where there was a decline in 2005 to about 7.22 million pupils, could reflect the return of the Sudanese children after the Naivasha Comprehensive Peace Agreement that resulted in the repatriation of the Sudanese refugees to their homeland. But

this decline was short-lived as it started to rise up to 8.45 million in 2013. The rise in enrolment is not the problem but what makes it a problem is what Kwesiga (2014) refers to as *underfunding*. For example, he notes that according to the education budget of 2006/2007, over Ush 46 billion was required for UPE. But only Ush 32 billion was approved and only Ush 30 billion was finally received by the Ministry of Education and Sports. The implication is that the Ministry of Education and Sports has to use what it receives to cover the increasing number of children regardless of the changes in enrolment figures over the years.

### **Attendance**

It is helpful for the purposes of this study to assess how many of the pupils enrolled actually attend school. The percentage distribution of the population of pupils who attended school and those who left school in 2002 by age, class and region is provided in Table 3.6 below. The year 2002 is important because the data collected in this year was from the last population and Housing Census carried out by Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS, 2006).

**Table 3.6 - Percentage distribution of Population by School Attendance Status by Age Group and Region**

Level	Characteristics	Attended school in 2002	Left school in 2002	Never Been to school	Total
Primary	06-09	81.8	2.3	15.9	100
	10-12	90.9	4.0	5.1	100
Secondary	13-18	71.1	22.5	6.4	100
	19-24	19.8	64.6	15.6	100
University and tertiary	25-29	4.2	75.9	19.9	100
	30-49	1.4	70.4	28.2	100
	50-59	-	56.6	43.4	100
	60+	-	42.1	57.9	100
<b>Region</b>					
	Central	41.3	47.0	11.7	100
	Central (minus Kampala)	42.0	44.7	13.3	100
	Eastern	42.1	38.4	19.5	100
	Northern	37.8	34.5	27.7	100
	Western	40.6	38.3	21.1	100
	<b>Total</b>	<b>40.7</b>	<b>40.0</b>	<b>19.3</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Uganda Bureau of Statistics (2006:12)*

The purpose of this table is to show the young population in Uganda who attend school and those who have never been to school. Due to underperformance and possible repetition of

classes, children from 13-18 years can still be classed in primary schools. In this table, the distribution shows that the population of school attendance in Uganda in 2002 increases with increasing age, but the opposite is true for those who had never been to school. The regional variation highlights the lowest number of school attendees in the Northern region (37.8%) as compared to the other regions (above 40%) in 2002. This implies that despite the general high rate of enrolment, the Northern region, including Moyo district, experiences low levels of enrolment of children to school. There is an equally high dropout rate of 34.5%, preceded by Eastern and Western regions, 38.4% and 38.4% respectively. This implies that there is a problem with retention of the enrolled children in school in general. The data also shows a very high number of persons who have never been to school (27.7%) compared to the other regions. This can be explained in terms of the high rates of poverty in this region as illustrated in figure 3.3 earlier.

It is also useful to show the percentage of pupils that attended school and left school in 2002 by class. This helps to show at which stage in primary children enter and leave school the most.

**Table 3.7 - Percentage of Population aged 5 years and above that Attended and Left School in 2002**

Class	Percentage that attended school			Percentage that dropped out of school		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
P.1	497,540	482,397	979,937	1.3	1.4	1.3
P. 2	741,677	708,366	1,450,043	0.9	1.0	0.9
P. 3	515,002	496,784	1,011,786	1.4	1.6	1.5
P.4	484,945	471,802	956,747	1.7	1.8	1.7
P.5	437,644	424,473	862,117	2.1	2.2	2.2
P.6	367,358	342,385	709,743	2.6	2.8	2.7
P.7	306,335	266,437	572,772	3.4	3.7	3.5
<b>Total P.1-P.7</b>	<b>3,350,501</b>	<b>3,192,644</b>	<b>6,543,145</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>1.8</b>

*Source: Uganda Bureau of Statistics (2006:15)*

Table 3.7 indicates that the high number of pupils attending school in the lower classes (P. 1-3) is consistent with table 3.4 and the number of pupils leaving school rises from P.4 and escalates in P.5 to P.7. The reasons are not provided at the time of the census. What is clear is that the declining number of pupils according to grades implies that there are fewer pupils advancing to the next class each successive year. There are many causes attributed to pupils dropping out of school and these range from factors affecting both home and school leading to poor test results (NAPE, 2011; Karugaba, 2013; Nakumbi, 2013). For instance, Mali et al.

(2009) identified the following as contributing factors to primary school going children dropping out of school in Moyo district:

- The nature or acquired behaviour of the individual learner;
- The nature and the social status of the household of the learner;
- The nature of the administration of the school, motivation and training of the teachers in the school;
- The nature and management of the education system, and;
- The nature and behaviour of the community in which the child lives and its surroundings (Mali et al., 2009:12)

Apart from the individual child's attitude and the home environment in which the child lives, there is an implication that the curriculum provided in the primary education can also contribute to pupils dropping out of school.

### ***Curriculum***

The subjects required for primary education is the responsibility of the National Curriculum Development Centre (Uganda Education Guidelines, 2008). Below are the recommended subjects for primary education.

**Table 3.8 - Recommended Subjects and the weekly Periods for Primary School**

Subject		Class (P=Primary)						
		P.1	P.2	P.3	P.4	P.5	P.6	P.7
1	Language (English) Literature, Reading and Writing			3				
2	Language (Mother tongue)	6	6	6	6	5	5	5
3	Language (Regional, Kiswahili)	3	3	3	2	2	2	2
4	Mathematics	3	3	3	3	2	2	2
5	Integrated Science (Science, Health, Environmental and Family Life Education)	4	4	4	5	5	5	5
6	Social Studies (Population and Family Life Education)	3	3	3	3	4	5	5
7	Religious Education	2	2	2	2	3	3	3
8	Art and Technology	3	3	3	3	3	2	2
9	Music, Dance and Drama	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
10	Physical Education	3	3	3	3	2	2	2
11	Business and Entrepreneurship Education	2	2	2	2	3	3	3
12	Agriculture	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
<b>Total number of periods recommended for the curriculum</b>		<b>40</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>40</b>

*Source: Adapted and modified from Muhwezi (2003:14)*

The above number of subjects taught is viewed as being over loaded, even though pupils are tested and awarded after successfully passing the four core subjects: English, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies (SST) (Tembe, 2008). Despite the well stipulated syllabus for primary education, and a rise in access and capitation grants to schools, the UPE in Uganda, as in Moyo district has been closely associated with poor quality overall (UNESCO, 2005; ODI, 2006; Mali et al., 2009).

### ***Performance levels***

The overall examining body of each successive level is the Uganda National Examination Board (UNEB), (Uganda Education White Paper, 1992). Uganda's education system tends to be examination oriented (Kasirye, 2009), but the majority of children in public primary schools underperform. One of the important reforms in the education system has been the establishment of the National Assessment of Progress in Education (NAPE) functional under the National Examinations Board (UNEB). The role of NAPE is to ascertain the level of pupils, learning achievement and to monitor changes in their achievement levels over time. Put plainly, 'NAPE seeks to determine the skills that a cohort of pupils have acquired and are capable of acquiring in relation to the objectives of the curriculum' (NAPE 2011:5). In their assessment of all P.3 and P.6 pupils in primary schools in Uganda (private and public) in 2011, P.6 were assessed in the literacy sub-skill of reading comprehension in English. The pupils in this cohort were found to exhibit more competence in the sub-skill area, which are taught in lower primary (NAPE, 2011). This means that the P. 6 pupils were performing below their level. When the same cohort were tested in the sub-skill of writing, the majority of pupils in P.6 (72%) could draw and label objects, and only half of them (50%) could complete an application form. However, when a comparison was made between government and private schools, the mean score of pupils in the former schools was 29%, compared to 57% in the private schools. Within school differences showed that boys in government schools obtained slightly higher mean scores than girls, but in private schools their performance showed a minimal difference. These examples show that generally, the performance of primary school children in the public schools is poorer than those in the private schools. In a categorisation of performance by district out of 100%, Moyo emerged at 53% which is a good average performance. However, this percentage does not distinguish between urban, private and rural schools. The Education Standards Agency (ESA) in Uganda identified some school factors which have been seen to affect pupils' performance as presented in the table below.

**Table 3.9 - School Factors likely to Affect Primary School Performance in Uganda**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Areas of assessment</b>
Teacher Qualification	Lack of qualified teachers, especially in rural schools
Teaching Methods	Inadequate lesson preparation
Class Size	Overly large classes constrain teachers' time for class supervision and marking
Learning Materials	Lack of basic materials, especially materials written in indigenous languages
Teacher Absenteeism	High absenteeism attribute to low commitment, poor school management, lack of accommodation, and low salaries
Language of Instruction	Use of mother tongue constrains supply of teachers

*Source: Education Standards Agency, Report on Monitoring Learning achievement in lower Primary (2004). Adapted from Winkler and Sondergaard (2008:29)*

With a view to achieving the EFA goals, the government of Uganda (GOU) has made commitment to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (Mbabazi, 2008; UNICEF, 2012). This required a number of reforms in the primary education sector. In Moyo district, at the time of the study there were 14 pre-primary schools, 79 primary schools of which 1 is privately owned. This means there were 78 UPE schools supported by government. Furthermore, the decentralisation system of governance has prompted a number of secondary schools to spring up, however, their number remains low. At present, there are 25 secondary schools and 2 technical institutes (Office of the DEO, 2011). This indicates the kind of pressure that these post primary institutions would be under if all of the enrolled primary children performed well and to proceeded to second level education in Moyo district.

#### ***Major reforms in the primary education sector***

The implementation of UPE meant sudden larger class sizes, higher percentage of unqualified teachers, fewer school supplies and teaching and learning materials for pupils, and all of these issues needed to be resolved if quality was to be assured. The government of Uganda attempted to resolve some of these problems with its development partners by developing a number of quality enhancement strategies (see table 1.1).

in addition, the development of education guidelines on policy, planning, roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders in the implementation of universal primary education was also a key reform in the primary education sector (MOES, 2008). This was aimed at involving all those who have a stake in the education of primary school going children including educators, government local leaders, pupils, parents and guardians to participate and carry out their respective responsibilities effectively to improve pupils' performance.



### **3.3.4. Universal Primary Education: Policy on Responsibilities**

The specific responsibilities for the various stakeholders in the implementation of UPE included in the guidelines can be found in the Uganda Education Guidelines produced by the Ministry of Education and Sports (2008:10-19). The roles and responsibilities specifically of parent/guardians are broadly covered in the following areas:

- Basic child survival requirements;
- Basic child nurturing and support;
- Physical and material support, and;
- Responsibilities to support child's learning at school and home. (Uganda Education Guidelines, 2008:17, section 8.3.13)

The study develops these areas further for the investigation of the extent and nature of parents' involvement in the education of their children. More precisely, it focuses on the education of parents to see whether their education levels and literacy skills make a difference in their support of their children in order to enhance learning and achievements for the primary school children or not. It is evident that clear roles have been stipulated for parents and community members towards the education of children. Apart from tuition fees, parents and community are charged with the responsibility of supporting their primary children physically, materially, psychologically and educationally. The very basic provisions include (in terms of) uniform, books, pens, development funds, lunch and catering for any other scholastic requirements. The central government, for their part, through the Ministry of Education and Sports provides a capitation grant directed to the respective universal primary schools. This policy has led to disparities due to variations in community capacity to support primary education and a lack of access to education for children from the most disadvantaged families (USAID, 1995). As UNESCO (2008:74) put it, 'literacy learning opportunities need the support of many different institutions, not just the education system'.

The delegation of responsibilities to various stakeholders in the education of primary school children requires this concerted effort if primary school children's educational performance is to improve. As Uganda is a multilingual country (NAPE, 2011), issues around differences in the language of home, and of the school are relevant to how well primary children perform in school. Saville-Stroike (2006) asserts that when considering the purpose of language, it is important to distinguish between two types of communicative language use, notably, academic competence and interpersonal competences. Academic competence refers to the knowledge needed by a learner to use L2 (a second language other than ones native language) primarily to learn about other subjects. Primary school going children in Uganda require English for their

educational activities in all the skills of literacy: speaking, reading, writing and listening. Interpersonal competence involves the knowledge required of learners who intend to use the L2 primarily in face-to-face contact with other speakers. The relevance of this lies in children being able to interact with their teachers and peers in classroom discussion, asking and answering questions. In the home environment, parents and other adults capable of using both the local language and English may be of benefit to the primary school going children for their educational purposes. This study aims to explore if parents are educated and literate in terms of being able to read and write in both languages (English and the local language), whether they may be able to support their children better academically and improve performance in school.

### **3.4. Conclusion**

This chapter has explored the background information on the area of the study. It provided a brief profile of Uganda from its geographical location, demography, economy and political contexts down to the current education system in the country. It is observed that Uganda had a good education system at the time of her independence in 1962. However, due to high political volatility not only its economy suffered between the years 1970 – 1990 but also education. It has been shown that there were crosscutting regional differences in all aspects of the country; climatic conditions, the economy, literacy levels, ethnic groups and language, security, and education. However, the government of Uganda through the decentralisation system of governance has made tremendous efforts to include all stakeholders in uplifting the education sector through its implementing agents, from the top namely, the Ministry of Education and Sports right through to the grassroots level through the auspices of the lower cadre of government local leaders, the LCs. Nevertheless, the problem of quality remains daunting. The responsibilities of parents to their children's education has not been measured to ascertain the degree of their commitment. The purpose of this study precisely investigates whether the different levels of parents' education and literacy skills make any difference in fulfilling these responsibilities for their children. If parents are committed to these tasks, what are the challenges facing them? From the literature reviewed in chapter two, the associations with pupils' achievement were positively related to parents' education and literacy skills. Numerous studies demonstrated that parents' education and literacy skills are relevant and important components in supporting their children's education effectively, thereby leading to better achievement (UNESCO, 2006; Feinstein et al., 2008; Dennesen, 2007; LABE 2011). This research endeavours to explore this claim in a development context, namely the Moyo district in north western Uganda. In order to examine this association, the next chapter is dedicated to outlining the methodology considered appropriate in investigating whether parents' education, makes a difference in their children's achievement in primary school.

# **CHAPTER FOUR**

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **4.1. Introduction**

This chapter presents the main methodological components pertinent to the study. The main sections cover the following:

- Research aim and questions
- Research design and rationale
- Philosophical (Ontological and Epistemological) perspectives
- Participants (sampling and sampling design)
- Instrumentation (Methods) and procedure
- Ethical issues
- Reflexivity
- Data analysis technique
- Predicted impact.

### **4.2. Research Aim and Questions**

For the purpose of focus, it is useful to remind readers of the main aim and the research questions that guide this research (see p.13).

#### **4.2.1. Aim of the Study**

The overall aim of this study is to investigate the impact of parents' education/literacy skills on the education of their primary school child. Specifically, this will explore parents' literacy practices at a household level and their effects on pupils' achievement in primary schooling.

#### **4.2.2. Research Questions of the Study**

According to Yin (2009:27) any research needs to address the following aspects.

1. a study's questions [i.e. addressing the who, what, where how when and the whys of the study];
2. its study proposition, if any [e.g. in what ways does parents' education levels enhance or militate against their children's educational outcomes];
3. its units (s) of analysis [how is the study going to be conducted and analysed?]

4. the logic linking the data to the propositions [how the researcher might have the whole picture of the design during the design phase so that the research design can create a more solid foundation for later analysis] and;
5. the criteria for interpreting the findings.

Following these guidelines, and the research questions (see p.13), a working hypothesis was developed that:

- \* A. If parents have well developed literacy practices, and;
- \* B. If they have access to adequate literacy resources at home and in the community, then they will positively impact on their children's education.
- \* However, in the case where A and B are not present, due to either lack of available infrastructure and government provision, parental illiteracy, or poverty, parents face challenges that can potentially and negatively impact on children's educational achievement.

Guided by the research aim and questions, this study has adopted a mixed-methods design with quasi-ethnographic elements. The following section elaborates further on the design.

### **4.3. Study Design and Rationale**

The main purpose of this research is to address the questions (p.13) and aim (p.123). In order to explore this aim, a qualitative mixed-methods approach with an ethnographic element (Sarandakos, 2005, 2013) was identified as suitable.

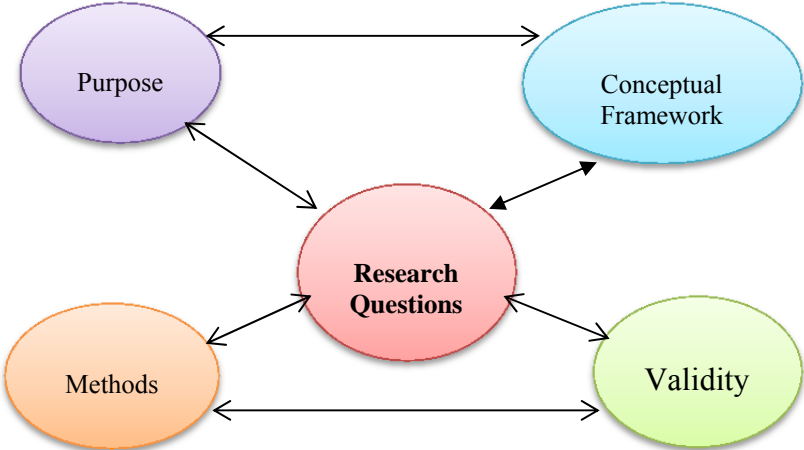
#### **4.3.1. The Mixed-methods Research Design**

According to Yin (2009:26) the 'design is the logical sequence that connects the empirical data to a study's initial research questions and, ultimately to its conclusion' (that is, answers to these questions). Bryman (2008) concurs by describing a research design as providing a framework for the collection and analysis of data. Nachmias and Nachmias (1992) describe a research design in a summarised fashion as:

...a plan that guides the investigator in the process of collecting, analysing, and interpreting observations. It is a logical model of proof that allows the researcher to draw inferences concerning causal relations among the variables under investigation. (Nachmias and Nachmias, 1992:77-78)

The concept of a mixed-methods approach to research is often discussed in the context of combining both qualitative and quantitative approaches (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Collins et al., 2009; Lichtman, 2010; Sarantakos, 2013). Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) define mixed-methods research as a class of research where the researcher mixes or combines qualitative and quantitative research, methods, approaches, concepts or languages in a single study. This concurs with Tashakkori and Creswell (2007) but they add that the mixed-methods design can be broadly defined as research in which the investigator collects and analyses data, integrates the findings and draws inferences using both qualitative and quantitative approaches or methods in a single inquiry. For Sarantakos (2013), the two approaches address different aspects of reality although both offer acceptable views of their study goals.

Maxwell and Loomis’ (2003) interactive model of research typologies of mixed-methods design provides a good base to illustrate the mixed-methods approach. This study adopts this concept because of the study’s inclusion of an ethnographic component into the mixed-methods approach for data collection. Maxwell and Loomis’ (2003) approach is sometimes referred to as an alternative model of research design where the components of the research design are interrelated in a network rather than in a linear progression as in a case study progression portrayed by Yin (2009). Their approach presents ‘the design of a study as consisting of the actual components of a study and the ways in which these components connect with and influence one another’ (Maxwell and Loomis, 2003:245) as illustrated in the figure below.



**Figure 4.1 - Qualitative Research Components**  
*Source: Maxwell and Loomis (2003:24)*

The five components address the following needs:

- **Purpose:** may be personal, practical or intellectual- (in this study it is a practical approach).
- **Conceptual model:** contains the theory that the researcher has developed or is developing – (in this study, the theory is developed through the data collected, that is an emergent theory);
- **Research question:** the questions that guide the study – (see section 4.2.2);
- **Methods:** the instrumentation or techniques used for gathering data for the study – (see section 4.9) and;
- **Validity:** how the researcher will handle potential threats to the authenticity of the conclusions from the study – (see section 4.7.1).

Within the mixed-methods design, this study relies more on the qualitative component as the main approach, and this is examined in detail in the following section.

#### **4.3.2. Qualitative Approach**

Anderson (1998:119) defines qualitative research as ‘a form of enquiry that explores phenomena in their natural settings and uses multi-methods to interpret, understand, explain and bring meaning to them’. Likewise, Hogan et al. (2009:3) describe qualitative research as ‘a multifaceted approach that investigates culture, society and behaviour through an analysis of people’s words and actions’. As Marshall and Rossman (2006:2) point out, ‘qualitative research is pragmatic, interpretive, and grounded in the lived experience of people’. For this reason, the data collected and analysed from qualitative research remains at the level of words, either the research participants’ own words, the words written in the documents or the words used by the researcher herself/himself to describe the activities (Blaxter, et al., 1999), images and environment observed (Hogan et al., 2009). Hence, Denzin and Lincoln’s (2003:3) definition of qualitative research as ‘a suited activity that locates the observer in the world, which consist of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible’. For Robson (2002), therefore, qualitative research is about finding out what people think, feel, and/or believe through the use of interviews, questionnaires or attitude scales by the researcher. Thus, Marshall and Rossman (2006:3) refer to qualitative research as a ‘broad approach to the study of social phenomena’ that enables the researcher to pay particular attention to the qualities of experience, processes, meanings, and aspects of life that

quantitative approaches do not typically hold central to research (see also Gubrim and Holstein, 1997; Denzin and Lincoln, 2005).

Hogan et al. (2009) also state that qualitative research sometimes takes place in natural settings, where researchers can conduct their research in the presence of the people they are studying, or within the environment they are examining. In this view, Fisher (2005:411) describes qualitative research as ‘uniquely suited to discerning human participation in what happens to them’. In addition, Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias (1996:281) argue that qualitative researchers ‘attempt to understand behaviour and institutions by getting to know the persons involved and their values, rituals, symbols, beliefs and emotions’. This is similar to the idea that Denzin and Lincoln (2005) expressed above that qualitative research tries to make sense of phenomena in terms of the meaning people bring to their lived experiences.

In line with these views, and by employing a qualitative research approach, techniques such as interviews, questionnaires, observation and document analysis are used in this study for the purpose of gaining a deeper understanding of the influences on children’s educational achievement arising from the impact of their parents’ levels of education. These are the experiences, processes, meanings, and aspects of life that were expressed by Gubrim and Holstein (1997) and Denzin and Lincoln (2005) above.

The qualitative research approach within the mixed-methods tradition is preferred for this study because of the features that fit the purpose of the project undertaken, that is, exploring the educational practices by parents for their children in primary education, and the views and opinions of other relevant stakeholders involved. By using exploratory inquiry, the central features of qualitative research as highlighted by Sarantakos (2013:41) are duly acknowledged and taken account of, which include: ‘perception of reality, perception of human beings, the nature of science (as a means of extracting knowledge), and the purpose of social research’. These main features are outlined in table 4.1 below.

**Table 4.1 - Features of Qualitative Research**

<b>Features</b>	<b>Characteristics</b>
Naturalistic	A process that is field focused
Subject-centred	Describes life-world from inside out, and from the view of the subjects or participants
Informative and detailed	Offers rich description, and allows entry to subjective social constructions of people
Normative	It is value-laden inquiry
Constructionist model	World is human creation

Context-sensitive	Gaining an impression of the context, its logic, its arrangements, its explicit and implicit rules
Reflexive	It values the self-awareness of the researcher
Open	Stresses the principle of openness, no hypothesis, no limit in its focus
Flexible	Design, methods and processes are open to change
Communicative	Focuses on communication between participants and researcher and between participants themselves
Subjective	Values subjectivity and the personal commitment of the researcher
Interpretivist	Values the reflective assessment of the reconstructed impression of the world by those being researched
Holistic	Focuses on the whole study objective in its entirety
Inductive	Proceeds from the specific data to generate categories and theories
Small scale	It studies a small number of people

*Source: Sarantakos (2013:45)*

From the table above, it is evident that this study has adopted a qualitative approach which is predominantly naturalistic (Anderson (1998), and is subject-centred, which informs readers about the life-world of the people through the perspectives of the subjects themselves. Even though it is subject-centred, Danzin and Licoln (2005) argue that it is not subjective, meaning that it is not based on one person's point of view, or biased towards one particular outcome. The approach is open and flexible in that, there are no pre-set hypotheses which guide the research question(s), and changes are possible in the course of the research (Hogan et al., 2009). In addition, the qualitative approach views the world from a constructionist perspective and interpretation (see section 4.3) of data by the researcher through the process of an inductive data analysis (see section 4.11.1).

Overall, the qualitative tradition takes a holistic approach to a study, and usually with a small number of participants (Sarantakos, 2013).

Because of the use of a mixed-methods design where multiple techniques are involved in this study, triangulation of both data and methods are essential (Sarantakos, 2013:159). Triangulation 'refers to the practice of employing several research tools within the same research design' (Sarantakos, 2013:159, see section 4.7.2 for further details). He argues that this procedure allows the researcher to view a particular point in research from more than one perspective, and hence to enrich knowledge and/or test validity. However, Limnek's (1993) caution must be heeded that triangulation may not be suitable for every social phenomenon but for this study it is considered appropriate (for more information, see section 4. 11.2).



## *Setting*

Hogan et al. (2009:4) note that a qualitative research ‘sometimes takes place in rural settings where the researcher can conduct the research in the presence of the people they are studying or within the environment they are examining’. This is in tune with the choice of an ethnographic element for this study, and because of the ontological position of this study (naturalistic), a quasi-ethnographic approach forms a major part of the methodology and this is examined in the next section.

### **4.3.3. Ethnographic Approach**

Within the mixed-methods design employed in this study, an ethnographic element was included. O’Leary (2010) describes ethnographic studies as:

... studies [that] attempt to understand the reality of the researched, they generally rely on multiple data collection strategies, involve the exploration of cultural groups within natural settings, and often require ‘immersion’ through prolonged engagement and persistent observation. The research process is flexible and emergent, and likely to evolve as lived realities within the cultural group are revealed. (O’Leary, 2010:117)

This is in line with Flick and colleagues’ (2000) assertion that researchers intending to make an empirical investigation of human beings, their everyday practices and life-worlds have, in principle, two possibilities:

1. hold conversations with participants about their actions and collect appropriate documents in the hope of obtaining, in this way, rich information about the particular practice, and;
2. find strategies for taking part in this everyday practice – become familiar with it, so as to be able to observe its everyday performance (Flick et al., 2000:222).

These statements combine the tools of data collection, and also satisfy the objectives of this research project. The aspects alluded to include firstly, the researcher gathering factual information from relevant participants through questionnaires, and secondly, conducting participant observation in the families of the pupils to observe parents’ roles in their children’s education. Thirdly, by the researcher carrying out in-depth interviews with parents and other stakeholders involved, to supplement information from questionnaires and on-site observation. This sequence is preferred so that the parents do not perform only for the interest of the researcher (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

The main aim of the ethnographer is purely descriptive as it seeks to explore and offer explanations from the participants' perspective and also from participant observation, as to how and why parents in the Moyo district of Uganda act the way they do in supporting their children's education. The ethnographic approach is meant to offer an understanding of the lived experiences of parents' literacy related practices in relation to their children's school activities in the home environment. The researcher follows what Hammersley (1983, 2007,) highlights as the general features of the ethnographic research. These include the researcher engaging in:

- people's behaviour studied in their normal environment, not under experimental conditions;
- data collected from different sources, such as interviews, observation and relatively informal conversations as the primary ones;
- generally focusing on a single setting or group, that is the parents in the Moyo district who are from the same ethnic background, and;
- the analysis that involves the interpretation of meaning, that is what parents do or say and why (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007:4).

In keeping with the features provided by Hammersley (2007) above, the researcher is required to adopt some specific forms of roles such as immersion, context, insider-outsider and reflexivity, which are pertinent features that characterise an ethnographic approach. The following paragraphs briefly examine these features.

### ***Immersion***

Hogan et al. (2009) assert that the degree of immersion in the study is an important element of participant observation (see also Goffman's description in section 4.9.2). In this role, the researcher immerses herself in the family and observes the daily activities and processes of their [researched] daily life with particular attention to literacy practices by parents, and how it may impact on the child directly or indirectly leading to subsequent school achievement (Bryman, 2008; Knights and Morgan, 1991). This approach by the researcher is in line with the definition of ethnography as expressed by Flick et al. (2000) above. In addition, Bryman, (2008:400) concurs by defining ethnography as 'a process of joining a group, watching what goes on, making some notes and writing it all up'. The strategies involved in this ethnographic study entailed a research method in which the researcher was:

- immersed in the social setting for a period of three months;
- made regular observations of the parents and their primary age children; for example, mapped family activities for the day during any normal day, noting communicative exchanges, literacy activities as exhibited by the members, and artifacts available;
- listened to and engaged in conversations, while being aware of the theme of the conversation, duration and the persons involved;
- interviewed parents and children on issues that were not directly accessible to observation or on points which the ethnographer was unclear about;
- collected documents about the parents and children; for example, pupil's school progress reports, correspondence between parents and school administration or teachers; pupil's homework signed by parents;
- developed an understanding of the culture of these families being studied and their behaviour especially within the context of the research questions, then;
- writing up a detailed (thick description) account of the setting in relation to the research questions.

From the activities outlined above, the ethnographic approach served two main purposes; that is, the facilitation of participant observation and the provision of a written form of data (see section 4.5.3 for more information).

Traditionally, ethnographic research is conducted over a long period: it ranges from several months to years (Bryman, 2008). But shorter periods are also accepted as indicated by Crowley-Henry in Miller and Tewksbury (2006:46) who note that, 'ethnographic approach can consist of shorter periods of participant observation in a particular sub-cultural context'. This study followed the shorter period of 10 weeks (see field research schedule in appendix 10).

Out of the 10 weeks, the first week was devoted to making contacts for introduction and access. The next eight weeks were spent in active data collection, alternating interviews with participant observation. The researcher spent three days with each of the nine families, (that is 72 hours in each) with a sum total of 648hours. These were days, spent totally immersed in the family's daily patterns of life. The parents ranged across high, average and low levels or no formal level of education in each of the three sites (urban, semi-rural and rural) in Moyo district in Northern Uganda. Only two families with a high level of education were able to offer the researcher and her driver accommodation while the rest of the families did not have the facilities. This meant an increased level of movement from her religious community to the sites from 7:30 am to 8:00pm. Within this period, she started the day with the family from

their breakfast, cooked on mud-built ovens and with an open fire underneath often set outside in a shelter as shown in the photo below.



**Photo 4.1 - Freshly Baked Corn Cakes for Breakfast with Tea (F3, urban)**

*Taken by researcher on 30.7. 2012*

The researcher also joined in field labouring activities (see photo 4.2), shared meals with the families and thus was able to observe the daily routine of activities as indicated in figure 4.3 below. This type of approach to research draws from the natural philosophy of science as proposed by John Locke (1632-1704) who believed that in order to gain knowledge about the world, we must first gain impressions about the world, precisely through our senses (Moses and Knutsen, 2012). Locke 1984 [1690]) does not believe in *innate* (piori) knowledge asserting that all knowledge of the world is a *posteriori* – it can only be derived from sense experience hence, the importance of the ethnographic element in this study (Locke, 2004) which enables the researcher to participate, interact and observe during the field study in the families selected.



**Photo 4.2- - Research Immersed in the Family's Joint Activities**

Researcher immersed in the family activities. Harvesting pea-nuts (a) and the researcher assisting in brewing local liquor [nguli] for children's school fees (b). Taken in the field on 12.8.2012 and 13.8.2012 respectively ( family F3, semi-rural)

## *Context*

Briefly, the research project is centred on a small corner of Africa – the rural district of Moyo in the West Nile Region, in North Western Uganda. In this part of Uganda, families have to educate their children for life in society where English is the official language but is almost never the home language (there are over 40 indigenous languages). In the West Nile region, families largely subsist on agriculture or other money generating activities such as fishing from the River Nile (mostly by men) or brewing local liquor [nguli] (mostly by women). Homes do not have running water or electricity, and people travel long distances on foot on dirt roads, or if very well off, on bicycles or personal motorbikes.

The ethnographic research in this project thus can be categorised as rural as the subject district, Moyo is located over 500km from the capital city, Kampala. The researcher focused in three schools located on different geographical positions: Moyo the town centre (described as urban), Metu, the Mountain area (described as semi-rural), and Gimara, the Nile Valley area (described as rural) for sampling the children and families. The researcher is a member of the Mountain community she was exploring as a participant observer. All of her observations and interviews took place in this district with people who speak the same language, Ma'di. This then is described as open ethnography, where the identity of the observer/researcher is known, and the observation is in the natural setting (home), but the observer is part of the setting (Sarantakos, 2013). The idea of an ethnographer being totally an insider is highly contested. The following sub-section further examines this aspect of the identity of an ethnographer.

## *Inside-outsider*

From the ethnographic perspective of the study, the researcher assumes two roles, first as an insider (immersion) and secondly as an outsider (observer).

In this study, the researcher can honestly say she experienced both roles, that is as an insider and as an outsider. As an insider, the field experience added value to the reflexive aspect of the ethnography, a position which allowed her to find out as much as possible about the sample in question (Hogan et al., 2009). This became evident, especially when accessing the families in an overt role. As an outsider, it meant that she was not privy to the same level of understanding of the culture of the individual families as would an insider. As indicated by Hogan et al. (2009), this effort, on the part of the researcher to remain as an outsider is in line with the idea of classic ethnography, the suggestion that the ethnographer maintains a different

position to the sample of the population under observation. This view however, tends to conflict with another important element of ethnography, and that is the part of reflexivity.

#### **4.3.4. Reflexive Ethnography**

Reflexivity is an important component of ethnography, which needs to be accounted for (Miller and Tewksbury, 2006). It presents the researcher as not entirely a stranger to the area and to the culture of the people being researched. In this study, the researcher comes from the same district she is researching. She attended primary school in the semi-rural area and speaks the local language fluently. Her mother taught in primary schools in the area for over 30 years and many people who were taught by her mother would have known her in the area. This does not mean however that the researcher knows every part of the district. In fact, she has very little knowledge about the life and activities of people in other sub-counties, such as the urban and rural sub-counties she included in her research. The following paragraph further examines this component of this study.

The debate on reflexivity has been contentious in the field of social research. While classic ethnography tends to diminish the background, experience and motivations of the ethnographer, dismissing them as irrelevant or considers them not to influence the resulting ethnography's report and text, reflexive ethnography takes full account of the ethnographer's experience in the field (Hogan et al., 2009). However, the classical views portray the researcher to be impartial and objective. These views have come under attack from social researchers (Denzin 1997). Social researchers argue that the social world consists of multiple realities, rather than one single objective one (Hogan et al., 2009). Consequently, the major limitation of traditional ethnography approaches was the failure to include detailed information regarding the researcher or ethnographer in question and her/his journey in understanding through the course of the study and participant observation. Moreover, they assert that the extent to which any research can be impartial has been questioned, especially considering that the researcher makes personal decisions and choices on such things as sampling, method of data collection and analysis, and core theories to highlight the study's processes. Consequently, twentieth century academics regard the possibility of any ethnographer being able to give one true objective picture of an exotic or under-examined sub-culture's lived reality with suspicion (Denzin, 1997; Sanjek, 2000). On the contrary, contemporary researchers' views on ethnography place the researcher/ethnographer's role as an integral part of the research process which must be considered in-depth as part of the research study (Crowley-Henry in Hogan et al., 2009). Hogan et al. (2009) reiterate that in

reflexive ethnography the ontological and epistemological position of the ethnographer shifts from being an outsider to being an insider. Whyte's (1993: 279) understanding espouses this unique position of the ethnographer:

...the researcher is living for an extended period in the community he is studying, his personal life is inextricably mixed with his research. A real explanation, then, of how the research was done necessarily involves a rather personal account of how the researcher lived during the period of study.

However, to maintain an objective side of the research the researcher needs to retain some elements of an 'outsider' by making an effort to terminate the links to the sample. It was far more difficult with younger children in the family, but she had to reassume the mantle of a researcher in order to be able to report her activities, rituals and ways of life in an objective fashion. Drawing on the work of Johnson and Clarke in Miller and Tewksbury (2006), the following illustrative examples recount some of the experiences of the researcher's access efforts during the fieldwork.

#### ***Addresses: extracts from researcher's journal***

The difficult part in accessing families in these rural areas is the lack of definite addresses to their households. School administration was only able to identify the families by village names but they had no idea how to get to the individual homesteads. A few times, I missed my target households, and in another I was led to the elder wife of the man while I was looking for the mother of the child I was following in the study who happens to be of the second wife. Understandably, in the traditional setting, the first wife holds a position of authority and recognition over the second or third wives so it was culturally correct when I asked for Mr X's household and people naturally directed me to the first wife's house. Only when I asked the whereabouts of child X did I discover I was in the wrong house. Overall, I had constantly to rely on the good will of the people in the neighbourhood. It was easier when I used the pupils to bring me to their homes.

#### ***Infrastructure***

There are no public means of transport within the district. This presented another difficulty in accessing rural homesteads without a road network suitable for vehicles. I had to either walk or hire a motorcycle, locally referred to as bodaboda (a term derived from the phrase, border - to-border because it was commonly used at country borders to cross from one side of the border to the other). This was often used by me to commute to and from the homesteads at a

cost ranging between €0.60 for a distance of less than a kilometre to 1 euro (UGX. 2, 000 - 4,000) for a distance of 3-4km. If one is caught up, and there is no other alternative, one has to hire this bodaboda to cover distances as long as 50-60km at UGX 45,000 (approximately €15). Other difficulties I faced included bad roads/bushy footpaths, rivers without bridges, lack of public transport, lack of electricity (limited light for working on the project), lack of access to internet or photocopying machines, and animal and insect pests. Also communication with some participants was difficult when they had left for the fields.

One incident related to a bad, unmaintained road that greatly affected me. In the first place, in order to be able to travel between the three sites in the context of my field research, I took precaution to procure 80litres of petrol from Kampala city (approximately 500km from the research site) because, in the rural town of Moyo, petrol prices are very expensive. After travelling for over 400km away from the city, we entered the dirt road with lots of deep pot holes and gullies. The driver, not being familiar with fresh blind-spots (in the pick-up in which I was travelling), drove at a normal speed of about 50-60km/hour – ran into a unnoticed pot-hole which raised the pick-up so high that on landing back, the barrel with 80lts of petrol literally popped out and splashed on the road. By the time the car came to a halt, the barrel had rolled down the ditch while spilling its contents all the way on the ground. Finally, when I came out of the pick-up and confirmed the reality, it was as if my own blood was being drained into the dry ground. I stood, speechless, lost, numb and wondering how I would start my research visits without fuel, especially when I had not external funding. The cost of about UGX 300, 000/= (€100) was lost due to poorly provided infrastructure, and I had to search for other means. This was a limiting factor considering I had no external funding for this research. However, not all was lost, and there were some good advantages of infrastructure, and one of these was mobile phones.

The use of mobile phones was of great help, and made it much more easy to locate the hidden homes. Families that did not have mobile phones (two of the F3) cautiously directed me to use a neighbour's mobile contact to reach them in case of unexpected circumstances. This revealed to me how the local people still have that strong African communal style of living even to the extent of sharing information intended for a particular family. On one of the occasions, this aspect directly affected the researcher as illustrated below.



### *Lack of basic facilities*

One of the families I visited had tragically lost their pit-latrine (toilet) due to a heavy down-pour of rain. While Mike (fictional name), the father of the house frantically worked to rebuild the pit-latrine, they were using the neighbour's pit.



**Photo 4.3 - Joint Activity by a Father and Son Rebuilding a Pit-latrine**  
*Taken by researcher (2.8.2012).*

When I had the need, after many apologies, the family directed me to the neighbour's pit-latrine, which was also in a precarious condition as shown in the photo below.



**Photo 4.4 - Village Pit-latrine**

These events serve to indicate some of the field stress noted by Tewksbury in Miller and Tewksbury (2006), faced not only by the researcher but also by the researched. The events above also relate to Tewksbury's notion of conducting an ethnographic research when he said:

...the researcher has to be willing to give a significant amount of time and personal emotional investment to the work... fieldwork can drain the researcher's time, energy, emotions and put major strains on social and

professional life while also drawing into question long-held moral, ethical and value-laden stances. (Miller and Tewksbury, 2006:129)

He further indicated how a researcher may need to terminate an ethnographic research project. Drawing on his perceptions about how to bring the fieldwork to a close, the next section briefly explores this important area.

#### **4.3.5. Disengagement from Field Research**

One of the difficulties in engaging in ethnographic research relates to when to end the fieldwork. Tewksbury and Miller (2006), like Snow (1980), note that the process of ending field research has received little attention, yet what researchers' experience in the course of conducting a research is an integral part of a social scientist's career. He likens the process of terminating an ethnographic study to an academic graduation of a candidate, in terms of having learned something in the field, equipped with data ready to disengage from the participants and head to new levels of analysing and writing up the findings. The whole process basically attempts to answer the questions posed by Snow (1980) some three decades ago.

1. When should the fieldwork or data-collection stage of the research enterprise be brought to a close?
2. Are closure and disengagement primarily a function of informational sufficiency, or are they precipitated by various extraneous factors that pressure the researcher to bring the study to a close?
3. What are the various factors that often pressure the ethnographer to stay in the field and which work against closure and disengagement? (Snow 1980:101)

According to Tewksbury, these questions underpin the stress, strains, and losses as the researcher anticipates the end of the fieldwork, which she/he must find ways to manage. In the researcher's experience in the field, these stress, strains, and losses were equally shared both by the researcher and the researched. Three of field experiences provide good examples, which the researcher considers important reflexive episodes.

#### ***Cultural issues: extract from researcher's journal***

The first unforgettable experience had to do with cultural and social issues – meeting a separated spouse [father] in a local restaurant because he is customarily prohibited from meeting his daughter at home. It took place with F2 in the area designated rural. Allegedly, he had married a woman who was said to be related to him. Consequently, under the pressure of

the elders, they were forced to separate with his wife [relative] after having had two children. Subsequently, the children were taken away from him, and the woman remarried. Their two children lived with their maternal grandmother, who had a broken hip, and so they were all cared for by their uncle. I met him on account of his daughter's education. Even though the child lives with her grandmother, it was her father who meets the school expenses and so I considered it necessary to meet him. To be able to use the restaurant premises I had to order food for three (pupil, driver and herself). After the meal, I took a separate table to interact with the pupil's father.

As he recounted his story, he revealed how guilty he feels about not being able to be with his children, and at the same time he pays respect to the custom. This placed me in a position of conflict of roles: researcher or counsellor. While trying to establish an empathetic balance with the participant, my professionalism weighed in, where upon, I held back on offering suggestions or advice. Somehow, it was clear that his reservations broached the issue of reciprocity. The feeling of not being able to reciprocate to this participant's predicament caused me considerable anxiety. That feeling of helplessness not because 'you are not able' to say something but because 'you cannot say what you really want to say' – as it is methodologically and ethically not appropriate was a daunting experience. This kind of delicate role relationship between a field researcher and study participant(s) has been acknowledged widely (Ball, 1990; Cannon, 1989; Hammersely and Atkinson, 1983). Specifically, Hammersely and Atkinson, (1983) point out that fostering an empathetic approach while maintaining a certain social and intellectual distance during data collection is an acceptable approach.

### ***Confidentiality***

The second example took place in the F1 category I first visited the urban area. This family had accommodation for me in their house so close relationships with the rest of the family members was possible, from the grandmother to the grandchildren. The pupil of my study has younger siblings, and the youngest was a four year old named Angel. When there were signs that I was about to leave, he said if I did not stay to dine with them he would not eat. The mother told me usually he is a poor eater and he would find any excuse to avoid food. She pressed me to return for dinner (7:30pm) and we would find a way of telling him that my time in their family had ended. No sooner had we resolved this problem, than the ten year old child ([girl]) posed a difficult question to me.

‘Are you leaving our home because the next home you are going to is better than ours? Has their house a tin roof like ours or is it thatched with grass?’ These questions entailed important ethical concerns, in that I personally knew I should not disclose the state of one family to another. Tewksbury refers to it as ‘the secrets’ (Miller and Tewksbury, 2006:139). My answer was, ‘I don’t know what their home is like, maybe if I visit them, then I might have an answer for you’. In addition, her knowledgeable mother took up the argument by telling her that I was a teacher and I must visit other pupils’ homes as well. This seems to settle the mind of the children.

### *Emotional situation*

The third incident happened towards the end of my home visits in the Nile Valley rural area, which was 64km from my residence in Moyo Town. This family was in the third category (parents with low or no level of formal education). They did not have accommodation either for my driver or me. I had to seek accommodation in the nearby Catholic mission (5km) and commute to the home as early as 8:00am. On my last day’s visit, I noticed Joel, the 14 year old boy of my study was not seen around the compound. Naturally, I asked the mother where he might have gone. The response from his mother chilled my blood; ‘Joel has gone to the Nile to fish for you, he wants you to eat good food before you leave.’ To this, my response had mixed feelings, the strongest feeling was, what if...he had an accident in the river...? Although I was aware that going to fish in the river Nile was a pattern of these people’s life along the dangerous stretch of the Nile, I barely managed to compliment him, ‘Oh, that’s thoughtful of him! Is it safe for him to go alone, I further queried?’ They assured me it was alright, but deep inside me, I was more than certain that my emotions and anxieties were high for fear of the dangers Joel might face in the Nile, all because of me was almost unbearable. The fears were based on reality. The family and friends previously had clearly revealed to me during my first day’s endless enquiries that the strip of the Nile around their village harbours crocodiles. This thought unsettled me until the boy appeared at around 11:15am with three pieces of little fish, which he and his younger brother gutted and cleaned for the mother to prepare for my lunch, which she served to me to share with him at lunch time (1:30pm).

Reminded by Tewksbury’s advice that knowing when it is time to leave the field ‘includes both personal and professional issues...means you don’t become too closely afflicted with the individuals with whom you were spending time’ (Miller and Tewksbury, 2006:133). One strategy of easing the strain of leaving is to pre-set dates before entering into the observation exercise. It was helpful when the researcher stated clearly to the participants how long and

when she would stay with them. With dates clarified, the day came for leaving, (except for children who were not able to understand the situation), the researcher left families of participants with ease. Efforts were made to satisfy participants' social and emotional needs by accepting their gifts, which ranged from cobs of fresh sweet corn, buckets of peanuts [groundnuts], to smoked fish from the River Nile, and live chickens - all happily packed in my pickup. Some of the reasons for disengagement from ethnographic studies Tewksbury noted, that corresponded with this field study, included researcher fatigue before participants got tired of her, and financial constraints. Having examined the reflexive aspects of the study, the next section focuses on the theoretical components pertinent to this study. Sarantakos' (2013:28) states that 'authentic social research is guided by three fundamental factors namely; ontology, epistemology and methodology'. Beginning with the research paradigm selected for this study, these philosophical perspectives are an integral part of the theoretical components of this study. They are deemed appropriate foundations upon which the qualitative and the ethnographic approaches adopted for this study derive, and these are elaborated in the following sections.

#### **4.3.6. Theoretical Considerations**

Sarantakos (2013) highlights two well-known and popular qualitative paradigms, of which the symbolic interactionist paradigm describes most accurately the perspective adopted throughout this research project.

##### ***Research paradigm***

The symbolic interactionism is considered appropriate because of the following reasons (Sarantakos 2013).

- Social life is formed, maintained and changed by the basic meaning attached to it by interacting with people, who respond to each other on the basis of meanings they assign to their world.
- Meanings are established in and through social interaction. They are learned through interaction and not determined otherwise.
- Meanings are employed, managed and changed through interaction
- Social life is expressed through symbols. Language is the most important symbolic system (expressed in and through literacy in this study).
- The purpose of social research is to study the structure, functions and meaning of symbolic systems.

- It adopts a naturalistic method, which employs exploration and inspection as major procedures (see also Blumer, 1969; Wallace and Wolf, 1986).
- Data and interpretation depend on context and process. (Sarantakos, 2013:43)

These attributes resonate with the subject under investigation that is parents' practices in the home environment towards enhancing their children's school performance. This involves observation of their social and daily activities in the home setting. Such socially constructed human phenomenon is associated with the constructionist tradition (ontological perspective), which requires some elaboration.

### ***Constructionism***

The nature of reality (ontology) deemed suitable for this study lies in the constructionist inquiry. Constructionism focuses on the belief that there is in practice neither objective reality nor objective 'truths' (Sarantakos, 2013:37). Constructionists believe, that although reality exists, it is not accessible to human endeavour, meaning is possible only when the human mind constructs reality (Cooper, 1998; Holstein and Gubrium, 2008). Proponents of this theory posit that constructionism is about realities and relationships (Gergen, 1994, 1999; Schmidt, 1998).

The relevance of this theoretical foundation lies in the investigation on humans and gathering data from their natural setting – the home and school. Table 4.2 highlights the philosophical, theoretical and methodological components that constitute social research and the paradigm associated with this study.

**Table 4.2 - The Pillars of Social Research**

<b>Philosophical position</b>	<b>Association</b>
<b>Ontology</b> (deals with the nature of reality) multiple, socially constructed)	Constructionism (world view is human creation not discovery)
<b>Epistemology</b> (nature of knowledge: relation between knower and would-be known)	Interpretivism (reflective assessment of the reconstructed impressions of the world)
<b>Methodology</b> (approach to systematic inquiry)	Qualitative methods aim to interpret social life, to understand social life, and aim to discover people's meanings (contextual

	factors are described/reported, interprets human life)
<b>Research</b>	Flexible design, small scaled, inductive and holistic
<b>Method /Instruments</b>	Techniques employed in the collection and analysis of data (interviews, observation and document analysis)

***Ontology***

This ‘deals with the nature of reality’ under investigation (Sarantakos, 2013:29). This study is cognisant of the nature of reality involved in this project, which is complex, based on the real life situation (such as parents and children in their home setting, teachers and children in the school context, and professionals in the field of education). The researcher bears in mind the various participants involved, and the diversity of perspectives and likelihood of conflicting perspectives within this group (Sarantakos, 2005; Lichtman, 2010). This complexity and multiple perceptions are acknowledged and accounted for by choosing a method of conducting in-depth interviews intended to lead ‘the researcher to look for the complexity of views rather than narrow the meanings into a few categories or ideas’ (Creswell, 2007: 20), and through participant observation.

***Epistemology***

Epistemology refers to the nature of knowledge and how this knowledge can be made known (Sarantakos, 2013). This presents the relationship between the researcher and the researched in relation to how the reality in question can be known. In this study, as in any qualitative approach, this reality comes from the perspectives of the participants - interpreted by the researcher (that is, interpretative). The epistemological aspect thus deals with the way the research arrives at knowing about the world she is investigating by eliciting views, experiences, feelings, opinions, attitudes, beliefs and behaviours from participants (Sarantakos, 2013). This posits an interactive link between the researcher and the participants where values are explored, made explicit through face-to-face interviews and participant observation techniques.

**4.3.7. Methodology**

Sarantakos (2013:29) describes methodology as ‘the research strategy that translated ontological and epistemological principles into guidelines that show how research is to be conducted’. In other words, it prepares the appropriate research design to be employed by the researcher, instructing her as where to focus the research activity and how to recognise and extract knowledge. In a qualitative approach, methods aim to interpret social life, to understand social life, to discover people’s meanings, and contextual factors are described/reported, interpreting human life.

### ***Rationale for the Design***

The mixed-methods design is chosen because the study investigates the relational phenomena about parents’ education and literacy skills and its influence, if any, on their primary school going child in the natural social setting of the home (Anderson, 1998). Hogan et al. (2009:2) note that the mixed-methods approaches, ‘can be very useful in providing more complete explanations of social phenomena’. The ethnographic element fits in with the research objective because it involves parents and their children in the home setting. The headteachers and teachers in the school which the children attend, the community senior members, the local education officer and the commissioner from the central Ministry of Education are all deemed to be relevant stakeholders in this project and their views matter. The mixed methods approach allows for various research instruments (questionnaires, interviews, observation and document review) to be used for valid corroboration of data (Hogan et al. 2009). For the families involved, participant observation in their homes, in the day-to-day activities and interactions using the ethnographic element, will provide data which otherwise would not have been possible through interview sessions or document analysis (Sanek, 2000). It should also be acknowledged that some of these parents may not be literate and so dealing with text instruments could present an obstacle. Using questionnaires enabled the researcher to collect factual data, which was used for stratifying the families to be observed. This was based on the different levels of their [parents’] education and literacy skills. Next, the semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to meet participants face-to-face and enabled her to either explain or translate the interview questions, especially to participants with low or no literacy competence. As the interview developed, some important information, in addition to what is said, may also emerge which might be important to the research (Loxley et al., 2010). The rationale for choosing the mixed-method design with an ethnographic element approach therefore, consists in the researcher engaging in several qualitative research strategies, such as interviews, participant and observation, which entail ‘seeing through the eyes of the people



being studied’ (Bryman, 2008:402). In addition, the preference of situating the study in the participants’ own ‘naturalistic stance’ that is their home, also qualifies the study for adopting the mixed-methods approach (Bryman, 2008:402). In this mixed-methods research questionnaires, interviews, participant observation and document analysis form integral sources. Triangulating data from these sources will ensure validity of the research. The next section presents in detail the participants included in this study.

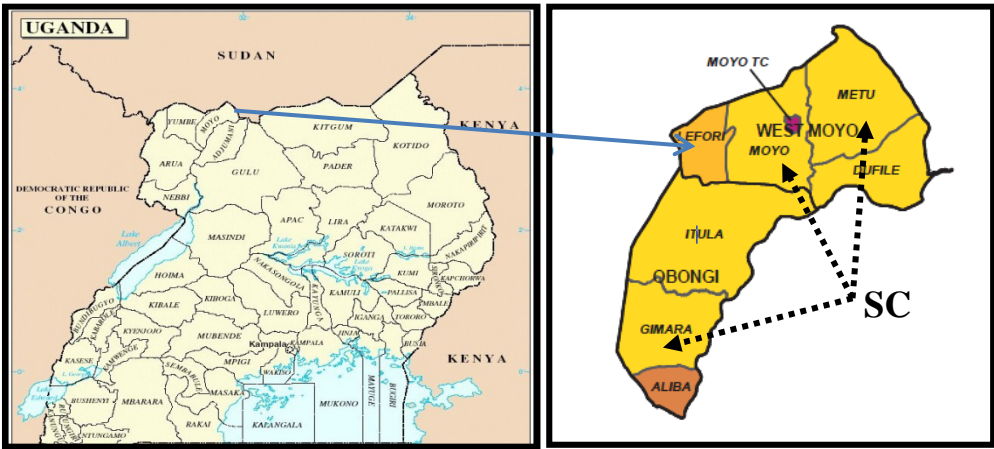
**4.4. Participants**

The participants include parents and their primary six children, headteachers, teachers, senior members in the community with an educational background and the district education officer in Moyo district. The principal participants however, are parents.

**4.4.1. Population, Sampling Design and Sampling**

*Population*

The population for this study included 119 participants, that is, pupils (n=90), educators (n=8), parents (n=18) and senior community members (n=3). Three geographical locations: urban, (Moyo Town Council [MTC]); semi-rural (Metu sub-county, the Mountain region); and rural (Gimara sub-county, the Nile Valley) in Moyo district form the study sites. These three sites starting from the town moving outwards at distances of 10km and 64 km are expected to provide a robust case in terms of comparison in regards to the impact of parents’ education and literacy skills on their children’s achievement, independent of location. These three sites are illustrated in figure 4.2 below.



**Figure 4.2 - The three Study Context (SC) in Moyo District in Uganda**  
*Source: Directorate of Water Development, Ministry of Water & Environment (2010)*

Moyo district is located in the North West of Uganda. It comprises of two counties: Moyo and Obongi, which are further divided into nine sub-counties; namely, Moyo Town Council, and sub-counties of Moyo Metu, Dufile, Laropi, Lefori, Itula, Gimara and Aliba.

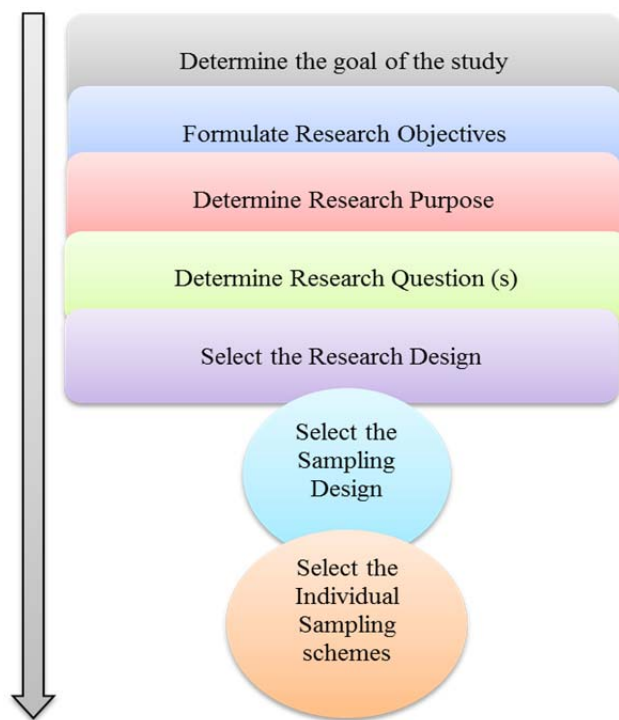
### ***Sampling Design***

Researchers engaged in qualitative research often use purposive sampling (Bryman, 2008; Collins et al., 2009). This study used stratified purposive sampling, which is ‘a non-probability form of sampling meaning that the researcher does not sample participants on a random basis’ (Bryman, 2008:414). It involves dividing the population into strata to obtain relatively homogeneous subgroups and a purposeful sample is selected from each stratum (Collins et al., 2009). The strata have been created by the type of residence of the families (that is, urban, semi-rural and rural) but further stratified by their levels of education. Hence, the sample constituting parents that is, ‘the part of the survey population that is to be studied’ were chosen according to their literacy/education levels (Sarantakos, 2005:152). These three categories of parents (families), each in different socio-economic backgrounds were:

- 1) parents who are professionals and employed, with proficient levels of literacy;
- 2) parents who are semi-skilled labourers with no permanent employment but with a reasonable level of literacy, and;
- 3) parents who are unskilled labourers and thus might not be employed and with no or low levels of literacy skills.

### ***Sampling***

According to Collins et al. (2009), the mixed-method approach sampling process is quite a linear one with seven distinct straightforward procedures (steps) as shown in figure 4.3 below:



**Figure 4.3 - Steps in the Mixed-Methods Sampling Process**

*Source: Adapted and modified from Collins et al., 2000:6*

According to Collins et al. (2000) these steps clearly project the goal of the study leading from one step to the other, which helps the researcher to arrive at selecting the research design with informed knowledge about the approach.

With this in mind, the researcher selected the three sites (urban, semi-rural and rural) with varying distances from the district main town, which ensures that the settings and day-to-day life style are different for each, even though they belong to the same ethnic group albeit with different education levels. From each of the sites, three sets of families were selected as elaborated in section 3.4.1.1 above but coded as:

Family 1 (F1, professional): parents with high education levels and good literacy skills.

Family 2 (F2, semi-skilled): parents with average education and with reasonable literacy skills.

Family 3 (F3, unskilled): parents with low education or who have not attended formal education with minimal or no literacy skills.

These three sets of families (F1, F2, and F3) were selected from each of the three sites; urban, semi-rural, and rural respectively giving a total of 9 families and 9 children for in-depth interviews and participant observation. The selection of parents according to their levels of education was determined by the structured interview responses from pupils in schools, and document records from the headteacher's office (record of parents of pupils). By selecting

parents with different levels of education from three different geographical locations, it would be possible to study similarities and differences in the literacy- related activities among parents and in the families in relation to their primary school-age-going children. The research question thus implies that the performance of pupils in literacy skills, and proficiencies in the curriculum subjects can be influenced by the level of their parents' education and literacy skills. Variables for observation included 1) literacy practices within the families, 2) evidence of literacy resources that are available in the home, 3) parents' supervision of child, and 4) care of the welfare of the child. This is further elaborated in table 4.3. As with the mixed-methods approach more than one method is used for data collection.

#### **4.4.2. Sampling Procedure**

This study adopts Blattman's et al. (2003) sampling design where a sequential procedure was used with multilevel samples for the qualitative components of the study. This meant data obtained from the questionnaires and documents reviewed in the schools provided preliminary facts about the principal participants and helped to prepare the researcher to make purposeful sampling which assisted in conducting interviews with parents and their children in the sixth class.

The parents were thus selected from the school registry (where their children attend school), and from the headteachers office records. In addition, questionnaires were conducted with pupils who provided basic facts about themselves and their families, which was compared with the information in the school's registry. Once the desired sample size of parents (according to the level of their education) was established, pupils whose parents were selected automatically become the stratified sample for investigation. In addition, an intensity sampling (Collins et al., 2009) was also used to include other participants whose views on the topic is important. These individuals included headteachers, teachers, the local district education officer, and the national Commissioner for Primary Education because their opinions, views and experiences relative to the phenomena of investigation were considered as intensively important though not extreme (Collins et al., 2009). Snowballing technique (Bryman, 2008), however, was used to identify the senior community members for inclusion in the research. The overall sample and sampling technique is presented table 4.3 below.

**Table 4.3 - Sample and Sampling Technique**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Sample</b>	<b>Type of sampling</b>
<b>Parents</b>	All parents of P.6 pupils in Moyo district in the three schools (90).	A sample of P.6 parents from each of the three schools (9).	Stratified random
<b>Pupils</b>	All pupils of P.6 of three schools in Moyo district (90).	A sample P.6 pupils from each of the three schools (9).	Stratified random
<b>Teachers</b>	All teachers of P.6 of the three schools sited in the Moyo district (3).	A sample of P.6 teachers from each of the three schools (3).	Intensity sampling
<b>Head teachers</b>	All headteachers of the three schools sited in the Moyo district (3).	A sample of headteachers from each of the three schools (3).	Intensity sampling
<b>Senior members of the community</b>	The community in which these schools are located in the Moyo district (3).	A sample of senior members from each of the three communities, where the P.6 pupils come from (3).	Snowballing
<b>DEO and the Commissioner</b>	The local education officer (DEO) of Moyo (1), and the Deputy Commissioner for Primary Education (1).	A sample of the district education officer in charge of the three schools (1). And one Deputy Commissioner for Primary Education in the Ministry of Education and Sports (1)	Intensity sampling
<b>Total</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>29</b>	

Because of its ethnographic element, this mixed-methods study focuses on one ethnic group who have homogeneous language and culture (Flick et al., 2000). This is thought the best approach because including other populations with different cultural backgrounds may be problematic with language and culture differences, which may require translations – not suitable for ethnographic study within a short period of time (Collins et al., 2009). This presented a challenge to the study, in that generally purposive sampling although it is goal-driven, may be problematic in terms of generalisation to a wider population. However, this is counter- balanced by the homogeneity of the population.

### ***Selection of the schools***

Similarly, the schools in which the pupils attended were chosen not because they were the best or weakest. Rather they were selected because of their varying social composition and distances from the main district town in order to be able to increase the potential of the study for generalizability. Otherwise, all of the three schools were government aided primary schools, mixed in composition (boys and girls), and they were all established not less than 30 years ago and they were all in Moyo district. This intentional selection fits in with the

description of the purposive sampling design protocol, although it is acknowledged that the purposive sampling has its weaknesses and strengths.

The problem of purposive sampling is that it does not allow the researcher to generalise results to a population (Bryman, 2008). However, given the careful consideration for a homogeneous population on four levels as mentioned earlier, the scope for generalisability within other parts of Moyo district and indeed to other rural populations in Uganda is likely.

The strength of purposive sampling is that it is goal driven in that the researcher samples with certain research goals in mind (Bryman, 2008). For example, parents with high, average or with low or no formal education and literacy skills were specifically selected and these levels were then related to the forms of impact they had on their children's literacy skills and performance in school. The next section discusses the methods used in this study.

## **4.5. Methods (Instrumentation)**

Methods or instruments help researchers to gather information as guided by the research design. In this study, data-gathering instruments or tools have been intentionally chosen to fulfil the objectives of the study under investigation. Three research tools have been selected as suitable; structured and semi-structured interviews, ethnographic participant observation, and document analysis. The next section provides further description and administration of these methods.

### **4.5.1. Questionnaires**

Questionnaires were used as a strategy for participants to, first collect factual information and secondly to express their attitudes, beliefs, and feelings towards the topic in question (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009). Loxley et al. (2008:4) refer to it as an 'unavoidably structured' method of data collection about social phenomena.

#### ***Types of questionnaire***

Both standardised and semi-standardised questionnaires were constructed, which kept a high degree of rigidity in answering the questions (Sarantakos, 2013). The questionnaires were accompanied by a cover letter that introduced to the respondents the research topic and to the researcher (Sarantakos, 2013:251). The content of the cover letter included the following. It:

- described of the main objectives and the social significance of the study;

- identified the researcher and her college;
- provided the reasons why the respondent should complete the questionnaire;
- guaranteed anonymity, privacy and confidentiality;
- outlined requirements for completing the questionnaire;
- gave information about possible risks associated with the project, and;
- covered issues related to ethics in research, such as right to withdraw (see appendix 15-17).

Because questionnaires require written information (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009; Loxley et al., 2008), they were administered to participants in advance with the exception of pupils (conducted in class on delivery), and participants were given a definite time period to complete them. This is one way questionnaires differ in administration from interviews which requires the presence and interaction of the researcher and the participants concurrently. Parents were exempted from questionnaires because some parents were not able to read and write.

### *Construction of questionnaires*

The questionnaires were constructed for fact gathering purposes (Oppenheim (1992). In order to maximise the response rate, the construction of questionnaires needed to be clear, and straight forward with questioning framework referred to as ‘a funnel sequence approach’ (Sarantakos, 2013) whereby the questionnaire begins with simple and general questions and then processed onto more specific and/or complex questions (Loxley et al., 2008). In this way, a logical flow of order and flow of questioning from topic to topic were maintained. A variety of response format type of questionnaires were constructed with the majority of them as pre-coded questions with only one open-ended question at the end for participants to give, if any, further comments. These included variable scale, ladder scales and Likert scale questions. The researcher made efforts to ensure that each question was focused by addressing one point at a time, and in a few occasions, ‘double- barrelled’ questions were deemed necessary (Sarantakos, 2013:262).

The main weakness of questionnaires as a method of data collection lies in the fact that they do not allow close contact with respondents, offer no probing and supervision, and do not create possibilities for clarification from both sides, which may place stress on participants. Questionnaires, however, allow unusual responses, to be derived, they are useful for exploring new areas to which the researcher may otherwise have no access (Loxley et al., 2008). They

also allow respondents to answer questions at their own pace (Sarantakos, 2013). Moreover, Sarantakos (2013) also claims, questionnaires as being less expensive, producing quick results offering greater assurance of anonymity and are stable and consistent. For this reason, important issues of presentation is paramount.

In this regard, the researcher ensured that the respondents' consent was sought, they were briefed about the objectives of the questionnaire and the research topic and why they had been selected to complete it. Only when participants consented to participate, was the questionnaire delivered to them to provide answers in the absence of the researcher except those given to pupils. In summary, 90 questionnaires (in-class were completed by P.6 students across the three schools ( sample in appendix 1), and 9 questionnaires were completed by educators across three sites, distributed in advance to give respondents time to complete them without pressure ( see appendices 2-5)

#### **4.5.2. Interviews**

Within the educational research tradition, interview is 'a method of data collection which gathers information through oral or verbal questioning' (Sarantakos, 2005: 428). As a result, interviews have also been described as a 'conversation' (Wilkinson and Birmingham, 2003:1; see also Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). Kvale and Brinkmann (2009:1), identified three forms of conversations:

- a) in everyday life;
- b) in literature, and
- c) in the professions.

They further qualify 'interview' in the following manner (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009:2):

...the research interview is based on the conversations of daily life and is a professional conversation; it is an inter-view, where knowledge is constructed in the inter action between interviewer and the interviewee. Therefore, an interview is literally an inter-view, an inter-change of views between two persons conversing about a theme of mutual interest. It is an interdependence of human interaction and knowledge production.

This definition shows that there are two sides to interviews: the interpersonal interaction and the inter-view knowledge disclosed. Thus, Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) advise that when carrying out an interview, it is important to focus on both the personal interaction and on the knowledge obtained through the interaction.



Kitwood (1980:47) who used situation description in his study of adolescents, believes that ‘for a proper account of values it is vital to understand the social context in which meaning is found’. In addition, Gall et al. (2007:229) state that the interview is suited to ‘solicit respondents’ opinions about particular topics and issues’, which in this projects fits in with exploring the experiences and views of parents and other participants about parents’ engagement in their children’s education depending on varied educational levels. Yin (2009) further considers interviews as one of the most important sources of information. Interviews also have strengths and weaknesses, as have all forms of data collection techniques.

Patton (1990) offers one of the most convincing arguments that suggest the use of interviews. His argument is that:

We cannot observe thoughts, feelings, and intentions. We cannot observe behaviours that took place at some previous point in time. ...we cannot observe how people have organised the world and the meanings they attach to what goes on in the world. ...the purpose of interviewing, then is to allow us to enter into the other person’s perspective (Patton, 1990:278)

Consequently, in this study, selected respondents include persons as presented on table 4.3. These respondents were interviewed as a follow-up to the observation sessions in order to elicit information (views, opinions and attitudes) about the impact of parents’ education levels and literacy skills on their children’s literacy development and language proficiencies for achievement at school. The interview questions (see sample appendices 6a, 6b and 7) were delivered to the respondents in advance, (when the researcher visits them to explain the purpose of the research) so that they would have time to think about the questions before the interview. This allowed pursuance of in-depth information around the topic. The responses from different participants on the same theme, for example, served, first, as supplementary data to responses gathered from observations previously, and secondly, as a comparison between responses obtained from the other respondents on the same theme.

#### ***4.5.2.1 Location of Interview***

Location of interviews is important for a number of reasons, including convenience for the interviewer and interviewee, the psychological comfort of the interviewee, and ease effectiveness of recording interviews (Loxley, 2008). An agreed time and place, therefore, was arranged between the researcher and the interviewee, mostly at the convenience of the interviewee. From the researcher’s point of view, the DEO, the headteachers and teachers were better interviewed in their offices and schools respectively, and the parents, children and

the senior members of the community were interviewed in their homes. This allowed those with office responsibilities to access documents that were required for consultation. For those respondents who were met in their homes, it was to make them feel at ease and, therefore, more confident to speak freely because they were within their own home environment. Being aware that the majority of homes in Moyo districts are not private, in that the homes are not fenced in, the researcher requested the interviewee to ensure that a quiet space was available, as the interview would be recorded. In this way, the parents had to ask the younger (if any) children to go and play either in another corner of the compound or, better still, in a neighbour's compound. Children spending time at the neighbour's compound is a very common occurrence and is accepted in the community, unless there are no adults in that home at that particular time. Most households have a one-roomed hut.

Another reason for conducting the interviews in the homes of the parents in a one-roomed hut (sometimes divided by a curtain to demarcate the sleeping space from the living one), is that in such houses with limited rooms, children are not encouraged to stay indoors during the day. This explains why the interviewee has to ensure a moment of quiet by sending the younger children away from the house at the time of interview. It also facilitated quiet from the neighbours, which was convenient for recording. Otherwise, very often, members in the neighbourhood also would use the compound as pathways to their homesteads, which could cause distraction during the interview as passers-by always feel obliged to greet the members of the home they pass by. Building the confidence of the interviewees was a priority for the researcher, aware that these groups of participants, especially parents and their children, have not often been exposed to research interviews before. For this reason, the researcher built and sustained their confidence initially throughout the field exercise, and then conducted the interview in their own environment to give them greater confidence. The next section will discuss the types of interviews which were used.

#### ***4.5.2.2 Type of Interview: Semi-structured***

There is a wide range of variation and type of interviews that are used in any particular research; they are categorised as structured, semi-structured and unstructured (Loxley, 2008). In this study, the semi-structured interview was preferred. Semi-structured interviews are defined as, 'an interview with the purpose of obtaining descriptions of the life world of the interviewee in order to interpret the meaning of the described phenomena' (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009:3). It is less rigid in both content and application than the structured one (Loxley, 2008). This type of interview was chosen so that the researcher could continually

monitor the progress of the interview and make adjustments or adaptations to the questions as convenient.

Another reason for the use of the semi-structured interview format was to ensure a wider chance for the participants (parents, headteachers, teachers and the pupils, community members and the district education officers) to provide more information on the subject of the study (parental literacy support for their children). This concurs with Kvale's (1996:5) argument in favour of the semi-structured interview. Sequencing interview questions from general to specific questions is important (Bryman, 2008). This becomes of paramount importance according to Dilley (2000), for example, when the interview progresses, asking specific questions pertaining to the topic enables in-depth information to be gleaned. This has also the advantage of continuously testing the strength and knowledge of the interviewee with regards to the beliefs, values or perspectives s/he (interviewee) holds about the topic being researched (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). For Dilley (2000), six interview questions are at the heart of interviews because there is tendency to reflect on what is said (on the part of participants) thus inviting more follow-up questions such as, tell me more about ....from interviewers.

For this study, not more than 10 semi-structured interview questions were constructed for parents, and other participants. These were structured in themes such as biographical, opinion-based and experience-based regarding the participants' role in the topic of research (see appendix 7). In this way, more scope was given for interviewees to express their own views in their own words, rather than compelling them to opt for the pre-specified responses that come closest to how they feel (Loxley, 2008). Overall, the purpose of the interview therefore, 'is to satisfy the researcher's questions; it is he or she who overtly directs the proceedings' by using the semi-structured interview type (Powney and Watts, 1987: 18).

The researcher has chosen to use semi-structured interview for two main reasons. Firstly, it is to guide her and keep the topic in focus. Secondly, the semi-structured interview enables the interviewees to give their own views and not rigidly stick to the topic. In this way, the researcher avoids blocking valuable data that may emerge from the participants. Lastly, by meeting the participants in person, the researcher expected to gather data and information which otherwise might not easily be gathered through the other instruments of data collection, such as participant observation and document analysis.

#### **Table 4.4 - Research Field Activities**

<b>No. Participants</b>	<b>Method</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Duration</b>
<b>9 Parents</b>	Semi-structured interviews	Family home setting	40-45minutes
	observation	Family home setting	2-3days
	Document analysis	School and external	All through
<b>Children</b>	90 Questionnaires	School setting	40 minutes
	Semi-structured interview	Family home setting	30 minutes
	9 Families for Participant Observation	Family home setting	2-3 days each
	Document analysis	Home and external	All through
<b>3 Senior community members</b>	Questionnaires	Family home setting	Two weeks
	Semi-structured interview	Family home setting	35minutes
<b>3 Headteachers</b>	Questionnaires	School setting	Two weeks
<b>3 Teachers</b>	Questionnaires	School setting	Two weeks
<b>Headteachers</b>	interview	School setting	30minutes
<b>Teachers</b>	interview	School setting	30minutes
<b>1 District official</b>	Questionnaires	Office setting	30minutes
<b>1 Deputy Commissioner</b>	Questionnaires	Office setting	30minutes

Note: The 90 pupils were served with questionnaires and the 9 who were part of the 90 who were also interviewed and observed in their homes.

#### **4.5.3. Participant Observation**

Observation is a research method that entails gathering data through vision as its main source (Sarantakos, 2013). He states that observation can be used as the only technique of data collection, or jointly with other techniques as in this study, fused with intensive interviewing and documentary study.

Participant observation is linked to the ethnographic approach used in this study. Hence its definition as ‘a research in which the researcher immerses himself or herself in a social setting for an extended period of time, observing behaviour, listening to what is said in conversations both between others and with the fieldworker, and asking questions’ (Bryman, 2008: 698). This view draws on Bruyan’s (1966:13) understanding that ‘the participant observer shares in the life activities and sentiments of the people in face-to-face relationship, in the natural setting. On the note of immersion, Goffman (1989) romantically describes ethnographic participant observation as:

...subjecting yourself, your own body and your personality, and your own social situation to the set of contingencies that play upon a set of circles, so that you can physically and ecologically penetrate their circle of response to their social situation, or their work situation, or their ethnic situation. (Goffman, 1989:125)

This total immersion calls for tighter ethical concerns even when the researcher comes from the same wider community. As Emerson et al. (1995) reminds us, in ethnography, even with intensive [re]socialisation, the ethnographer never becomes a member in the same sense that those ‘naturally’ in the setting are members. The researcher remains both an insider – outsider (Hogan et al., 2009).

Traditionally, observing in the natural setting in qualitative research derives from social anthropological studies (Junker, 1960; Lichtman, 2010; Hogan et al., 2009; Sarantakos, 2013). Sanjek (2000) distinguishes between cultural and social anthropology as a potential approach to studying people. While he describes meaning contained in people’s heads as being proper to cultural anthropology, social anthropology is characterised by its focus on the meanings constructed from social arrangements and speech in action. However, both descriptions are relevant to this study; the social and cultural.

#### ***4.5.3.1 Advantages and Disadvantages***

Access to any social setting for the purpose of observing participants in ethnographic research is important and yet difficult to achieve. There are two broad categories of access into a social setting: ‘overt’ and ‘covert’ (Bryman, 2008:403). These are further described as open/public

and closed/non-public (Bryman, 2008; see also Bell, 1969; Hamersley and Atkinson, 1995; Lofland and Lofland, 1995). In this study, the families and the schools as sites for investigation were categorised under closed/non-public social settings and the researcher accessed them in an overt role.

The researcher had taken account of how to overcome the difficulties in gaining access, by adopting some of the tactics, which have been employed by some organisational researchers (Bryman, 2008:407). Below is an adaptation of the tactics, which she employed by:

- using friends, contacts, colleagues and academics to gain access;
- getting sponsors – (these are people within the school/family who acted as her champions) people who are prepared to promote and value the study;
- using the head of the family (father). (In traditional African contexts, the father of the family is a likely person to use in order get clearance to be able to study members in the family or managers in the organisations, such as the headteachers in the schools);
- being prepared to negotiate with family heads and school heads in order to be offered complete access;
- being honest about the amount of time she is likely to take up in the course of conducting the research - telling the people plainly how much time will be required of them.

Above all the advantage of participant observation is that it allows the researcher to discover how the particular realities are produced in practical terms. It displays the social phenomena in a given situation from the perspective of the participants (Flick, et al., 2000). Nevertheless, there is no single protocol for analysing the data from observation which is left to the individual ethnographer's creativity (Flick, et al., 2000).

Overall, the value of the ethnographic approach is as follows:

- to hold conversations with family members and to take part in the family's everyday life (Flick et al., 2000);
- to validate self-reported data about parents, and;
- to consider the wider social context that impinges on individuals or groups as part of the data sources (Knapp et al., 1994).

### ***Questions to guide observation***

As there can be numerous activities, interactions, events, language and behaviour - that may occur within any one group of people at different times, the researcher may need to have guiding points for taking notes that are relevant to the topic of the study. This can be through narrowing down the focus of interest by devising specific research questions to guide the observation or by relating the emerging findings to the social scientific literature (Gerson and Horowitz, 2002). Therefore, researcher formulated questions to guide the ethnographic observation in the field in order to determine what was really going on in the social setting and community in relation to literacy practices/educational development by parents .

1. What are the specific literacy-related practices in the family?
2. Is there evidence of literacy stimulation in the home to foster children's attitude to literacy and to education leading to their performance in school?
3. What are the literacy-related activities that most strongly relate to pupil's subsequent success in school?
4. What are the activities in the family/home/community that inhibit the development of the child's literacy skills for subsequent performance in school?
5. What is the extent of the child's own involvement in literacy-related activities? (see appendix 9).

#### **4.5.4. Document Analysis**

All documentary information is likely to be relevant to every research (Yin, 2009). Documents are useful to support what is said (through interviews) and observed (through participant observations). Yin identifies the following different forms documents can take:

- letters, memoranda, e-mail correspondence, other personal documents such as diaries, calendars and notes (home and school);
- agendas, announcements and minutes of meetings and other reports of events;
- administrative documents-proposals, progress reports, and other internal records, for example, attendance records, disciplinary warning letters;
- formal studies or evaluations of the same that the researcher is studying; and
- news clippings and other articles appearing in the mass media or in community newspapers.

Furthermore, Yin points out that making inferences from documentary evidence is also upheld for its quality.

In this study, the purpose of documentary analysis was to provide a secondary source of data (Sarantakos, 2005). Through this technique, the researcher was able to access available relevant family documents such as the child's school records, progress reports, correspondence which parents had made to school administration, and vice versa, to crosscheck information about how parents engage in their child's education, and to investigate whether a parent-child academic relationship exists through parents' remarks or signatures in pupils' homework exercise books. These helped to confirm the extent to which parents are involved with the school, teachers, and the local education authority concerning their children's schooling. How parents monitor their children when out of school was also revealed by studying the family calendar and diary.

The researcher chose to use this technique, especially to corroborate and augment evidence from other sources. For example, in verifying the correct age, name, titles or spellings that might have been mentioned in an interview session or in questionnaire responses by a participant (Yin, 2009). According to Yin (2009), if the documentary evidence is contradictory rather than corroboratory, the researcher must further pursue the problem by inquiring further into the topic.

#### **4.6. Administration of Methods**

The first part of the field research involved establishing standards of research with the University of Dublin, Trinity College Research Director. For example, approval was sought from the School of Education to ensure the research proceedings were consistent with the research principles of the university. Ethical forms were signed by both the researcher and supervisor (see Appendix 11-17) in agreement to launch this study. Once in the field, further ethical concerns were adhered to. For instance, the researcher first visited the district education officer (DEO) to introduce herself, and declare the purpose of the research. During this visit, she presented a letter of request to be granted permission to access the selected schools in his district. She also obtained letters of permission addressed to the headteachers of the selected schools (see Appendix 17, Research Schedule, Appendix 10). The second phase was to visit the schools with the letter from the DEO in order to access the schools (see appendix 13).



Through the headteachers' office, letters seeking parents' permission to both allow their children (grade six) to be interviewed and requesting them to participate were dispatched. Only after pupils brought back the signed consent forms were they accepted to participate in the interview in the school. From this exercise, a sample was derived both through the documents from the school and the questionnaires administered to the pupils. Interviews of parents took place after the observation exercises in order to avoid interference in the natural setting of the family processes. The interviews of professionals: the commissioner, the DEO, headteachers and teachers took place concurrently during days when there was no home observation. These interview took place in the institutions where they worked.

The procedure for participant observation closely followed the ethical concerns (section 4.7) in order to access the families for observation. Next, the researcher wrote letters to the parents, addressing them to the head of the family, which in this context is usually the father of the house, requesting permission to access, and be allowed to live with, the family for observation (see appendix 15). The date and durations of the exercise was also discussed and the overall purpose of the research was explained. As most homes under investigation did not have a written address, the researcher used various means to reach the families, for example, by asking other people in the area and at times, she was led to the homes by the children under observation. This connection was established from the school where each child attends through the headteacher and the teacher.

During the observation process, the researcher took field notes, and photographs where necessary. She also joined and mingled freely with the members of the family in their daily activities such as working in the fields, having recreation with them, and sharing meals. Taking the advice of Flick et al. (2000) seriously, the researcher was interacting and carrying out minor activities with the family members, and she was alert about what was going on, who was saying what and why, and immediately jotting down anything of interest as soon as the opportunity presented itself.

The second phase of the field research involved interviewing parents and the senior community members. During the interview, manual notes were taken using a special notebook for the purpose of the interviews. The conversation between the researcher and the researched were audio recorded with the permission of the respondent having been obtained in advance. The researcher used a digital recorder (an Olympus device) which is small, 4 inches long with a computer port. This allowed intact transfer of data onto a PC for safe storage which was transcribed shortly afterwards. An ordinary tape-recorder using AA dry battery cells was also

be used as a back-up. In all three sites where the research was conducted, electricity is not guaranteed. The main town of Moyo receives electricity from the town generator from 7:00pm-11:00pm each day, as long as fuel is available. The majority of homes in the rural areas do not have electricity. The common sources of light are hurricane lamps, candles, and torches while a few homes have solar lights, so much of the research work had to be carried out in the day time.

After questionnaires were administered to pupils in their respective schools, it was important to ensure that they did not know how they had been stratified for further investigation as this could have created division amongst pupils. This made it necessary to conduct the follow-up interviews with parents and their children later on in their own homes so that the other children did not raise complaints as to why they were left out of the interview and home observation phases. As Sarantakos (2007) reiterates, a stratified sample is employed when there is a need to represent all groups of the target population in the sample, and when the researcher has a special interest in certain strata.

The interviews were conducted by the researcher herself without a research assistant as she is conversant in both the English and the local languages. There was no need for an interpreter. Each semi-structured interview took approximately 30 minutes. Each respondent who engaged in structured interviews had been informed that all the information provided by respondents during the interview sessions would be kept confidential and their consent to participate in the study was secured. If any of the participants wished to withdraw from the research schedule, acceptance of their decision to do so was guaranteed in accordance with ethical principles involved in conducting qualitative research projects.

#### **4.7. Ethical Issues**

In this mixed-methods design, ethics has been an essential part of the research process built into all aspects of the study. Blaikie (2010:54-58) outlined some major principles associated with ethical conduct while carrying out educational research, and these include such issues as:

- no harm to participants;
- privacy and anonymity of participants;
- confidentiality of information gathered from participants;
- informed consent from participants;
- rapport and friendship initiated by researcher;

- appropriate behaviour by researcher;
- data interpretation by researcher, and;
- data ownership and rewards.

In Boeije's (2010:45-49) view, these ethical principles are common to qualitative research, especially 'informed consent, privacy, confidentiality and anonymity, professional standards, sensitive topics and balancing risk and benefits for participants'. As this study is qualitative and contains elements of ethnography, the relationship constructed between the researcher and those researched is total overtness at all times, non-harmful or non-exploitative interactions with informed consent of participants.

To ensure that the above principles are adhered to the researcher first obtained a signed ethical form from the director of research studies in the School of Education, Trinity College Dublin (see Appendix 11). Secondly, she also formulated consent forms (see Appendix 14) and wrote letters to parents requesting their permission to access their families and interview them and their children (see Appendix 15). Letters for permission were also addressed to the headteachers of the sampled schools, requesting access the school, interview teachers and pupils in the school (see Appendix 17). Thirdly, letters requesting the personal consent of other individuals such as the senior members in the community, the district education officer and the Deputy Commissioner were also prepared. Only after such letters were read, understood and participant consent form was signed by the concerned parties (see sample Appendix 14) did the researcher proceed to conduct the field study. And in all circumstances, the researcher ensured that appropriate and culturally sensitive issues were treated carefully while encouraging meaningful participation in and input from the selected respondents. For example, in accessing families, she ensured the father of the family, if present, was the first to be approached as, culturally, this was significant. Other ethical and theoretical issues are highlighted in the following sections.

#### **4.7.1. Validity and Reliability**

A fundamental concern in qualitative research revolves around the degree of confidence researchers can place in what they have seen and heard (Kirk, 1997). In order to ascertain validity and reliability, the researcher decided to use three different types of data collection tools. Freankel and Wallen (1993) also highlight the need for care in the selection of particular locations in which data are collected. They describe this variable as location threat. In this regard, the researcher chose to conduct both interviews and observation of respondents in participants' own social settings as this gave them greater confidence and comfort in being in

their own location. Through the process of triangulation of methods, crosschecking of data was ensured to prevent any bias or threats to internal and external validity (Freankel and Wallen, 1993). As triangulation is considered an important component to data corroboration in this study, it is worthwhile elaborating on it further.

#### **4.7.2. Triangulation**

In this study triangulation was important because there were multileveled data sources (Blattman et al., 2003; Boeije, 2010). Flick et al. (2000) have also considered triangulation of data as important for analysis especially when comparing between results of different approaches and methods (such as questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, document analysis, or field protocols). In this study, triangulation was confined to methods as suggested by Flick et al. (2000) and is not extended to theories and investigators as this is beyond the scope of this project.

Webb et al. (1966: 174) advocated the triangulation of measurement processes in the search for the validity of theoretical propositions as they state:

...when a hypothesis can survive the confrontation of a series of complementary methods of testing, it contains a degree of validity unattainable by one tested within the mere constricted framework of a single method.

The Webbarian proposition is the combination of different methods to produce results that are more reliable. This does not mean that triangulation cannot be useful in a single method.

Triangulation was preferred in this study because as Denzin (1970) pinpoints, ‘the flaws of one method are often the strength of another’, and so by combining methods such as questionnaires, participant observation, interviews and document analysis, ‘the researcher can achieve the best of each, while overcoming their unique deficiencies’ (Denzin, 1970: 308). Qualitative research is said to be prone to researcher bias.

#### **4.7.3. Bias**

A number of scenarios surround the issue of bias especially in qualitative research. These may pertain to both the researcher and the people being researched. This relates to issues such as attempting to summarise responses and delay in transcription, on the part of the researcher (Kirk, 1997). Delay may lead to the interviewer forgetting some of the details and there may be likelihood of adding information, which was not uttered. In order to avoid this practice, the researcher uploaded interview responses to a PC on the same day and transcribed in no more

than two days' time. Cohen and Manion (1992) view such forgotten details as the most likely to be the ones that disagree with the interviewer's own expectations. In other cases, error/bias may arise when the interviewee may be indifferent or not motivated to cooperate, or may want to please the interviewer or may want to present him/herself in favourable terms. Because of this, the researcher made sure that all participants – parents, teachers and education professionals were contacted in advance, and the purpose of the interview was explained in relation to the education of children in school. This was to direct and draw their attention to the importance of the children's education rather than to the researcher. However, the issue around power relations between the researcher and the researched could not be underestimated in regards to how it might influence the data.

#### **4.7.4. Piloting**

A reconsideration of the sample occurred after the piloting exercise in December 2011 and January 2012. As participant observation was found more suitable for this study, the number of families involved was reduced from 18 to 9. This was because of time constraints for the observation in the families. Eight weeks were found not to be a sufficient length of time to cover 18 families as initially planned. Instead, nine families and nine pupils were covered, while the number of the other participants sampled for interviews remained intact. Other adjustments included elimination of open-ended questions from questionnaires as some parents were found to be illiterate in writing and understanding written texts. Instead more time was allocated for participant observation while interviews and document analysis techniques remained as planned.

#### **4.8. Data Analysis**

Qualitative research employs a large number of analytic procedures although each one of them takes into account the specific types of data and the methodology employed. Sarantakos (2013) outlines three important features in qualitative analysis, in that it:

- (a) deals with data presented in textual, verbal and multi-focus format (see Miles and Huberman, 1994);
- (b) contains a minimum of quantitative measurement, standardisation and statistical techniques (Engle and Weggening, 1991), and;
- (c) aims to 'transform and interpret qualitative data in a rigorous and scholarly manner' (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996:3).

In order to achieve this, data analysis pertinent to mixed-methods will be used and this involves a series of careful and sequential activities with the data gathered. In this study, thematic analysis, and the analytic model and method were used for data analysis.

#### **4.8.1. Thematic Analysis**

This study concerns parental influence based on their levels of education (as independent variable) on their children's achievement in school (as the dependent variable) (O'Leary, 2010). In order to analyse these variables, the study adopts a thematic analysis approach, which focuses on themes by means of coding (Popping, 2000; Boyatzis, 1998). Thematic analysis employs an inductive approach (Robinson, 2007; Johnson, 1998; Katz, 1999) to merge themes from data, which are not pre-constructed by the analyst. While a theme is a set of categories that share the same or similar meaning, Analytic Induction implies proceeding from the specific to the general (Sarantakos (2013). In other words, it requires building an abstract concept from a study of a specific data, such as from parents, educators and children in this study. Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) hold the view that analytic induction may entail both induction and deduction. Analytic induction studies data that are obtained through qualitative research and attempt to establish regularities and commonalities that could support the formulation of hypotheses and vice versa through a deduction process. For Sarantakos (2013) the trend of analytic induction follows the process of the analytic spiral, which sees the analysis as moving between the general and the specific, until an agreement is reached (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

#### **4.8.2. Data Management**

According to Sarantakos (2013), data management starts with data collection through to analysis by processing text, photos, audio taped text, video footage, and other forms of documents. The sole purpose of textual analysis is to identify sets of themes that will reflect the essence of textual data, to discover recurrent patterns. It is also useful to identify 'what' and 'how frequently' concepts occur in the texts (Popping, 2000), to analyse patterns (Stone, 1997) and to discover and identify 'multiple relations between different themes that make a text corpus consistent and intelligible' (Foresta et al., 2002:5). During the process of analysis, themes are invented, formed and reformed before they are fully constructed and the common features in this process are: recurrence, repetition and forcefulness (Sarantakos, 2013). Coding (open coding) is used to create categories by merging codes (because of new data information gathered) that leads to the construction of themes.

This study conducts the data analysis wholly after data collection. This is acceptable as Sarantakos (2013:367) indicates, provided when ‘the recording of data is facilitated electronically, for example, on audio tapes or video tapes. The overall timetable for the study is provided in appendix 10.

***Storage of data***

Keeping data gathered safe and organised are key components to qualitative data analysis. The raw data collected from interviews, to evidence-based (interpreted) were stored securely. The researcher used two audio digital recorders to collect data after which it was up-loaded onto a PC, USB and a CD for security. The Dell PC has a personal password for extra security and all storage is in her private room under lock and key and not accessible to other people.

***Analytic model***

In this study, the fixed model was used because of its focus primarily on written records (that is on documents, transcripts, and audio tapes). In this sense, the methods of analysis are those employed when studying documents: document study, content analysis or text information (Sarantakos, 2013).

**4.8.3. Process of Analysis**

The process of the thematic analysis in this mixed methods study follows that proposed by Onwuegbuzie and Teddlie (2003) and Collins et al. (2000) who identified several stages for analysing mixed-methods data. The process is displayed in table 4. 4 below.

**Table 4.5 - Steps and Descriptions in Analysing Qualitative Data**

No	Step	Description
1	<b>Data reduction</b>	Reducing the dimensionality of the qualitative data (e.g. via exploratory thematic analysis, memoing) and quantitative data (e.g. via descriptive statistics, exploratory factor analysis, cluster analysis)
2	<b>Data display</b>	Describing pictorially the qualitative data (e.g. matrices, graphs, charts, lists, networks, rubrics and Venn diagrams) and quantitative data (e.g. tables, graphs)
3	<b>Data transformation</b>	Quantitative data are converted into narrative data that can be analysed qualitatively (i.e. qualitised ; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998) and/or qualitative data are converted into numerical codes that can be represented statistically (i.e. quantitised; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998)
4	<b>Data correlation</b>	Quantitative data being correlated with qualitised data or qualitative data being correlated with quantitised data

5	<b>Data consolidation</b>	Both quantitative and qualitative data are combined to create new or consolidated variables or data sets
6	<b>Data comparison</b>	Comparing data from the qualitative and quantitative data sources
7	<b>Data integrations</b>	The final stage, whereby both quantitative and qualitative data are integrated into either a coherent whole or two separate sets (i.e. qualitative and quantitative) of coherent wholes

Source: Collins et al. (2000:12; see also Benini, 2000; and Pfeifer, 2000.)

In this study, the technique entailed translation (from the local language [Ma'di] to the English language). This was followed by transcribing, coding and synthesising responses from semi-structured interviews in the qualitative analysis method (Jorgensen, 1989; Boeije, 2010). Boeije (2010) cautions that data are not mechanically sorted out in a predetermined category. Rather, sorting, naming and categorising go hand in hand, based precisely on the data interpretations by the researcher, leading to emerging preliminary analysis.

Following the above steps, the researcher engaged in the following steps to analyse the data practically by:

- a. listening to audio tapes;
- b. translating the interviews from the local language (Ma'di) to English and transcribing;
- c. coding the transcript information and sorting the data, and;
- d. creating an analytical scheme to identify themes.

It is emphasised throughout the section that Qualitative Data Analysis (QDA) as the hallmark of this study, consists of a stream of activities from segmenting the data to reassembling.

#### **4.8.3.1 Analytic Method**

The study adopts 'the method of agreement' for its analytic method (Sarantakos, 2013: 370). The method of agreement is preferred because it focuses on patterns of commonalities in the data. In this study, commonalities refer to both similarities and differences in the data as Saldana (2013:6) points out that 'at times commonality may exist in difference'. Thus, Hatch's (2002) caution that patterns should not be thought of as just stable regularities but as varying forms. In his view, pattern is characterised by:

- similarity (things happen the same way) ;
- difference (they happen in predictably different ways);



- frequency (they happen often or seldom);
- sequence (they happen in certain order);
- correspondence (they happen in relation to other activities or event), and;
- causation (one appears to cause another) (Hatch 2002:155).

With the exception of sequencing, all of the above were applicable in this study analysis.

Jorgensen's (1989) definition seems to capture the activities involved in data analysis in this study.

... analysis is a breaking up, separating, or disassembling of research material into pieces, parts, elements, or units. With facts broken down into manageable pieces, the researcher sorts and shifts them, searching for types, classes, sequences, processes, patterns or wholes. The aim of this process is to assemble or reconstruct the data in a meaningful or comprehensible fashion. (Jorgensen, 1989:107)

The qualitative research with quasi-ethnographic elements, which is regarded as a study of human phenomenon, interaction, discourse and motivation within a purposive sample (Lichtman, 2006), aptly corresponds to a study of this nature. In addition, according to Boeije (2010:76), in reassembling, the researcher needs to engage in 'looking for parts, searching for relationships between the distinguished parts, and finding explanations for what is observed'. This involves translation and transcription which are further elaborated below.

### ***Translating and transcribing***

The first step in translating and transcribing was to upload the interviews from the digital recorder to the laptop (Dell) computer and label them according to the various contributors (participants) and noting the dates on which the interview was conducted. This was a slow process as the researcher had to use the foot pedal to control the speed of playback. As she listened, she typed the verbatim interviews on computer Office for Word. She repeatedly replayed the tapes in order to provide the opportunity, firstly to translate (where the interviews were carried out in the local language), and secondly, to be able to go deeper into the minds of the interviewees and thereby add quality to the data available to her.

### ***Coding - sorting, and analysing***

Once the translation and transcribing was completed, coding allowed the researcher to sort statements by content of stories, concept, and themes (Rubin and Rubin, 2005). As it is a stratified purposive sample, the participants who provided the information (on the same question) will be coded for comparison across the sample group.

This study uses Punch’s (2009) framework for coding and categorising. Punch researched childhoods in Bolivia, and she described how her codes, categories and themes developed and subdivided during her ethnographic fieldwork and eventual data analysis. She speaks of large codes such as HOME and encoding everything relating to life at home and then subdividing it later into sub-divisions leading to themes.

In this project, the researcher at the coding stage engaged in reading the transcribed material and then manually coding the data. Saldana, (2013: 3) defines a code as ‘a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and /or evocative attribute for a portion of language based or visual data’, while coding ‘is a transitional process between data collection and more extensive data analysis’ (Saldana, 2013:5). Hence, Charmaz’s (2001) description that coding is a critical link between data collection and their explanation of meaning. Miles and Huberman (1994) view coding as part of data analysis. However, Saldana (2013:4) warns that coding is not a precise science, ‘it is primarily an interpretive act ...,’ which can ‘... summarise, distil, or condense data, not simply reduce them’. Madden (2010:10) affirms that such analytic work, in fact, does not diminish but ‘value adds’ to the research story. However, it is vital to identify how, and what exactly requires coding.

***Types of coding***

According to Saldana (2013), when researchers engage in deciphering a datum for meaning, they are in the process of decoding. In other words, they are getting rid of irrelevant information and encoding (labelling or ascribing a word that expresses the data unit), and this fall under different groups of coding types. These include different types of codes as illustrated in **Table 4.6**.

**Table 4.6 - Types of Code**

Type of Code	Description
<b>Descriptive</b>	A word that expresses the data unit
<b>In Vivo</b>	Using participants’ own word (s)
<b>Elective</b>	Phrases from open-ended process
<b>Simultaneous</b>	An embedded or interconnected part of the main event
<b>Values</b>	Reflects participants’ values, attitudes, beliefs and presenting his or her perspectives or world view (subjective perspectives)

*Source: Adapted from Saldana (2013:59)*

As this study relies more on a qualitative approach and ethnographic field research, all of the above types of codes are useful in the process of coding. It is important to identify what needs

to be coded, and Saldana (2013:15) refers to this as ‘Units of social organisation’. Lofland et al. (2006:121) assert that social life unfolds at four coordinates, precisely, ‘...the intersection of one or more *actors* [participants] [who] engage in one or more *activities* [what](behaviour) at a particular *time* [when] in a specific *place* [where]’. These identifications are pertinent to the topic, research questions, content and the context undertaken in this project.

### ***Process of coding***

Descriptive initial coding has been referred to as ‘open coding’ (Saldana, 2013:100). Charmaz’s (2006) view is used in this study as it implies an initiating procedural progression in tune with first cycle coding process. According to Saldana (2013) initial coding is ‘breaking down qualitative data into discrete parts, closely examining them, and comparing them for similarities and differences. Its main goal, according to Charmaz (2006:46), particularly with grounded theory, is to ‘remain open to all possible theoretical directions indicated by your readings of the data’.

Based on the standard coding strategies, the researcher sorted the coded data, first, into descriptive broad words, which included such types of coding as In Vivo, Elective or Value (see table 4.5 Saldana, 2013), then into categories and into themes that related to the research questions. Other issues that emerged during the interviews were refined during a second and the third coding, bearing in mind Saldana’s (2013) advice that coding is not a precise science. After the coding and sorting of concepts and themes as stated above, the researcher then represented the data in a variety of ways.

## **4.9. Data Presentation**

Miles and Huberman (1994) have presented a variety of methods of data presentation in their own studies in widely-read published work. Many other qualitative researchers have adopted some of these methods in their studies. This study draws on some of their techniques for qualitative data presentation as they have been justified both theoretically and methodologically.

As the study adopted a mixed-methods design with ethnographic elements, the method of data presentation includes tables, matrices, percentages and graphs to show variations, similarities or differences in the findings. One of the aims of doing this is to establish links between the themes and concepts that emerged during coding and sorting. This process helped to deepen

the analysis as illustrated in table 4.6 highlighting the variables analysed in parents’ educational activities related to their primary children’s achievement in school. Some of these variables shown on table 4.6 below were tested, coded, categorised and presented in matrices as indicated in table 6.18.

**Table 4.6 - Variables Used in the Analysis for Parental Involvement**

Discussing on future planning	Identifying problems of academic activities at home	Time limitation
Discussion on school activities	Identifying homework	Getting reading materials
Identifying learning patterns	Assisting homework	Tuition
Identifying problems of academic activities at school	Guiding on examination	Role modelling
	Monitoring academic performance at school	Space
	Motivation	Resources
		Well-being

*Source: Adopted and Modified from Vellymalay (2010:433`)*

Like tables, the features of matrices are; title, heading, and cells and the content are basically text, extracts from notes, standardised responses in general, data integrated around a point or research theme (Sarantakos, 2013). The other form of matrix that will be used is role-oriented matrix, which presents verbal information about the themes. For example, the views on the roles parents’ education levels and literacy skills play in their children’s academic activities as indicated on table 4.6 above. The role group will be used to present the parents at different levels of education as F1, F2, and F3.

**4.10. Conclusion**

This chapter discussed broadly the research issues (section 4.2), methodological aspects and theoretical considerations related to the research design and the rationale for preference of the design (section 4.3). Section 4.4 discussed the participants involved, and methods employed in this study were presented in section 4.5. Procedural and ethical issues were examined in sections 4.6 and 4.7 respectively, while the data analysis and presentation were provided in sections 4.8 and 4.9. The thematic element was given priority and all of the strategies pertaining to it were explained.

As an ethnographic research element was part of the design, the researcher's use of participant observation was explained in depth. The important element of reflexivity, as an essential and integral part of the ethnographic approach was also given full consideration. The interview technique was considered of great use, in terms of enabling the researcher to engage in the phenomenological enquiry about the way in which parents' education and literacy skills influence their children's achievement in school. Furthermore, it was indicated that by employing mixed-methods across a heterogeneous population as presented in Table 4.3, a corroboration of methods and data was ensured. The following chapters (5 and 6) present the data from participants and it is discussed in chapter 7.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### FINDINGS FROM SCHOOLS

#### **5.1. Introduction**

This chapter presents data from three schools selected from the three sites, namely urban, semi-rural and rural in Moyo district in Northern Uganda. The first part provides a description of the three schools: location and pertinent particulars as provided by each headteacher. The second section analyses the questionnaire responses from headteachers and teachers while their interview responses are presented in section three, which also includes the contribution from the Moyo district education officer (DEO) and the Deputy Commissioner for primary education at the national level. These groups of participants (n 8) are referred to as educators in this study. Questionnaires were designed to elicit both factual and personal information from the headteachers and teachers on the basis of their experience of parents' roles in supporting their children in these primary schools. The number of years the respondents have served in the teaching profession adds to their knowledge about the pupils and their parents involved in this study, hence the importance of their views and opinions. The education officials were included because they represent the government through the agency of the Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES) in Uganda and so their views in relation to education policy regarding parents' roles and responsibility in their children's education are important.

#### **5.2. Description of Schools**

The schools were selected not because they were the best or worst of schools in Moyo district, rather they were selected to be representative of the entire district. Out of the 34 primary schools in the three sites namely, Moyo Town Council, Metu sub-county and Gimara sub-county, three were purposefully selected to represent the urban, semi-rural and rural schools for the study. The criteria for selecting these schools are provided in the Methodology chapter, section 4.4.1. The following section describes these schools.

### 5.2.1. The Urban Primary School

#### *Location*

This primary school is located in Elenderea village within Moyo Town Council (MTC) in Moyo district. It was established in 1965 as a primary two school by the MTC local government. This school developed to be one of the prominent schools in Moyo district but the civil war which affected much of northern Uganda in the 1980s had a bad impact on this school as reported by the headteacher. This impact can be seen from the walls of the school building which are in need of re-plastering. However, because attention has been directed to more urgent needs in the school, such as re-roofing, new doors and windows, desks for pupils and sinking pit latrines, the general maintenance of the school seems to have become a second priority. The photo below illustrates these problems, and shows a pupil lowering the national flag in the foreground after the school day, which ends at 4:30pm.



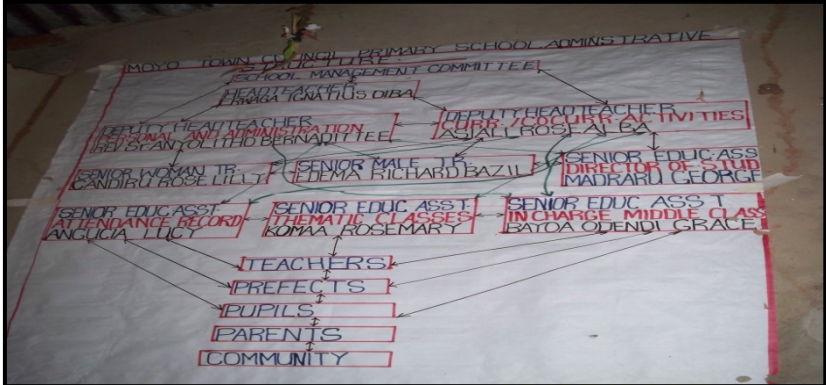
**Photo 5.1 - Urban Primary School. Pupils clean up before leaving school**

*Taken by researcher: (16.7.2012)*

The school draws pupils mainly from the town centre, children of civil servants and business people and executives working in the town from different ethnic backgrounds. The School's Management Committee (SMC) members include representatives from foundation bodies (faith-based bodies) who were pioneer founders of schools in Uganda. They include the Catholic Church, Church of Uganda, Orthodox Church, Seven Day Adventist, Muslim Faith, etc. (see Education Policy Guidelines, 2008). The SMC also has representatives from the teachers, local government, local councils, parents' representatives, and former male students. The committee has a chairperson, vice chairperson, a secretary and members.



The various responsibilities of the school staff include overall management of the school by the headteacher assisted by two deputy headteachers as administrators, a curriculum head as director of studies, a thematic senior male/female teacher in/charge of library, general welfare, games, scouts and guides, agriculture and a staff secretary. The school’s administrative structure is summarised in hand-writing in figure 5.2 below.



**Figure 5.1 - School Administrative Structure**  
*Photo taken on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2012 in the Headteacher’s Office*

**The school profile**

Currently, the school operates as a grade one school, that is, it has over 1,000 pupils and it is government aided. This is illustrated in table 5.1 below.

**Table 5.1 - Pupil Enrolment for 2012 in the Urban Primary School**

Class	P.1	P.2	P.3	P.4	P.5	P.6	P.7	Total
Boys	78	90	75	108	111	56	43	561
Girls	93	88	82	99	137	64	29	592
Total	171	178	157	207	248	120	72	1,153

Despite this school being an urban school, children leaving school before completing their primary education is common, as reported by the headteacher (interview, 17/07/2012). He reported that some of the children leave school because they have to transfer to another school following their parents’ change of location for work, while other pupils drop out of school owing to personal and domestic issues affecting the family. At the start of the school year, there is little difference between the number of boys and girls in P1 but by the time they reach the middle classes, the number of boys outnumber that of girls. By the time pupils approach primary seven (the final year in the primary cycle in Uganda), the number of pupils drop significantly as can be seen in 2012 in table 5.1 above. Although it is beyond the scope of the study, the headteacher remarked that generally in the urban setting, girls tend to drop out of

school more than boys for a number of reasons such as domestic demands, early pregnancies, parents' preferences for marriage or personal interest.

The overview of the school's profile is provided in table 5.2 below.

**Table 5.2 - Summary Profile of the Urban Primary School**

Particulars	Status
Founding Year	1965
Founding Body	Local Government
School Code	007427
Registration Number	5390077
Distance to the Nearest School	500m
Distance from District Education Office	300m
School Land	5 Acres
Number of School Management Committee (SMC)	14 (6 female and 8 male)
Number of Parent Teacher Association (PTA)	10 (4 female and 6 male)
Number of School Staff	23 (8 female and 15 male)

*Source: Headteacher's records*

As reported by the headteacher, generally, the school's performance is picking up as compared to their previous records. The results of primary leaving examinations (PLE) from 2008-2011 are illustrated in table 5.3 below.

**Table 5.3 - The Previous PLE Results of the Urban School, 2008-2011**

5 PLE RESULTS 2008-2011							
YEAR	DIV1	DIV2	DIV3	DIV4	U	X	TOTAL
2008	00	38	19	01	00	00	58
2009	00	59	01	00	00	00	60
2010	08	55	01	00	00	00	64
2011	08	64	00	00	00	00	72

*Source: photographed by researcher from the headteacher's office (school visit on 16/07/2012)*

Division 1 = distinction 1, Division 2 = distinction 2, Division 3 = credit score, Division 4 = a pass, Division U = fail and Division X = a pupil who registered for the examination but did not take it. The figures represent the number of pupils who sat for the examination in the respective years.

Despite this being an urban school, where the majority of pupils come from professional parents, no pupil achieved division 1 between 2008 - 2009. There was only one pupil in division 4, and the majority of pupils were in divisions 2 and 3 which is a good result because

these pupils qualify for first year in secondary education. Moreover, 2010 and 2011 results saw a rise in performance with 8 pupils in division 1 and no pupil performing in division 3. A number of reasons were attributed to this improvement in pupils' results. According to the headteacher extra coaching of primary seven during holidays and early starts (7:30am) of classes for upper primary pupils (P.5-7) were some of the contributing factors. It needs to be acknowledged that for pupils to be able to attend holiday coaching is an indication of parental cooperation in the education of their children in terms of paying additional fees and allowing children to leave domestic responsibilities at home.

This is a clear indication that parents of the urban school seem to care about how well their children perform in school. This is further reflected in the rise in the number of pupils performing well academically and in the steady reduction in the number of pupils not doing so well over the four years. However, what is not clear is the rise in the number of primary seven pupils registered from year in to year. Whether or not it is because of the successive good results or for other reasons, is unclear. The next section presents the school in the semi-rural area.

### **5.2.2. The Semi-Rural Primary School**

#### ***Location***

The semi-rural primary school is located on the east side of Moyo town, approximately 10km away. It is situated near the small trading centre along the Moyo Kampala road. There is a secondary high school (Metu Senior Secondary School) located about 300m east of the school, and the Catholic Church structure where the school was formerly established is also only about 300m west of the school.

#### ***School profile***

From the account of the headteacher (Hand written report, 10/9/2012), the school was started by the Catholic Comboni Missionaries [Italian missionaries also known as Verona Fathers] in 1957. Under this Congregation, the school was meant to serve both as a school and catechumenate for the people of the area, as formal education was not in place at the time. In order to fulfil these two intentions, it was understandably located near the Catholic Church of the now Metu Catholic Parish. The overarching aim of the establishment of the school was to convert the local people to the Christian faith through education. It was started as a girls' school, as during that time mixed schools were not encouraged by the missionaries. Consequently, St. Thomas Aquinas, now known as Lokwa Primary School was established to

educate boys separately from the girls. This school is located to the north side, at a distance of about 1 kilometre. When the education act of 1963 was put in place, the headteacher revealed that the government took over the management of the school from the missionaries. Since then, the management, technical advice, appointment of teachers, payment of teachers' salaries is done by the government. However, in the 1970s, the school started enrolling both boys and girls.

It was first built with a grass thatched roof and mud walls but later it was updated in the 1960s and further in the 1970s to a permanent building with brick walls, cement floors and a tin roof. In 2007, the school relocated to a new site - outside of the mission premises, only about 300m near the former sub-county headquarters. This was due to a lack of space for school development and activities like a football ground. Since the government became the school's new proprietor, there was also pressure from the missionaries to leave the mission area for other church developments. To date, this is what the school looks like with the mountains in the background.



**Photo 5.3 - Children of P.2 waiting to be orally examined in the local language**

*Taken by researcher on 23.7.2012*

Unlike the urban primary school, the semi-rural school is a grade 2 schools, that is, the number of pupils enrolled is less than 700. The headteacher is also a graduate. Usually primary schools in Uganda can be headed by teachers with either grade 3 or diploma teaching qualifications (Grade 5); these are teachers who have attained a Teaching Certificate and a diploma in education from Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs) and the National Teachers Colleges (NTCs) respectively. In recent times, headteachers with a bachelor's degree offer added advantages to a school, but are a rare occurrence in primary schools. This school has gone through different leadership of headteachers: religious personnel and laity (male and female). Currently, the

headteacher is Jacob (pseudonym) and he has a staff of 15 trained teachers, of which 9 are female and 6 male. Generally, the school has been doing fairly well in all its activities both extra-curricular and academics. This is illustrated in table 5.4 below.

**Table 5.4 - The PLE Results of the Semi-Rural Primary School 2008-2011**

Year	DIV 1	DIV 2	DIV 3	DIV 4	DIV X	DIV U	Female	Male	Total
2008	00	09	15	03	01	01	15	14	29
2009	00	22	13	05	-	-	16	24	40
2010	00	22	15	04	-	-	19	22	41
2011	00	24	17	01	-	-	22	20	42

*Source: Headteacher's record*

Unlike the urban primary school, the semi-rural primary school's performance shows some weaknesses. From 2008-2011, the school did not have any pupils passing in division 1. Although there is a steady increase in the number of pupils in divisions 2 and 3, there are few pupils in division 4 and only one failed (division U) in 2008. According to the headteacher's remarks, this is an encouraging result as the majority of pupils obtained divisions 2 and 3, which qualify them for transition to secondary education. As in the urban school, the number of registered pupils increased in successive years.

The language of instruction, as in all other primary schools in Uganda, is English although the recent thematic curriculum introduced in 2007 demands that primary 1-3 should be taught in their local languages, in this case the Ma'di language for primary schools in Moyo district. However, speaking English is emphasised in the 'talking compound' (using illustrated pictures on the walls of the school building from which children can learn). The photograph below captures the Primary 6 class seated under a mango tree labelled, "SPEAK IN ENGLISH" as they are being prepared for a debate. This is a direction meant for children in the whole school to follow, and the headteacher reiterated that the school knows it is important for the children to learn to speak, read and write in the English language since it is the essential medium of teaching and learning at this grade and in their future education. This is indicated in the 'Implementation Strategy for Advocacy of Local Languages in Uganda', which emphasises that "English be taught as a subject from P.1 - 3 and from P.4 – 7, English should become the medium of instruction" (FABE, 2011:4).



**Photo 5.4 - Pupils of P.6 Being Coached by their Teacher under a Mango Tree**  
*Taken by Researcher on 23.7.2012*

The headteacher also reported that there were prominent former students who completed their education in this school, who are doing well either in their private work or as government employees in various sectors, and this includes the researcher. Like the urban school, the semi-rural school seems to be gradually progressing in performance, and the number of registered candidates to primary seven is also rising. According to the headteacher, the pupils require concerted support: home, school and government to enable them to achieve. Although the government capitation grant is an added support, it is too little to make significant changes in the school and in the lives of the pupils. The next section provides a description of the third school which is located in the rural area.

### **5.2.3. The Rural Primary School**

#### ***Location***

The rural primary school is located in the River Nile Valley that separates Gimara sub-county from Adjumani district. It is 64km from Moyo town including its distance from the district education office. There is a grade 1V health centre in the area which means it is served by a doctor and a surgical theatre for minor operations.

#### ***School Profile***

As reported by Leo, the deputy headteacher (hand written report, 19/7/2012), the primary school was started in 1962. The school was first located near the River Nile and later the community of Romogi, Paloke and Paduku clans offered the land which measures approximately 25 acres where it is now permanently built by the government. Like the semi-

rural school, the rural school had to be moved from its former location due to insufficient space for a complete school structure. It was started as a result of a need expressed by the community, precisely because of long distances between the existing school in the area, and the homes of many children who needed to attend primary school. In addition, the problem of flooding of the Poligo stream, which runs between the Catholic mission of Obongi and its current location 4km away, was a major reason for re-establishing the school. When this stream flooded, it prevented children from going to school at Ngungu primary school, now called Aliba primary school. The community decided to start the primary school at that time, headed by the late Kale Jafar (a primary six leaver), which operated from P.1-3 only.

The Government took over the school after independence (1962) in 1965. Currently, the school is headed by a female headteacher who is a diploma holder in education. The school enrolls mixed pupils from primary one to seven (P.1 – P.7) as presented in table 5.5 below:

**Table 5.5 - Enrolment Chart of the Rural Primary School for 2012**

Class	P.1	P.2	P.3	P.4	P.5	P.6	P.7	Total
Boys	73	44	35	42	29	25	22	270
Girls	59	53	37	51	37	18	12	267
Total	132	97	72	93	66	43	34	537

As indicated in table 5.5 above, more boys than girls enrolled in P.1 but between P. 2-4 girls, outnumber boys. The explanation given was that young boys from age eleven tend to be absent from school to tend family animals, engage in petty fishing in the river Nile and are lured by peers who are not attending school. However, the scenario shifts from P.4 -7 where though both numbers of girls and boys decline steadily, that of girls tends to be much higher than of boys. The headteacher reported that at this age (13-16), most girls drop out of school for various reasons ranging from domestic responsibilities (they are old enough to cook and mind children) to early pregnancies leading to unplanned early marriages. The headteacher further explained that the domestic responsibilities affect girls' academic performance as they normally would not have time to engage in their revision as boys would. However, some boys experience a lack of time for school activities outside of school which will be presented in chapter six.

The headteacher remarked that the type of stress some school children experience tends to undermine not only girls' academic competence but especially pupils from low economic backgrounds. In particular, the headteacher noted that fewer and fewer girls and boys manage to complete their primary cycle in this area although girls are more vulnerable than the boys in

a number of aspects. The table below summarises the school profile of the rural primary school.

**Table 5.6 - Summary of the Rural Primary School**

<b>Particulars</b>	<b>Status</b>
Founding Year	1962-5
Founding Body	Parents
School Code	7369
Registration Number	260048
Distance to the Nearest School	3-4km
Distance from District Education Office	64km
School Land	25 Acres
Number of School Management Committee (SMC)	12 (4 female and 8 male)
Number of Parent Teacher Association (PTA)	9 (2 female and 7 male) 8 co-opted members who are P.7 leavers and I grade 3 teacher

*Source: School Deputy Headteacher (6/9/2012)*

### ***School Rules***

The school rules are boldly hand written on a chart in the headteacher's office and this is outlined below.

- Pupils must:
- Attend school daily.
- Follow time.
- Attend assemblies, be in their school uniforms and be smart.
- Be disciplined.
- Take care of school properties.
- Respect teachers.
- Do community work.
- Not fight in the school or outside the school.
- Not smoke or drink alcohol, attend lessons daily, respect staff members and avoid dodging exams.

Overall, the rural primary school is steadily improving both economically and academically. The headteacher added that parents try to contribute in terms of paying money for the monthly exams, food for children in school, some contribute Ush 3,000/=; equivalent of about €1 per month and 9,000/= (€3) per term, plus school development funds. Parents who cannot afford cash bring food items in kind such as cassava. Above all, the allocation of some of the school



plots to telecommunication organisations, such as ATM and Orange has also increased financial support to the school. It enables the school to provide lunch for the upper primary in school and extra tuition during school holidays. According to the headteacher, this has led to improvement in performance and increased enrolment from as little as just over 200 in 2005 to over 500 in 2012. In-school examinations are set every month and pupils are expected to pay. Examinations set at district level for primary seven cost Ush. 5, 000/= (approximately €1.50) per child. But when the examination is set within the school, it costs Ush 2, 500/= (approximately less than €1) per child for the upper primary classes (P. 5 and 6). The lower classes, 3 and 4 pay Ush1, 800/= (less than €1) per child. This amount may appear little but when there is more than one child in the family, some parents are not able to afford to pay. From the headteacher's experience, parents generally, though poor, are willing to contribute financially and that is the hope of the school. He reported that this is a good sign that even poor parents value education for their children.

In summary, all the three schools are government aided, co-education and are under the universal primary education programme. The next section provides the responses from the headteachers' and teachers' questionnaires beginning with the demographical information about them.

### **5.3. Respondents: Headteachers and Teachers**

Headteachers and teachers collectively referred to as educators were considered important respondents in this study. Using intensity sampling, headteachers, teachers, the education officers at district and at the national levels were included because their opinions, views and experiences relative to the phenomena of investigation were considered important (see Chapter 4.4.2). In order to maximise the response rate, semi-structured questionnaires were administered to the participants in their respective schools and places of employment in advance and were collected after two weeks. This method was deemed appropriate for this sample because they are literate, therefore able to read, understand and respond in writing.

#### **5.3.1. Headteachers**

Headteachers were considered important in this study because they are seen as directly accountable to parents and to the Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES) in Uganda. They are the managers for teaching and learning. Not only do they oversee the welfare of the children and teachers in their schools but they are a link between parents and the curriculum, which is associated with the government education policy and they are also teachers of the

children. For these reasons, headteachers are expected to be in a well-informed position to be able to provide detailed information about parents, pupils’ home-backgrounds and to comment on the connection, if any, between parents’ education and literacy skills and their children’s educational achievement. A funnel, sequence type of questionnaire was constructed with only one open-ended question at the end for participants to give, if any, further comments. The first part of the questions were intended to elicit factual information about the participants as presented in the next section.

**5.3.1.1 Headteachers: Biographical Information**

The particulars about the headteachers involved in the study across the three sites are summarised in table 5.7 below.

**Table 5.7 - Particulars about Headteachers in the Three Schools**

Particulars	Urban Headteacher	Semi-Rural Headteacher	Rural Headteacher
Qualification	Graduate (M)	Graduate (M)	Grade 5 (Diploma) (F)
Years in teaching profession	22	22	18
Years of service in this school	7	6 months	7 months
Years as Headteacher	17	17	8
Years as Headteacher in this school	7	6 months	7 months
Reason for becoming an educator	Circumstantial/personal interest	Personal interest	Personal interest

*Source: Questionnaire for headteachers (July, 2012)*

The study considered that all the headteachers studied were well qualified for their responsibilities. As indicated in the table, two were graduates (male) and one was a diploma holder (female). All three had long experience of not less than 18 years in the teaching profession. The reasons for their choice of entering the teaching profession are mixed; two expressed a personal choice but one reported that it was circumstantial which had both political and economically related issues.

### 5.3.1.2 Headteachers: Knowledge about Parents

In this section, headteachers' knowledge, opinions, observations and experiences about the relationship between parents' educational levels and literacy skills, and their children's educational achievement is presented. Using a Likert-type ranking scale under the headings; always, often, rarely and never, headteachers were asked to rank statements provided regarding parental involvement in their children's school work. The results are illustrated in table 5.8.

**Table 5.8 - Headteachers' Knowledge about Parents**

	Parental role	Always	Often	Rarely	Never
1	Ensure that their child goes to school		U S-R	R	
2	Keep track of their child's progress at school		U	S-R	R
3	Meet part of the cost of education		All		
4	Take an active role in monitoring their child's school work			U S-R	R
5	Discuss school progress with their child			U S-R	R
6	Visit school administration to discuss their child's progress at school			All	
7	Provide place and time for their child to study at home			All	
8	Participate in the construction of buildings at school		R	U S-R	
9	Know about their child's friends in and outside of school			U	S-R R
10	Participate in the planning process in the school about how their child should be taught		R	S-R	
11	Provide advice to school administration		U S-R	R	
12	Build healthy parent-teacher alliance		U S-R	R	
13	Contribute towards health facilities in the school		S-R	U	R
14	Participate in maintaining school discipline		U S-R	U R	

Key: U = Headteacher (urban), S-R = Headteacher (semi-rural) and R = Headteacher (rural)

All three headteachers did not cite any activity where parents are 'always' involved in in relation to their children's education. However, they all agreed that parents 'often' pay part of the school fees required. While the headteacher in the urban school did not cite any area where parents 'never' participated in their children's school work, the headteacher in the semi-rural

cited that they ‘never’ know about their child’s friends in and outside of school’. In his view this is an unlikely factor to affect the children’s academic achievement. The headteacher in the rural school cited several areas (five) where parents ‘never’ get involved in their children’s education. According to him, parents in the rural area rarely send their children to school, and as a result they do not tend to build close relationships with school. This data shows that parents in the urban school are more likely to get involved in the education of their children than parents in the rural school. The areas cited as ‘never’ by parents in the rural area, were reported as priority concerns for parents in urban area as these activities are considered central to children’s performance at school. Instead, the activities parents in the rural school are noted as performing ‘rarely’ begin with not sending their children to school, and not building close relationships with the school in terms of visiting teachers to discuss their children’s progress. Subsequently, it was reported that there is little healthy parent-teacher alliances in the rural school as compared to the urban and semi-rural schools resulting in parents not participating in maintaining school discipline.

It is curious to note that the three headteachers concur over issues of monetary responsibilities by the parents. All three expressed that parents often respond to ‘meeting part of the cost of the education of their children’. Paying part of the cost of education by parents is a policy issue as part of Universal Primary Education (UPE) programme (Uganda Education Guidelines, 2008). Although pupils under universal primary education are not expected to pay tuition fees per se, both parents and pupils continue to refer to any additional cash parents pay to school as school fees. These include money paid towards development funds and lunch in schools. Issues related to money recur across the participants’ responses involved in the study. For example, headteachers, teachers, senior community members and the Assistant Commissioner in the Ministry of Education all reported in their interview responses that their own levels of education has helped them to be able to pay the school fees of their children, siblings and other relatives. On a similar note, pupils reported that parents being able to pay their school development funds and lunch fees (school fees) were their top priority, only next to providing school requirements and paraffin for light for their studies at home. It emerged that the underpinning reason is the general low level of living standards in the family households. The search for money was reported as a priority for every family. Regardless of the parents’ levels of education and literacy skills, headteachers noted that all families lack cash to enable their families to live comfortably. They also reported that parents who are government employees earn low and irregular salaries which cannot support their families’ needs. In consequence, the majority of family heads who are employees in the civil society

have either to take on a second job or get involved in agricultural activities in order to supplement money ensuing from their official jobs. The same challenges were reported by the educators in relation to their own financial status. In reference to headteachers and teachers, the senior community member in the rural area argued:

...If teachers take school teaching seriously, she/he will have no time to do something for family's survival. Teachers are expected to report to school by 7:30am, he is either finishing lesson planning, or marking pupils' exercise books, then the actual teaching begins. Before he goes home, he must plan for the next day's lesson. All these activities require time to plan and search because some of the materials are not available so one must look for alternatives for teaching materials... the teacher who probably fulfils these duties must accept and be prepared to starve, and endure instability in his house, because the family members will complain. These are some of the challenges committed teachers face. Either way, one party is at a disadvantage. (Interview, August, 2012)

Teachers' dilemmas, as this participant suggests, seem to be a shared experience which also applied to any civil servant working in any of the three sites of the study in Moyo district. It emerged that with a general low level of income, the majority of parents are not only able to pay the school fees but equally are not able to provide their children with the scholastic materials which have direct impact on children's school achievement. The salary scale for teachers is equally problematic in this regard. This was reported by all three headteachers who cited issues to do with money as the central concern to school administrators, parents and their children. The next section presents responses to the questionnaire that enquires about the relationship between headteachers and parents.

### ***Headteacher's relationship with parents***

As mentioned earlier, headteachers are directly accountable to parents and the Ministry of Education and Sports. They are the managers for teaching and learning. It therefore follows that they see to the welfare of the children and teachers in their schools, and so they are a link between parents and the curriculum which is associated with the government education policy. They are also teachers of the children and therefore, this responsibility of coordination is explored below.

### ***Description of headteacher-parent relationship***

Headteachers were asked to describe their relationship with parents ranging from very good to no relationship. All three headteachers described their relationship with the parents of their pupils as 'good'.

The headteacher in the urban area specifically stated that he communicates with parents through various means such as:

- parental interviews in the headteacher's office;
- mobile telephone;
- parents' meetings, or;
- sending messages verbally through the child.

Similarly, parents in the urban area reported that they communicate to the headteacher through the above means. The headteachers in the semi-rural and rural areas noted only one mode of communicating with parents, and that is by 'sending messages verbally through the child'. Parents in the semi-rural and rural areas reported they communicate to the headteacher verbally through their children. This indicates the limited available resources in these areas as compared to a variety of available resources both for headteachers and parents in the urban area. This is reflected in the number of responsibilities parents, especially in the rural area, are not able to fulfil with regards to the education of their children. It thus becomes questionable whether it is the lack of value parents in the rural school and the of place of education in the lives of their children, or whether their participation in their children's education is limited because of limited resources which in consequence could have a negative impact on their children's performance in school.

### ***The frequency of parents-teacher association (PTA) meetings held in a year***

Headteachers were also asked how many times they hold parent-teacher meetings. This is important because it is during such meetings that parents and school personnel meet to discuss children's academic development and general welfare.

According to the headteacher in the urban school, the PTA meetings are held once a year while in the semi-rural and rural schools they are held once every term, that is, three times a year. There are three terms in the Ugandan primary school calendar so how effective it is for the school in the urban area to hold PTA meetings once a year and three times a year for the semi-rural and rural schools requires further exploration. It is possible that the frequency of meetings could have a bearing on parents' participation in their child's education. In addition, it was noted by the headteacher in the urban school that the majority of parents in the urban area are able to read and write and consequently much of the information pertaining to school in relation to their children is communicated through written information. However, the parents in the semi-rural and rural schools require physical attendance in school and verbal

communication to learn about their children’s progress because, as reported by the headteachers in these sites, the majority of them are not able to read and write. The lack of available resources seem to tally with parents’ levels of education and literacy competencies. The majority of parents in the urban areas as described in chapter three are civil servants or business persons and therefore their responsibilities and profession tend to reflect their general education levels.

***The main issues discussed in PTA meetings***

The headteachers were also asked to list in order of importance the common issues that were often discussed during the PTA meetings. This is to assess parental priority issues in relation to their children in school. The issues discussed in order of importance for each school are provided in table 5.12 below.

**Table 5.9 - Issues often Discussed in PTA Meetings**

Issues Discussed in PTA Meetings		
Urban	Semi-rural	Rural
Academic progress	Daily pupil’s school attendance	Parents’ contribution through development funds
Discipline	Discipline	Termly examination fees
Health	Provision of scholastic material	Monthly feeding fees to the school
Career development	Guidance and Counselling	
Sporting activities	Provision of basic needs of the child (education, health shelter)	

*Source: Questionnaire to Headteachers (July, 2012)*

The major issues discussed in PTA meetings in the urban and semi-rural schools appear to be centred on academics, although in the semi-rural school the headteacher stressed three times the child’s welfare as being a priority for him, while the issues in the rural school appear to be centred on funding. The implications of this are that the children in the urban school seem to be well provided for and the parents seem to be more interested in discussing matters to do with the academics of their children, so matters pertaining to their welfare are not a central concern in the PTA meetings. Similar interest is expressed by parents in the semi-rural school on pupil’s academic development to a degree, but their attention also seems to point to the welfare issues and school requirements of their children. In contrast, the focus of parents’ interest in the rural school tends to be financially oriented as opposed to the interest of parents in the other two schools. Part of the reasons of this could be that the majority of parents in the rural school have a low percentage of employment and so money is hard to find. This means

that parents are not paying school fees as promptly as the parents in the urban and semi-rural schools hence the headteacher's emphasis on this topic. Not paying school fees argues badly for pupils as one pupil in urban F3 family narrated in a face-face interview:

... when my school fees are not paid promptly, I am disturbed, I think too much even in class because any time I can be sent home from school. ... it makes me feel sad when I miss classes. In my school they [teachers] wait till you are sitting for test and teacher comes to call those who have not completed paying their school fees. I tell you, they can even remove the test paper from in front of you even if you had started to write. It can be quite embarrassing - to make other pupils know that your parents did not pay your school fees. (Interview, F3 urban, 24/8/2012)

However, the educators indicated that education is not only about paying the school fees and keeping the child in school. They emphasise that parents need to understand children's education involves, among other things, continuous engagement with the pupils on the part of the parents as much as the teachers. This is amply elaborated in table 5.9 above. Some of these commitments can be seen in parents' involvement by attending PTA meetings organised by the school. This is reflected by parents' attendance in the urban and semi-rural schools (50% - 74%) where their attendance is higher than those in the rural school (25% - 49%).

These percentages would seem to indicate that parents in the urban and semi-rural schools tend to show more interest in talking about the education of their children than those parents in the rural school. Previously it was noted that these categories of parents often come to discuss issues pertaining to their children's academics while the parents in the rural school were concerned about money. The reasons for failing to attend PTA meetings were reported as ranging from 'lack of time', 'lack of interest in school matters', 'fear of money related issues', 'less commitment and influence from community leaders' and 'lack of knowledge about school matters'. It is likely that the latter reason 'lack of knowledge about school matters' may be accounted for by the low percentage of attendance at PTA meetings among the majority of parents with low levels of education and literacy skills (see chapter 6). Much as parents with low levels of education have high aspirations for their children's education, the education officer reported that the majority of them are limited by their lack of understanding of what it means to provide full support to their children's education. If this argument is plausible, it would be interesting to find out how headteachers motivate these stratum of parents to attend PTA meetings at school. The headteachers' efforts were varied as highlighted in table 5.10 below:



**Table 5.10 - Headteachers' Forms of Encouragement/Motivation to Parents**

How Headteachers Encourage Parents		
Urban	Semi-rural	Rural
<p>Invite parents to school Open Days</p> <p>Give prompt feedback on pupil's progress</p> <p>Sustain close parent contacts</p> <p>Visit parents in their homes.</p>	<p>Give positive result on child's progress</p> <p>Invite parents to class meetings, academic days, open days and parents' day in school.</p>	<p>Organise regular meetings to sensitise the community about the importance of the school</p> <p>Invite resource person to talk on the importance of education.</p>

All three headteachers see extending an invitation to parents continuously as a better means of encouraging/motivating parents to engage in their children's school life. It can also forge a way forward for building constructive teacher-parent alliances for concerted efforts for the educational success of their children. In urban and rural schools, it was noted that these efforts have been effective. In the urban school for example, the head teacher reported that when parents turn up for PTA meetings, areas of weaknesses in their children's learning are discussed and improvements have been registered. The headteacher also disclosed that some parents do not turn up to PTA meetings or any other parents' meetings in schools because they think they will be asked to contribute money for one thing or another towards school (Interview, 16th July 2012). But when they realise the meetings have a different agenda other than lobbying for money, they respond to school invitations, hence the relatively high percentage of attendance ranging between 50% - 74% of parents who attend PTA meetings. The headteacher in the rural school reported improvements achieved through parental encouragement as her focus was to educate the community including parents since the majority of them have low levels of education and literacy skills. Improvements as a result included:

- "increased pupils' enrolment";
- "improved pupils' performance", and;
- "improved teacher-community relationships".

Unlike the other two schools, the headteacher of the semi-rural school had not been successful in his efforts to encourage parents to attend PTA meetings and to take a keen interest in their children's schoolwork. Although he attributes this lack of success to his being new to the school (6 months), he acknowledged that there is the likelihood of some parents not being interested in the PTA meetings. However, he reported that there is hope that under sensitisation activities, and that gradually, the situation had started to improve.

### 5.3.1.3 Headteachers: Knowledge about Pupil's Home Background

Headteachers were asked to rate non-school related factors where 1= very important, 2= important, 3=not sure, 4=less important and 5=not at all important in terms of their impact on pupils' performance at school. The ratings of the three headteachers are highlighted in table 5.11 below.

**Table 5.11 - Headteachers' Knowledge about Pupils' Home Background**

No.	Non-school factors	VI	I	NS	LI	NA
1	Health of child	All				
2	Nutrition of child	All				
3	Completed homework	U	S-R R			
4	Family support	U	S-R R			
5	Peer group support in the neighbourhood	U R	S-R			
6	Coming from a good neighbourhood	U R	S-R			
7	Coming from a bad neighbourhood	U	S-R	R		
8	Community support in the pupil's life	U		S-R		R
9	Parental supervision	U R	S-R			
10	Reasonable family income	All				
11	External support (State, LEA and community)	U	S-R R			
12	Parenting style	U R	S-R			
13	Pupils personal interest in school work	All				
14	Parents' education/literacy skills	R	U S-R			

Key: U= urban headteacher, S-R = semi-rural headteacher and R = rural headteacher

The headteachers concurred and rated as very important, the following non-school factors that impact on the pupil's performance in order of importance:

- Health of child;
- Nutrition;
- Family's economic status;
- Pupil's personal interest in school work.

It is reasonable to suggest that if parents have a reasonable level of income, they are likely to provide adequate nutrition and the health of the child is likely to improve. It is interesting to note that the headteachers in the urban and semi-rural schools rated parents' education as 'important' while the headteacher in rural school thinks it is 'very important'. The explanation could point to the fact that the headteacher in the rural school is more exposed to parents with low levels of education as mentioned earlier.

The headteachers portrayed diverse views about whether ‘coming from a bad neighbourhood’ has an impact on the pupil’s educational success. These contrasting views give insight into the life styles in the three sites. In the urban setting, the life-style is diverse as compared to the relatively homogeneous semi-rural and rural communities where anti-social behaviours displayed by children are often checked, controlled and regulated by community and members in the extended family which is a common practice in African societies, and the Ma’di people, in particular. This is a likely practice that may be lacking in the urban setting where families come from diverse backgrounds, hence the headteacher in the urban area rated both ‘good and bad neighbourhoods’ highly as capable of impacting on a pupil’s school success.

### ***Hindering home-based factors***

On a Likert ranking scale where 1= very likely, 2=not likely and 3=makes no difference, headteachers were asked to rate home-based factors which they think are likely to hinder the sixth graders from getting prepared for their primary leaving examination class the following year.

Out of the 10 factors provided, the urban and semi-rural school heads rated at 90% and the headteacher in the rural school rated at 70% the following factors as hindering pupils from continuing to seventh grade:

- frequent absenteeism from school;
- rebellious behaviour by pupil;
- lack of parental supervision;
- ‘don’t-care’ attitude about school by both parents and child;
- peer group that do not have positive attitude to school work;
- a burden of too many domestic responsibilities;
- lack of reading material at home;
- lack of proficiency in the English language;
- parents being educated with literacy skills, and;
- parents not being educated and without literacy skills.

While all the headteachers agreed that the variables listed hinder pupils from getting prepared for their final stage in the primary cycle, the head teachers from urban and semi-rural schools both view that ‘parents education/ literacy skills’ is not a likely hindrance to pupils’ academic development, whereas the rural headteacher indicated in her comment that ‘educated parents may support the child’s education by providing study room and writing materials as he/she is

aware of what is expected of her/him' (questionnaire, August 2012). This was a surprise response and may be understood as that the education of parents is not of primary importance but is an added advantage to the pupils getting prepared for their final examinations. The headteacher in the rural school noted that 'rebellious behaviour by pupils' and 'lack of proficiency in the English language' were not a likely hindrance. This was another deviant response. It may be interpreted to mean that generally in the rural area misconduct by children is handled communally so it is unlikely children in the rural schools display poor behaviour. In contrast, 'rebellious behaviour' among children was reported by both headteachers in the urban and semi-rural area as a hindering factor. While proficiency in the English language was not a likely hindrance in the rural area, it is seen as a problem in the urban and to a lesser extent in the semi-rural areas. For the headteachers of urban and semi-rural schools, speaking the language of instruction outside of school can help pupils practise English which can help them to write and express their ideas in writing their examinations.

#### ***5.3.1.4 Headteachers' Knowledge about External Support to Parents***

Headteachers were asked to state what kind of support, in their view and experience have State, Local Education Authority (LEA), School and Community provided in support of parents in improving pupils' educational achievement in Moyo district. Table 5.12 provides their respective responses.

**Table 5.12 - Headteachers' Views about External Support to Parents**

External groups	Headteachers		
	Urban school	Semi-rural school	Rural-school
State	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formulate policies.</li> <li>• Pay teachers' salaries.</li> <li>• Fund education through UPE.</li> <li>• Educate the community through NGOs.</li> <li>• Construct more classrooms to reduce class sizes.</li> <li>• Construct staff houses so that teachers are nearer the school to avoid late coming to school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Construction of classrooms for learners.</li> <li>• Construction of staff houses.</li> <li>• Provision of core textbooks.</li> <li>• Support supervision through Education Standards Agency (ESA).</li> <li>• Guidelines on education (Education Act, 2008)</li> <li>• Payment of teacher's salaries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Construction of classroom blocks, teachers' houses and latrines.</li> <li>• Payment of UPE funds to school.</li> </ul>
LEA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supervision and monitoring of teaching and learning.</li> <li>• Posting of teachers that cater for subjects taught, e.g. mother tongue (MT) teachers in order to build a strong base in reading and writing.</li> <li>• Formulate local policies, e.g. at what age young people could attend discos and which age bracket should not.</li> <li>• Monitor government policy implementation in schools.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avail funds for educational needs.</li> <li>• Support supervision through DEO's office.</li> <li>• Construction of pit latrines.</li> <li>• Provision of scholastic materials.</li> <li>• Employ trained suitable teachers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support supervision.</li> <li>• Organise refresher courses for teachers.</li> </ul>
School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide conducive environment for pupils</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enrol all school age going children.</li> <li>• Provide support supervision to teachers in schemes and lesson plans.</li> <li>• Guide and counsel learners.</li> <li>• Ensure no absenteeism by both teachers and learners.</li> <li>• Coordinate with all school stakeholders on matters relating to learner's education.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approval of schemes of work by headteachers for teaching and learning</li> <li>• Provide guidance and counselling.</li> <li>• Organise meetings.</li> </ul>
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Send children to school. Build teachers' houses. Attend PTA meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early registration of learners.</li> <li>• Own the school by participating in voluntary work in the school.</li> <li>• Guide and counsel the learners.</li> <li>• Attend school meetings.</li> <li>• Construct teacher's houses.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contribute towards feeding in school.</li> <li>• Attending meetings.</li> <li>• Offering of their land for the school</li> <li>• Sending children to school</li> </ul>

*Source: Headteacher's Questionnaire (July, 2012)*

All headteachers concur that through the local government, the State has the responsibility to construct more classrooms, teachers' houses and sanitary facilities (pit-latrines). They also unanimously expected the local education authority to conduct regular supervision on teaching and learning with feedback to school administration. The headteachers in the semi-rural and rural schools in particular reported that the school needs to ensure teachers' schemes of work and lesson plans are in place. From the community perspective, all headteachers expect concerted efforts that children are sent to school, and active and voluntary participation in matters relating to school business, especially attending school meetings. A request for more land from the community for the school was expressed only by the head in the rural school. The headteachers further noted that State, LEA, Schools and Community could further support parents in raising children's educational achievement by:

- sensitising and ensuring full community involvement through local government;
- reducing teacher : pupil ratio to 1:40 by constructing more classrooms;
- regular funding by prompt release of Poverty Alleviation Funds (PAF) funds; and
- supply of required text and non-text materials to schools by LEA.

The semi-rural headteacher added the following:

- employ all trained teachers and deploy them according to the number of the enrolment and subjects by LEA.
- provide same standard for local ordinance on education by State and LEA;
- rewarding of the best performing candidates by School and LEA;
- paying teachers promptly for their motivation to do more for pupils by State through LEA;
- avoid absenteeism by both teachers and pupils;
- parental monitoring of pupils' activities both at home and in school;
- guidance and counselling must be ensured by all stakeholders;
- parents must provide scholastic materials to the pupils;
- sensitise parents to show positive attitude towards education of the child.
- school administration through the headteacher should carry out close supervision of teaching and learning;
- adequate feeding, especially, lunch should be provided by parents during school hours, and;
- ensure a conducive environment for the learner both at school and at home.

The rural school headteacher added:

- setting monthly examinations, marking and doing corrections with children in school;
- providing study room and writing materials at home by parents, and;
- organising parents' day and class day termly by school.

Clearly, headteachers are concerned about external support to parents. However, their focus tends towards improving the facilities that already exist in the school but are not adequate for use rather than exploring new areas for improvement. For example, among the construction works emphasised were more classrooms, teachers' houses and pit toilets for both teachers and pupils. Moreover, it is of interest to note that the headteacher in the semi-rural school mentioned that he expects the LEA to provide funds for scholastic materials and to provide textbooks, yet there was no mention by any of the headteachers of establishing, for example, a school library where children could read, and where the textbooks could be stored. Yet, in the absence of a library, a hall or even a kitchen store, it was observed that often a classroom is used to accommodate a variety of items such as in the photos below. In most cases these types of arrangement make it difficult to organise, let alone find what a teacher might require for a class at a given time.



**Photo 5. 5 - A multi-storage Classroom in the Semi-rural School**  
*Taken July, 2012*

This way of utilising rooms designated for teaching and learning contradicts the headteachers' call for more classroom construction when in essence what they need are buildings for specific purposes.

It is noteworthy that there is also no mention of constructing a multipurpose hall where children can gather and practice extracurricular activities such as music, drama, debate, educational quizzes or group work. Most of these activities are done outdoors and as reported, are often jeopardised by bad weather conditions. It could be argued that if a hall was constructed, some of the extracurricular activities with the exception of football, netball and athletics could run uninterrupted as planned instead of being restricted by weather conditions. As observed, the reality in the three schools is that there is no hall, store, kitchen, tool room or library, in any of them. Classrooms serve to accommodate every item in which order and neatness lacks. In this kind of situation what has been happening to date is that text and scholastic materials get destroyed either by rough handling or pests such as termites or rats which often take advantage of unsupervised corners of any space in the warm tropical climate such as in Moyo district. The result is a shortage of academic material which subsequently impacts on pupils' performance at school.

Furthermore, in the home-based factors that affect pupils' learning presented in table 5.11 all three headteachers reported the health and nutrition of the children as being very important. Therefore, one would expect some suggestions towards how pupils' health could be taken care of when in school in terms of, for example, employing a nurse for the school who could be

paid by government but there was no such suggestions. In photo 5.1, the majority of the children seated on the ground did not have footwear to protect them from teeming parasitic attacks or injuries within or outside of school but no suggestion was made in this direction either by the headteachers. In the case of nutrition, it was reported that the majority of the children leave home without breakfast and some cannot go home during lunch time because of long distances or parents not being at home, therefore there is no likelihood of lunch at home as reported by the headteacher in the semi-rural school. Although some of these schools provide lunch at school, for example, the rural school, this is 'available only for the upper classes P.5-7 and the younger children are left without food (Interview, rural headteacher, 19th August, 2012). Again, it is surprising that none of the heads mentioned this in their list of possible supports that could be extended to their school.

### **5.3.2. Teachers as Respondents**

The data from the questionnaires administered to classroom teachers in the same three schools is presented under the following headings.

1. Teachers' biographical information.
2. Teacher's relationship with pupils.
3. Teachers' knowledge about pupil's home background.
4. Teacher's knowledge about parents supporting their children.

Teachers are in direct communication with children. This occurs on a day-to-day basis, for example, in the school context and particularly through classroom interaction. Therefore, they can often be seen as more knowledgeable about individual pupils' academic progress and potential than the headteachers. Teachers are also a link between the headteacher, parents, and the pupils. For this reason, they are considered in a better position to provide information about the academic strengths and weaknesses of the children. More so, teachers may also be able to identify some of the factors that hinder children from performing well in class and able to report on pupils' home backgrounds pertaining to support at home. Table 5.13 presents the particulars about the P.6 teachers involved in the survey.



**Table 5.13 - Primary Six Class Teachers' Professional Details**

Particulars	Urban school P.6 teacher	Semi-Rural school P.6 teacher	Rural school P.6 teacher
Qualification	Grade 5 (Diploma)	Grade 3 (Certificate)	Grade 3 (Certificate)
Years in teaching profession	7	7	3
Years of service in this school	7	6	3
Reason for becoming an educator	Personal interest	Circumstantial	Personal interest

*Source: Questionnaire for Teachers (July, 2012)*

Like the headteachers, three teachers were involved; one male from the urban and another male from the semi-rural school and one female from the rural school. The least level of qualification for teaching in primary schools in Uganda is a grade three certificate (Uganda Education Guidelines, 2008). From the table above, the urban teacher is the only one with a diploma. This could indicate the high expectations placed on teachers by relatively, educated parents in the urban area as compared to the teachers in the semi-rural and rural schools, who have certificate qualifications. Two reported that their choice of teaching profession is personal although questionnaire responses revealed that the majority of the headteachers and teachers took on teaching as their profession because it was a cheaper option than compared to attending a high school which could lead to University or other higher levels of training. For this reason, some educators indicated that their career choices have been directly or indirectly influenced by their parents, mainly based on economic related issues.

This subsequently may affect their level of commitment to teaching and learning of the children. This leads us to explore the teachers relationship with their pupils in the next section.

### **5.3.2.1 Teachers' Relationship with Pupils**

Teachers were asked to give their opinion about their relationship with their pupils. The three teachers had varying lengths of time teaching the P.6 class (see table 5.12). Generally, these experiences are considered adequate for the teachers to know their pupils.

#### ***Number of times teachers give homework to pupils***

When asked how often they assigned homework to pupils, the teacher (urban school) said he gives pupils homework four times a week while the teachers in the semi-rural and rural

schools both said they give it once a week in one subject area. Taking into consideration that P.6 class is a semi-candidate class, and they are examined on four subjects, namely English, Maths, Science and Social Studies (SST), assigning pupils homework once a week could mean each subject gets an assignment once a month. There are three months in a term so that means in a term, a pupil gets homework in a particular subject once a term. For children who require much more practice in reading and writing in the English language which is not often spoken at home, getting homework once a week and once a term per subject seems to be very little. Whereas, with the teacher in the urban setting who gives homework four times a week, there is a chance of children working on one subject at least every week and one day in a week for general correction at school with the teachers as reported. From the data provided, it appears that in the urban school, there is a concerted effort made by the teacher (diploma holder) to engage pupils more in their academic activities than those in the semi-rural and rural schools (certificate holders). This scenario raises a question on whether or not the level of teachers' qualifications matters in effective teaching but this is beyond the focus of this thesis.

### ***Reasons why pupils do not complete their homework***

In relation to the non-completion of homework, the teachers' respective responses were as follows:

- a) The urban teacher stated that children do not complete their homework in time and the reasons given were:
  - problem of light (no electricity);
  - late supper, and;
  - child labour.
- b) The teacher in the semi-rural school reported that children sometimes finish their homework on time but sometimes not. The reasons for not completing homework were:
  - not enough time at home to do the homework.
  - arriving home tired due to long distance from school
- c) The rural teacher reported that children do not complete their homework despite being it only given once a week. The reasons were:
  - overwork at home;
  - no room to study at home;
  - lack of paraffin for night studies (problem of light), and;
  - negative attitude towards studies.

Two major problems that have emerged as hindering children from completing their homework were, too many domestic chores, and a lack of conducive space and light for studying at home. It was observed that the burden of domestic chores rest on children across the different socio-economic categories of families: F1, F2 and F3. This can be explained in the light of their various economic activities. The well-off families (F1) in this study normally have parents who worked away from home and so their children have to fill in the gap for parents in terms of preparing food, minding children and taking care of the family animals after their return from school. For the parents with average education levels and low income (F2), it was found that they do not have fixed jobs because they are not qualified in any profession so their work is sporadic and uncertain. Like the employed parents, except that their work is not permanent, these groups of parents are taken away from home for many hours or days and the P6 children have to cater for the survival of the family at home. Finally, the less educated parents (F3) have only the option of engaging in working in the fields, carrying out petty trades or fishing in the waters of the Nile for their families' survival. Similarly, these activities take parents away from home for most of the day, at least 8-12 hours before they return home. Equally, their children from day primary schools have to carry out the house chores after returning from school.

Only the teacher in rural school stated that some pupils have a negative attitude towards their studies. In her view, this could be attributed to a lack of role models in the area to encourage them towards schooling. Although parents are expected to sign pupils' homework to indicate their engagement with children's school activities, the rural teacher reported that the parents do not assist their children in doing their homework. Consequently, 'pupils face multiple challenges at home that do not support schools' efforts in realising pupils' academic full potential' (Rural Teacher Questionnaire, 19th July 2012). This issue was widespread and the urban teacher revealed that:

we [teachers] request parents to sign the child's completed homework but majority don't do and children are also lazy. Some pupils prefer to do their homework at school instead of home because at home there is housework and no light to study by night. (Interview, urban teacher, 16.7.2012)

It is understandable that if parents are poor or uneducated, they are not able to sign their children's books. But the urban teacher noted that the clever children themselves know that doing their homework at school is perhaps better than bringing it home for at least three obvious reasons; parents are unable to help them, domestic responsibilities takes up their time and there may be no light for doing homework after supper.

Despite parents being not able to assist their children academically, some of the children were reported as being part of the problem as indicated above. The rural teacher reported that some pupils could get help from their elder brothers and sisters but they simply do not ask for assistance.

Teachers were then asked how they motivate their pupils, and they reported different ways of motivating pupils to do their homework. These included:

- correcting and awarding of marks in percentage form and placing it in the classroom (urban teacher).
- guiding and counselling pupils on academic matters (urban teacher).
- marking and giving feedback to pupils and parents (semi-rural teacher).
- encouraging pupils to have a timetable at home, and guiding and counselling pupils (Rural Teacher Questionnaire, 19<sup>th</sup> July 2012).

There were only two out of the nine pupils involved in this study who had study timetable at home. Celine (F1) had her timetable pinned in their living room for the whole family to see and act as a reminder to her. Dina (F3) in the semi-rural family sellotaped her timetable in their sleeping room (not part of the family house). According to the teacher (rural school) who raised the issue, placing the study timetable in the family living room allows parents to know their child's activities and thereby be able to monitor and remind the child to attend to their homework and studies. Whereas, it is rather unlikely for parents to ascertain their child's adherence to his/her timetable when it is placed in a separate sleeping place outside of the family house, as is the case with Dina. This problem was later confirmed through parents' interview responses.

Overall, teachers' relationship with pupils in school was reported as being good (Teacher Questionnaire, 19th July 2012) although the number of times homework is given appears inadequate. They have noted the challenges pupils face in their home background, and this is further discussed in the next section.

### **5.3.2.2. Teachers' Knowledge about Pupils' Home Background**

Teachers were asked to give their opinion about pupils' home backgrounds by rating the issues affecting pupils where 1= very important, 2 = important, 3 = not sure, 4 = less important and 5 = not at all important. The variables were:

1. health and nutrition

2. home assignment
3. punctuality
4. peer group support
5. home literacy environment
6. parental involvement

All three teachers from the three different schools rated home literacy environment and parental involvement as ‘very important’ variables influencing pupils’ school achievement. While peer group support was reported as ‘important’ by all three teachers, health/nutrition and home assignment were rated as ‘very important’ by teachers in the semi-rural and rural schools even though both teachers previously stated they give assignments to children only once a week.

***Teachers’ views about factors hindering pupils from getting prepared for PLE***

On a ranking scale where 1=often, 2= seldom, 3=rarely and 4=never teachers were asked to rate their opinion regarding reasons why pupils fail to get prepared for their primary leaving examinations (PLE). The reasons listed were:

1. pupils not paying attention in class;
2. disciplinary problems;
3. lack of parental supervision;
4. peer groups that do not have a positive attitude to school work;
5. rebellious ‘don’t-care’ attitude to school, and;
6. domestic responsibilities
7. The responses of the teachers are presented in table 5.14 below.

**Table 5.14 - Factors Hindering Pupils from Getting Prepared for PLE**

<b>Ratings</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Seldom</b>	<b>Rarely</b>	<b>Never</b>
Urban teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Disciplinary problems</li> <li>•Lack of parental supervision</li> <li>•Domestic responsibilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Rebellious ‘don’t care’ attitude to school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Peer groups that do not have positive attitude to school work.</li> <li>•Pupils not paying attention in class</li> </ul>	-
Semi-rural teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Lack of parental supervision</li> <li>•Peer groups that do not have positive attitude to school work.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Domestic responsibilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Pupils not paying attention in class</li> <li>•Disciplinary problems</li> <li>•Domestic responsibilities</li> </ul>	-
Rural teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Lack of parental supervision</li> <li>•Peer groups that do not have positive attitude to school work</li> <li>•Rebellious ‘don’t-care’ attitude to school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Domestic responsibilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Pupils not paying attention in class</li> <li>•Disciplinary problems</li> </ul>	-

*Source: Teachers’ questionnaires (July 2012)*

The teachers were unanimous about their opinion that ‘lack of parental supervision’ is ‘often’ a reason for pupils not getting prepared for their primary examinations. While disciplinary problem feature among the top reasons for the teacher in the urban school, this is a ‘rare’ factor in the semi-rural and rural schools, and instead peer groups that do not have a positive attitude to school work occupies the ‘seldom’ position. This can be explained in two ways. Firstly, in the urban area, disciplinary problem are increasingly becoming an issue through the creation of what are seen as bad neighbourhoods in the town, including events with adults involved in anti-social behaviours such as drinking, abusing each other and fighting, which it was reported (Headteacher, urban, 17th July 2012) children witness on a daily basis. Children tend to assimilate these behaviours and try them out later. Secondly, peer groups in the semi-rural and rural areas play an important role in the lives of children because most out-of-school activities, such as grazing animals, fishing and hunting birds tend to be collective activities as it was reported (Headteacher, semi-rural, 23rd July 2012), which town children are not able to engage in. As a result, apart from parental supervision, the emphasis of the teacher in the urban school tends to be quite different from the teachers in the semi-rural and rural schools. However, domestic responsibility is also rated as ‘often’ by the urban teacher and ‘seldom’ for the other two teachers. This report tends to correlate with that of the headteachers who also reported that the domestic responsibilities parents place on children hinder their commitment to school.

### 5.3.2.3 Teachers' Knowledge about Parents

On a Likert's ranking scale, where 1= always, 2= often, 3=rarely and 4=never, teachers were asked to rate their views on the following statements regarding parental involvement in children's school work.

**Table 5.15 - 15 Teachers' Knowledge about Parents**

No.	Parental role	1	2	3	4
1	Ensure that their child goes to school			All	
2	Keep track of their child's progress at school			All	
3	Visit you to discuss their children's work		U	S-R	R
4	Know about their children's friends			U	S-R R
5	Have a positive attitude about their children's schooling	S-R	R	U	
6	Provide a place and time for their child to study at home			All	

Key: U= teacher (urban), S-R = teacher (semi-rural) and R = teacher (rural)

The three teachers were varied in their opinions about parents. Only the teacher in the semi-rural setting noted parents as 'always' having a positive attitude about their children's education. This suggests there are parents who do not have positive attitudes towards the education for their children. This suggestion is confirmed when all three agreed that parents 'rarely' carry out activities 1, 2, and 6. The urban school teacher also added factors 4 and 5 as 'rarely' practiced by parents. Activity 4 received a 'never' response from the semi-rural and rural teachers. For the rural teacher, parents 'never' visit her to discuss their children's school progress. This highlights the lack of parental engagement as exemplified in activities 1 and 2 which are central to children's academic progress.

Consequently, there was a general view among the P.6 teachers who participated in the study that parents are not actively involved in their children's schoolwork. This was felt more in the rural and the semi-rural schools while the parents in the urban school tended to show more interest in their children's school activities. Again, this data correlates with the headteachers' views on parental support to their children's education corresponding to their levels of education.

Overall, the schools explored were all government aided operating under the universal primary education programme. They all had qualified headteachers and teachers. Even though their

academic standard is not excellent, there is steady improvement noted in all three schools. However, reports from headteachers and teachers showed that due to pressing household factors such as commitments and activities related to their family's survival, parents in all socio-economic categories seem to lack close supervision and monitor their children's academic progress. These inadequate parental supports to children included both academic and material, which often led to subjection of children to domestic chores that tended to undermine their commitments to school activities. This would partially explain why pupils are not able to complete homework regularly. However, some pupils were also reported by teachers as being responsible for not accomplishing school tasks because they failed to ask for assistance at home. Teachers therefore, called for further external support to parents which can enable them to give more time and support to their children. But before presenting data on potential external supports to parents, the next section presents interview responses from all of the participating educators in this study, regarding the specific issues of parental support to primary school going children in the Moyo district. This section is deemed important because participants were also asked to draw on their experience as parents, and on their own parents from the previous generation as compared to this generation.

#### **5.4. Interviews with Educators**

In addition to questionnaire data, this study also adopted the interview technique to elicit more detailed responses from participants on a one-to-one basis through verbal questioning (Sarantakos, 2005). In this study, all of the educators (n=8) involved: headteachers, teachers, district education officer and one education deputy commissioner from the national level were asked the same questions. The interviews were conducted in their respective work places and lasted between 30-45minutes (see table 4.4) and box 5.1 below (appendix 7), for the list of questions. As Kitwood (1980:47) said, 'for a proper account of values it is vital to understand the social context in which meaning is found'. Thus, in investigating parents' role in the education of their children it was felt appropriate to conduct interviews with key stakeholders, in particular drawing opinions, experiences and observations from those who administer to their children in the formal education system. Educators were also asked to offer their views about their own parents in retrospect, yet addressing the same current issues. The interview was guided by the following questions in box 1.



### Box 5.1 - Interview Guide for Senior Community Members

In your opinion, is there a difference in having educated parents in relation to the nature of their involvement in the education of their children in primary school?

What roles, if any, do you think parents with different levels of education and literacy skills play in their children's education?

Did your parents value education? *Tell me how.*

\*Were your parents as educated as you are (more or less)?

\*Did they influence your choice of career? *Tell me how.*

\*To what extent, in your opinion, did your own parents influence your education and career?

Please, talk to me a little about how your education. Has it made any difference in your own family, in what ways?

In what ways do you suggest pupils and their parents could be helped, and by whom to improve children's educational achievement in school?

Can you give any other comments in relation to the relationship between parents' education/literacy skills and their children's achievement in Moyo district?

The numbers in asterisk (\*) were exclusively for educators while the others were administered for both parents and senior community members.

#### 5.4.1. Data from Educator Respondents

The following sections report the data in accordance to these ten questions.

The first question explored educators' opinions, views and experiences about whether there is a difference or not in having parents with education and literacy skills and parents with little or no formal education and literacy skills in relation to the nature and strategies of parental support to children's education in primary schooling.

**Table 5.16 - Educators' Responses to Question 1 above**

Respondent	Response
Deputy Education Commissioner	Yes, definitely the education of parents has an influence on the education of the child.
District Education Officer	A big difference
Headteacher urban	Great difference
Headteacher Semi-rural	Lots of difference
Headteacher rural	Great difference
Teacher urban	Very slight difference
Teacher semi-rural	There is a difference
Teacher rural	There is a difference

All of the educators, albeit to different degrees, acknowledge that there is difference in having parents who are educated than those who are not educated in relation to the support to they can provide in the education of their children.

In response to the question addressing the roles parents play according to the different levels of their education/literacy skills, the educators reported the following.

The national Deputy Commissioner for primary education suggested that:

...the literate parent would want his/her children also to be educated;  
knows the value of education;  
knows the challenges they themselves went through during their school times and they can share that with their children;  
have responsibilities in government and so they have salary and caters for the family, so children notice this link and they get inspired to pursue education, and;  
they are admired in society and so the children also grow up admiring their own parents. (Interview, 18/09/2012)  
Thus, he concluded, 'it is this exposure which positively influences the learning of the child. All in all the education of the parents has a great role to play in the education of the child'. (Interview, 18/09/2012)

Thus, he concluded, 'it is this exposure which positively influences the learning of the child. All in all, the education of the parents has a great role to play in the education of the child' (Interview, 18.09.2012).

In addition, the local district education officer emphasised the parental choice of schools for their children relative to their levels of education and literacy skills when he reported:

... because educated parents value education of their children so much, they provide for their needs; nutrition and monitor their activities and send them to the best schools possible. In fact, most of our educated parents in Moyo send their children to school in the south [*major urban centre*] where education services are better and those schools request parents to attend monthly meetings. These parents take the trouble of moving all the way from Moyo to visit their children in those schools [over 500 km] in the major towns as required. (Interview, 20.07.2012)

Correspondingly, the headteachers expressed the following as attributes of educated parents who have adequate literacy skills. Beginning with the urban headteacher, that educated parents tend to:

- have more organised homes that are conducive to reading at home;
- value education;
- their children have higher expectations and this give them the impetus to go further with education than the children of the uneducated parents who are often characterised by dropping out of school before completing primary education;
- guide children to build higher ambition for achievement;
- have vision for the future of their children;
- care about children's health;

- children get guidance from parents through home work;
- family support is wholesome (welfare, scholastic materials and financially);
- have influence on neighbourhoods;
- activities at home are formative and educative than those in slum areas (interview, urban headteacher, 22.7.2012).

The semi-rural headteacher added that educated parents:

- know the impact of having children who are educated, and;
- monitor their children's progress in school (interview, 23.7.2012), and;

the headteacher of rural primary school reported that educated parents:

- have an interest in telling their children about the importance of education;
- monitor the activities of their children;
- follow up what their children are doing – right or wrong – at home and in school;
- give guidance to their children;
- support their children materially, and;
- show more responsibility about the education of their children, for example by attending school meetings and contributing financially to school on time (interview, 19.7.2012).

She further reported that parents' role in the education of their children is visible through how parents struggle to send and maintain children in school as she noted:

... parents struggle to ensure children go to school. They begin to save money for sending their children to school...do extra agricultural activities to raise money for supporting their children's education. (Interview, headteacher, rural, 19.8.2012)

On one level, it is possible to argue that while all these views are positive, to a large extent they tend to be more theoretically based citing few concrete examples, rather than the comments provided by the district education officer. However, additional reports from other participants are likely to validate these claims, as we shall see from the responses from classroom teachers below.

#### 5.4.2. Teachers' Responses about Educated Parents

Teachers' views on whether or not there is a difference in primary children having educated or uneducated parents in relation to their school achievement, are not so different from the headteachers.

Interestingly, the teacher in the urban school first stated that there is 'very slight difference' in having educated or not educated parents depending on their attitudes. While he noted that educated parents would have an interest in education, telling children about the importance of education, he acknowledged that children may have the same intelligence regardless of their parents' education. Therefore, they may perform either well or poorly. However, the teacher also noted that there is more to innate intelligence; hence, his additional view that 'if the parents are educated, the child may perform better because, parents would be able to monitor and explain school related matters to the child' (interview, 16.7.2012).

The teachers from semi-rural and rural schools both concurred with the other educators and their fellow teacher in the urban school that there is a difference in having educated parents. For instance, the semi-rural school teacher stated that there is difference 'because educated parents know the importance of education, they support their children in all areas of their education' (interview, 22.7.2012). The teacher in the rural school also added that there is difference because parents with 'academic knowledge would wish their children to have education both formal and informal'.

In response to question 2 about what role parents play in their children's education based on their levels of education, the urban teacher outlined the following as attributes of educated parents:

...parents' education and literacy skills play a very big role in their children's education: financially, materially, socially, health wise, educationally and even spiritually. (Interview, urban teacher, 16.7.2012)

The urban teacher elaborated his points in the following way.

*Financially:* parents who are educated can bring their children to a clinic where they are able to pay for the treatment of their child while the poor and uneducated parents are not able to afford the cost of clinics for the treatment of their children.

*Materially:* educated parents are more able to provide their children with the scholastic materials and for the welfare of their children better than the uneducated parents. This is not

say the less educated do not care about their children but it is more to do with income issues. The majority of educated parents have regular jobs therefore are salaried while the undedicated do not have regular jobs.

*Socially:* educated parents tend to socialise more freely than uneducated parents. The latter are isolated, they tend to be more preoccupied with their own activities such as fieldwork, and they have a fear of interacting with other people. This point correlates with reports from headteachers (urban and rural) and the district education officer.

*Health wise:* most parents in the locality are very poor and the hospital services are very poor so educated parents know what to do in this kind of situation, for example, they can remind children to brush their teeth, comb hair, and keep clean.

*Education:* educated parents have a choice to take their children to a good school while the poor uneducated parents have no choice but to put their children in low cost schools like UPE schools. Currently in Moyo district there is strike in UPE schools by teachers because of low pay which does not affect Private Schools. In the end, children in the UPE Schools suffer indirectly the consequences of poor provision for teachers.

*Spiritually:* educated parents tend to go to church with their children. Uneducated parents rarely do so; they leave children to go to church alone and rarely advise them. He also added that ‘when parents introduce and encourage spiritual desire in their children, there is significant change in behaviour and children’s performance improves. ... a boy who was badly behaved and his performance equally were low. Eventually, developed interest in church activities after he joined altar services. I noticed a great change in his behaviour, and his performance in class did improve’ (Interview, urban teacher, 16/7/2012). In his view, parents with low levels of education are inclined to spend most of their time in the fields cultivating and children are not supervised.

In the semi-rural school the teacher concurred by saying that educated parents ‘provide for children both materially and for the welfare of the children’ (Interview, semi-rural teacher, 23.7.2012). He added that when a child has problems at home she/he cannot perform at school. Further asked if he had come across such a child in his class, he confirmed:

... yes, there is a girl in the class whose ‘parents are unconcerned. Even when she is not well, the parents don’t care. She does not come for classes regularly; may be once in a week and she lacks scholastic materials; exercise books, pens, rubber, etcetera (Interview, semi-rural teacher, 23.7.2012)

The poor parental attitude towards children's education and how it impacts on the school going child as reported by the other educators is demonstrated in this example. This teacher showed responsibility when he reported that he took a step further by inviting this pupil's father to meet him, but he never turned up. Not giving up, the teacher further reported personally visiting this child's home but failed to meet with the father, and only through further inquiries he later learnt that:

... this pupil [girl] does not have a mother. All the domestic work: cooking, collecting firewood etc... at home rests on her. I have tried to invite him through the pupil but he never turned up (Interview, semi-rural teacher, 23.7.2012)

This example offers a complex weave of problems; first, an illiterate father, separated from his wife, insecure family income and so the child is charged with assuming the family's domestic responsibilities at this tender age at primary six level. Headteachers and education officers also previously cited examples, which highlight the same barriers to pupils through heavy domestic chores. It was also confirmed during home visits that girls, more often than boys were engaged in domestic responsibilities which were detrimental to their academic career.

The teacher in the rural school further highlighted such endemic problems which pupils experience in the hands of their less educated parents when she reported:

... on the other hand, the majority of uneducated parents have certain attitudes, for example, when they consider you are mature, like a teenager, they expect you to be ready for marriage. Girls, especially are taken as sources of wealth because of the dowry their fathers receive after marrying them. For boys they would tell them to get married so that they take care of the home. Parents go so far as preparing dowry for their son's wife instead of using that money for paying school fees. (Rural teacher, 19.7.2012)

This is evidence of the cultural norms of the Ma'di people, and the prevalent low living standards. It compels parents to do seeming injustices on one level to their children in order to ensure the sustainable survival of the next generation. Normally, the dowry (cattle, goats and money) realised after a daughter's marriage is often used to marry a wife for the son in the family. In the case where the family does not have sons, then the father is likely to use that wealth to get a second wife in attempts to beget a son. As one participant stated, 'sending their children to early forced marriages because they see their children as sources of wealth and labour' (Interview, Deputy Commissioner, 18.9.2012).

In the end, it was acknowledged by all that these practices inevitably affect the children's education.

Further responses reported by educators about the impact of less educated parents include the following observations by educators:

...the illiterate parents instead remark, in Luganda ‘na soma wa’ in other words, ‘I did not get education, but are you not feeding? Can’t I support you? So education is not necessary. (Interview, Deputy Commissioner, 18.9.2012)

As a result, participants noted that such parents are less likely to be enthusiastic in terms of encouraging their children to go to school.

Other views expressed point to child labour at home in relation to less/uneducated parents:

.... They overwork their children with fieldwork (in the ‘shambas’)... in the rainy season - hah, first, you plant the beans tend the cows, tough; and they usually say... “I did not go to school yet I am able to cater for you and family”. (Interview, Deputy Commissioner 18.9.2012)

These kinds of attitude from parents, according to him, often lead to high school dropout rates especially for girls. In this way, the illiterate parents were seen as responsible for high rate of children dropping out of primary schools. He argued that because these parents tend not to value education, it is not good for the education of children. For example, he cited that in North Eastern part of Uganda, there is a tradition of youth circumcision involving genital mutilation, which has caused a lot of damage to young girls and dangerous practices, which often force them out of school. He concluded that illiteracy is very dangerous to the education of children and that the families involved in this exercise are mostly the illiterate (Interview, Deputy Commissioner 18.9.2012)

At a district level, the education officer (DEO) added that less/uneducated parents tend to ‘shy off from following up the performance of their children and also fail to provide for their nutritional needs’ (Interview, DEO, 20.7.2012). When probed as to why these parents have such attitudes, he responded:

...why? Well most of these parents are not well off, they are doing badly economically. After failing in education and in life themselves, they do not see much value in their children getting education. I think the biggest weakness in Moyo district is lack of role models. The majority of educated are not employed because of the defects in the economy. (Interview, 20.7.2012)

The DEO appears to have highlighted the notion of the intergenerational transmission of illiteracy, helplessness and poverty instead of education, wealth and success in life.

Headteachers reported similar concerns about illiterate parents, who they suggest:

- do not set high expectations in their children ;

- have weak family support (urban);
- have morbid attitude to education, ‘I did not go to school but I survive’ hence they use children as labourers in the fields and taking care of the family animals even during school times (headteacher, rural, 19.7.2012).

However, she added, ‘this negative attitude is gradually disappearing as parents witness in their surrounding the difference having educated persons in the family makes in the lives of people’ (Interview, headteacher, rural, 19.8.2012).

The semi-rural headteacher further added:

... there is still the negative view among some uneducated parents who dare express, “after all even though I am not educated I can still keep myself up-to-date”. Parents with this kind of views exhibit negative attitude to education, especially towards their girls that is why government has enforced basic education for all children of school age to go to school.

To elaborate on this point one headteacher broached an example of a defilement case:

... when young people at primary level (P.4 - 7) get involved in sexual relations, according to the law, the boy/man responsible must go to prison. However, parents prefer to force their girl to the boy/man as wife instead of bringing the case to law. This is because their interest is not in the child but in the customary dues attached after giving this girl into marriage, often such dues are paid to the girls’ parents so parents decide to keep quiet over defilement cases and endeavour to settle the matter traditionally at home instead. This is a way of using the girl child as sources of wealth rather than valuing education for their future life. (Interview, headteacher, semi-rural 23.7.2012)

The headteacher further noted another area where less educated parents are not supportive of their children in school due to a lack of knowledge about education policies. One of this relates to misunderstandings about the UPE programme:

... parents, particularly the illiterate have huge misconception about the UPE programme. The general feeling towards the education of their primary age going child is, ‘even if you don’t go to school or fail, I am not the one paying your school fees, it is the government’. (Interview, semi-rural headteacher, 23.7.2012)

Although it was made clear that the government would only pay the school fees and parents should contribute by providing the scholastic materials including uniform, pens, pencils books, school bags lunch and so on, the headteacher noted:

... but because the parents do not make this contribution directly to schools, they feel reluctant about their role in the UPE programme. Simply because parents are not paying school fees, some parents among the illiterate do not even bother about the essential needs of their children’s schooling. There is huge reluctance in following up their children’s school progress. (Interview, semi-rural headteacher, 23.7.2012)



Generally, all of the educators reported that the education of parents matter for the educational success of their children. They also stated why they thought less educated parents are not as capable but that attitudes are gradually shifting towards accepting education as a good asset. Taking the path of culture and history, educators were asked, in their opinion to what extent did their own parents influence their education and profession (Qn. 3).

In retrospection, educators reported about the roles their own parents played in their education. This discussion is meant to facilitate a comparison of what parents did for their children a generation or two ago to the present time.

Out of the 8 educators consulted, only one, the district education officer who reported that his parents were qualified primary teachers, while all seven reported that their own parents did not have high levels of education. The low levels of their parents' education ranged between P. 2 – P. 6 and some, especially their mothers did not attend any formal education. However, these parents in different ways, according to the educators valued education for their children. Here are some excerpts to illustrate their opinions.

The national Deputy commissioner for Primary Education recalls:

... I must also acknowledge the contribution of my parents though none lived to enjoy the fruits of their labour. Mum, helped me prepare teaching aids. These materials; banana fibre, bark-clothes, cutting counters helped me so much in my teaching practice. Father also helped me by giving me money after I worked in his garden. I needed the money for buying bed sheets, transport, and uniform. Teachers' Colleges did not charge school fees but you needed some money to cater for these personal effects. (Interview, 18.9.2012)

In this reflection, parents' hard work and domestic responsibilities on children are apparent.

The district education officer (DEO) concurred but at a different level:

... My own parents valued education, they were teachers so they used to make sure we did our homework besides our daily routine work. It was not possible to go to school and remain idle thereafter. We did night preps while they were doing their lessons or marking. (Interview, DEO, 20.7.2012)

From the DEO's response, there is proactive involvement of his parents. They monitored, instructed, ensured children did their schoolwork and were more importantly exemplary by engaging in literacy related activities themselves at home. According to him, all nine in the family succeeded in their education though stopped at different levels.

In the same vein, headteachers acknowledged similar contributions from their parents even though they were not as highly educated. For example, one headteacher recalls:

... at home, my father was a disciplinarian, the way he groomed us: law-abiding citizens. None of us has ever slept in the police cell and because of that family background I think that might have contributed to my further education and performance as a headteacher... My father, who stopped in P.6 joined the army and also taught in an elementary school but because of his vision he was able to educate us (Urban headteacher, 22.7.2012).

When asked what in his view sparked that vision in his father, he said it is:

... because he had seen that the future for him and his children depended on the level of education of the children. My mother was a P.2 leaver, after attending catechumen classes she did not continue but she was supportive in our education; brewed beer, prepared meals and attended to our daily needs. (Interview, Urban headteacher, 22.7.2012)

In the semi-rural school, the headteacher reported:

...Dad remained in P.2 and mum never attended any formal school. She died leaving me a young child. It was dad, who brought us up. We were six in the family, and if not because of financial constraints, we would have gone far with education. The least educated in the family stopped in P.5, and that is my sister as she was the older girl, 4<sup>th</sup> in the family. After the death of our mother she had to take over the care in the house and that is why she remained in P.5. (Interview, semi-rural headteacher, 23.7.2012)

Equally, the headteacher in the rural primary school recalls a similar scenario with her parents:

... Yes, they [parents] valued education, they sent me to school and that's why today I am a headteacher. During our time [1970s,] though our parents did not go to school but our father, I remember very well, would send us to school on the very first day school started. Mum did not go to school, she did not play a big role but she cooperated fully with dad's decisions regarding our education. (Interview, rural headteacher, 19.7.2012)

The teachers interviewed similarly reported that their parents valued education although it was a struggle for them because schooling in Uganda then was not free. They reported:

...My parents were of low level of education; father stopped in P.7 and mother stopped in P.5. My father married three wives and had 16 children. They had low income so financial constraints were the biggest problem. Nevertheless, despite shortage of money, they sent us to school because they understood the long-term benefits of schooling for our future. (Interview, urban teacher, 16.7.2012)

In the semi-rural school, the teacher reported that his parents had basic education; Dad stopped in primary 7 and Mum in primary 5. But the reason they worked hard to educate their children resulted from:

...Hah..., I think from the neighbours. They have seen the neighbours have educated their children and they were working in different departments in Moyo or Kampala,

they get paid and are able to support them [parents] at home. So they want their children also to achieve in life. (Interview, semirural teacher, 23.7.2012)

Finally, the teacher in the rural school also concurred:

...No, my parents were not educated. Mom never went to any class. Father stopped in P.5 and they were practicing agriculture - cultivators, good planners, grew crops and sold the produce to get money to pay our school fees. (Interview, rural teacher, 19.8.2012)

Subsistence agriculture, fishing, engaging in petty trade such as brewing local liquor were among the hard work the educators cited as means of generating money by their parents for school fees. Notwithstanding the decades from the 1960s to date, the practice of brewing local beer among the Ma'di women continue to be a common trade. Participant observation during home visits confirmed this practice being carried out by school girls and their mothers. A brief explanation of this economic activity may be helpful to understand the struggles of parents 50 years ago and parents of today in Moyo district for the sake of their children's education.

The main ingredients for the local beer is maize, cassava and millet (for yeast), all home grown locally. This is one of the most scientific activities conducted by local women without reference to any manual guide. The process starts with a fermented mix of the brew, poured into the black tinned barrel (previously a pot was used). On top of this is placed a saucepan with a perforated bottom with an earthenware placed inside it. Lastly, a second saucepan with a curved bottom containing cold water is balanced on top of the perforated saucepan which rests on top of the barrel containing the brew. Finally, constant fire is ensured below the barrel resting on three stones as shown in figure 5.6 below. Without going into the details of its production, it should suffice to say that through the process of fermentation, heating, evaporation and condensation the liquor finally collects in the inner earthenware in the middle saucepan after replacing cold water, at least three to four times, in order to obtain high alcohol content results. The process of distillation is a laborious enterprise as water has to be fetched and carried manually from wells or boreholes, usually from a distance, firewood has to be collected from the bush and the smoke to be endured from the open fire. Each process can yield about 4-5 bottles (1 litre each) and each half litre sells at Ush. 700/= (equivalent of 30 cents in euro). It is mostly consumed by men. Girls from the age of 15 are involved in making local liquor.



Filling cold water



Binding to make it airtight

**Photos 5.6 - College Girl in the Process of Distilling Beer to Raise Money for her Education**

*Taken on 10.8.2012*

Some of these girls may still be in their primary education but because of financial constraints in the family, they are forced to brew beer for money. The money realised from brewing caters for, mainly, school fees, school requirements, clothing, paraffin and some for feeding. In the background, two more saucepans are filled with thick porridge-like stuff, *ira ze* (beer residue) which is being recycled for the next distillation.

The interviews established that the experiences of the educators of their own parents were positive about their education. Despite their lack of education, they worked hard to ensure their children were educated. All of the educators attributed their educational successes to their parents' relentless efforts. These parents of the first generation seem to share the burden of low family income but they had high aspirations for their children. This aspiration was derived from examples they had seen of the long-term benefits of education in their neighbourhoods. The reasons given by the educators can be interpreted as having three dimensions: past, present and future oriented reasons why their parents wanted them to succeed in school.

*Past*

- 'to compensate for what they did not get';
- 'to stop the cycle of illiteracy';

*Present*

- 'they have seen the benefits of being educated from the neighbours';
- 'to empower their children to fit in society';
- 'to be the 'eye' and 'ear' of their parents';

*Future*

- 'to give a bright future for their children';
- 'to be able to support them when they are old, and;

- ‘so that they are able to get job opportunities and be able to education their own children’ (Educators’ Interview Responses, July and August, 2012)

This background highlights the importance of educators’ participation in this study. It places importance on their own education as it enabled them to get jobs, earn money and afford family needs including expenses relating to their school-going children. Nevertheless, behind it all was the struggle of their less educated parents. This is important in that it shows in this sample, that even when parents are not educated, they were behaviourally involved, and desired that their children work hard and succeed in school.

However, the educators argued that in their experience, there are some parents to date who possess negative attitudes towards education and particularly for their children. In this regard, educators were asked if their own hard-earned education has made a difference in their own families today and in what ways (Question 4).

### ***Responses from education officers and headteachers***

In response to question 4, all 8 educators gave positive responses, indicating that their own education has made a positive contribution to their families’ lives. Each one in different ways expressed:

....Yes, very big difference. Because, 3 of my children are graduates and I am encouraging them to go for a 2<sup>nd</sup> degree. I tell them that they should look at me as an example. (Interview, Deputy Commissioner, 18.9.2012)

He also stated that in the family, they sometimes read together, as he put it, ‘as I read for my degree, they [children] were reading for their primary leaving examinations’. And that one of his daughters graduated as an architecture while his wife progressed from being a grade 111 teacher through to a grade V teacher (diploma), and she is looking forward to getting a degree. In other words, he reported that the educational practices of these parents has had a significant impact on the children, reading together, and witnessing parents engrossed in pursuing higher education was a catalyst for the children. He remarked that also the live example and encouragement by the parents within the family was an added advantage to the children. Hence his conclusion, ‘they have no other alternative but to continue to pursue further education themselves’ (Interview, Deputy Commissioner, 18.9.2012).

Similarly, the district education officer acknowledged the benefits of his own education even though he has no family of his own at the time of the interview. He said:

...Oh, yes, my education has made a difference. I value education very much and I would make sure my children in future follow my footsteps. I would wish them even to go further than what I have obtained so far. (Interview, 20.7.2012)

The headteachers and teachers tended to closely associate their educational returns with income and how it enables them to solve family and economic problems. The urban headteacher clearly acknowledged:

... yes it [my education] has made a difference. First, my income reflects the level of education I have attained. Second, I challenge my children at my graduation, what about you? I took photographs and showed them, that is a way of encouraging them, if they cannot attain that [degree level] status at least they should reach a certain level... yes, they are keen .... right now my elder daughter is in 2<sup>nd</sup> year in the University, and two children in S.4. At least they are trying. (Interview, Urban headteacher, 22.7.2012)

For this headteacher, his personal example is very important in motivating his children in school. Whereas, the headteacher in the semi-rural primary school associated his education directly with job and money opportunities as he responded:

... yes, indeed. I am able to pay school fees for my children, siblings, and relatives. I also solve financial problems when it arises in the family. (Interview, semi-rural headteacher, 23.7.2012)

When probed if there is any difference now between him as compared to his peer group who did not achieve educationally, he confirmed:

... Much difference (*pausing thoughtfully*)...some have married, others are regretting why they left school. I think they did not have determination. For example, I took my aunt's son to live with me so that he could continue with education. He tricked me and returned home, because he had a plan to marry. He is regretting his actions but now it is too late (interview, semi-rural headteacher, 23.7.2012).

In relation to the monetary benefits, the headteacher of the rural primary school similarly had this to say:

... Yes, very much (*She looks at me earnestly*). I am able to pay the school fees of my children. As of now, my first-born daughter is going to the University. I am able to provide for their basic needs and requirements at school. I am also able to give them support in terms of guidance. My husband was also a grade 3 teacher now retired to caring of our family animals. In a way, we pay the school fees together. (Interview, rural headteacher, 19.7.2012)

These participants indicate three important areas of benefit for them: payment of school fees, provision of material resources and, and more importantly, parental guidance, all of which they attribute to their education.

### *Responses from teachers*

The teachers were similarly positive about the benefits of their education. The teacher in the urban school expressed:

... Very much: socially, morally, agriculturally.....etc. For example, the three of us in the family who succeeded in education are better in the above mentioned areas than those who did not succeed ...I am able to advise my other brothers and sisters who have not succeeded in their education. I am able to solve domestic problems, help my siblings to advise their own children. (Interview, urban teacher 16.7.2012)

Clearly, this participant values his education which according to him has given him a particular responsibility not only in his family but also over and above his own siblings. This is an acceptable practice in urban and rural communities such as these in Moyo where communal values are respected. The teacher in the semi-rural area extends his role directly derived from his education even to the wider circle of relations, right down to the next generation. He agrees that his education made a difference in his family, ‘yes, I am married but no children yet but my education has made a difference in my family’. He continued to state that he was able to:

- ‘pay school fees for my 2 siblings and of my wife;
  - ‘provide basic needs for my family’;
  - ‘construct a semi-permanent house with cement floor and brick walls instead of the traditional mud-wall and grass thatched roof’, and ;
  - ‘support my parents by treating them when they fall sick and buy clothes for them’.
- (interview, semi-rural, teacher 23.7.2012)

This teacher has uniquely mentioned supporting his wife, and building a semi-permanent house as an attribute of his education. This can be interpreted in that because he is salaried, therefore he is able construct a better living environment than those who are less educated and with low family income. He also cited helping his parents as a value and duty towards them for having educated him. These are commonly held cultural motivations behind many parents’ struggles in supporting their children in school so that when they [parents] are old, the children can look after them.

In the rural school, a similar report was echoed when asked whether her education made a difference in her own family. The answer was prompt:

...Yes, it has made a clear difference. I am appointed as a grade 3 teacher. I am married and I have a plan for my family. I have built a semi-permanent house. Being educated also made me to think of the future of my three siblings and able to cater for

them (2 girls and one boy). And one child from the side of my husband, all are in school here with me. (Interview, rural teacher, 19.7.2012)

Like the previous teacher, this teacher listed a number of issues including concerns about the future of her siblings and building a concrete house. In this rural community being able to construct a permanent house is a sign of prestige, money, good planning and education.

Behavioural aspects were also associated with levels of education as the teacher continues:

...Behaviourally, parents with certain level of education have better behaviour than those who have low education. Parents who are not educated drink much more than those educated ones. (Rural teacher, interview, 19.7.2012).

This last statement is drawn from her own observation and experience in living in the village. As indicated earlier, brewing beer (local liquor) is a source of income so alcohol consumption is common. Ironically, those who consume irresponsibly are regarded as the degenerate of society. In other words, the participant is saying that parents who drink excessively are often the ones who would not provide for the education of their children nor for the welfare of their families. In her case, she noted that she does not drink and her plan for her child (now 6 months old) is to send him to nursery education and to a boarding school when he is of age. According to her pre-schooling is the best foundation a parent can offer their children.

... if you build up your child direct from nursery, the child will develop better brain than one who did not attend nursery until 6 years old and starts primary education straight away. From nursery education, the child will be introduced to English language and eventually expresses himself better. It is better to get it at early stage. (Interview, rural teacher 19.7.2012)

It is important to note that nursery schooling is not free, it is private fee-paying education, and therefore, only children of those parents who can afford to pay can send their children to nursery schooling. Because of being a teacher (3rd grade) she has noted that she is able to send her children to a nursery education before joining primary school. Secondly, like the teacher in the semi-rural school, although she has not completed constructing her ideal house, there is a level of satisfaction evident in knowing that being able to build a semi-permanent house with a tin roof adds to one's status in her community and society. As she observed, 'in the surrounding there are not many families with houses with tinned roofs - approximately 3 families only' (Interview, rural teacher, 19/7/2012). She is highlighting the fact that there are not many educated people (3) in her community. Educated persons in this context are the ones often associated with constructing permanent houses because they have the money for modern construction.



Throughout their responses, the educators' attachment of significance to their education, subsequent behaviour and action is noteworthy. More importantly, their salary as a result is central to catering for their school-going children but surprisingly, there is less mention of getting involved in the academic activities of their children. Their concerns about money seem to echo the financial constraints their own parents experienced because they were less employable being illiterate. They all report that their salary resulting from their teaching career, though inadequate, is able to pay school fees, provide basic needs. Above all they note, it enables them to provide scholastic materials for their children, solve other family financial problems such as medical treatments, clothing, food, take care of funeral arrangements (including those of the extended family members) and give advice to their siblings who themselves have children but have not succeeded in their education. There is sufficient evidence to agree with Pro Literacy (2008) claims that the benefits of education, literacy implied, is not only for the individual but for the whole family and the society in terms of extending help to their extended family members and the community. Having expressed views about how education has made a difference in their own families and that of their families, participants were also asked to suggest what could be done for parents whose education and literacy levels could not support their children's achievement at school in question 5.

The educators suggested a number of practical interventions for both children and their parents.

### **5.4.3. Interventions for Pupils**

Educators suggested a number of practical interventions for the children whose parents were not able to support them in academic activities due to low levels of education and literacy skills. These included:

...encourage community participation where parents can come to attend meetings and be sensitised to provide the scholastic materials for their children...this is a very big challenge to our UPE programme. UPE mandates government pay school fees only and the parents/guardians should provide the other needs. But some parents seem not to play their role as expected. For example, providing pens, pencils, lunch, meet the teacher and discuss children's learning progress - are all parents' obligation. (Interview, Deputy Commissioner, 18.9.2012)

He also added that:

...parents deserve to check the books of their children at home, even the illiterate should be able to look up for the red pen mark in their children's exercise books which is a mark belonging to the teacher...follow their children up to school because some children can dodge going to school. (Interview, Deputy Commissioner, 18.9.2012)

According to this education officer, parental involvement should not only be a matter for educated parents when he emphasised, ‘even the illiterate should be able to look up for the red pen mark in their children’s exercise books’. This strong appeal seems to give no option to parents, regardless, but to respond to the educational needs of their children. The district education officer was even more vigorous in his point when he stressed that:

...when parents do not provide good learning environment for their children at home, because of their level of education, in my opinion, the best way is for the community to put in place by-laws that can be enforced by local authorities. This can be forcefully done. Force such parents to provide reading materials, meals regularly at home, good lighting system, reading tables, so that children get a chance to learn profitably. (Interview, district education officer, 20.7.2012)

While the district education officer invokes the law, it is not clear as to what criteria such measures would follow to enforce such laws. He also does not indicate the financial status of parents, the majority of whom, as this study found, are not in paid employment.

The headteachers and teachers consulted are based in the community and appeared to be more sympathetic with the realities of everyday family life. Because they share that life in the community with these parents, they had a different but practical approach. The urban teacher suggested:

- sensitisation of both children and parents through the media using music and drama. For instance, talented local musicians can compose songs about the importance of education in the local language. For example, the recent songs by Moyo Boys such as “Ma’anvoti Celina, andraa a’jo nyi kuru a?” (my sister Celina, did I not tell you?), and using drama – such as constructed about HIV/AIDS pandemic carry great messages for both children and parents, and;
- invite parents to attend pupils’ activities at school at open days, academic days or parents’ days. (Interview, urban teacher, 16.7.2012)

Such strategies could encourage pupils, he said, to develop interest in their school activities and desist from activities that are detrimental to their education. He insisted that inviting parents to school would motivate children knowing that their parents would come to see their work at school.

On the part of local government and high-level stakeholders in the education of the children, it was suggested that:

...scholarship offers from government local office and from the Church for better performing pupils in the area would motivate pupils. (Interview, semi-rural teacher, 23.7.2012)

These were practical ideas, which are perceived by the educators as likely to bring about some significant changes in the community for the benefit of pupils. Interventions for parents were also considered fundamental, and respondents' ideas are provided below.

#### **5.4.4. Interventions for Parents**

The Deputy Commissioner proposed:

...sensitisation of parent by teachers/headteachers. They should be able to tell parents, especially the illiterate, 'look you did not have education but you managed to cater for your family, today without education your child will have no future'. (Interview, Deputy Commissioner, 18.9.2012)

In his view, sensitisation is crucial, and it should involve all stakeholders: teachers, headteachers, local leaders, Centre Coordinating Tutors (CCT) - all should have the capacity to visit the homes of children. He also expected that role models in the community, beginning with parents and those in church, should be able to talk to their folks about the importance of nurturing and emphasising the importance of education.

The district education officer equally emphasised sensitisation of parents but through local radio programmes in the local language. He believes that the local government council leaders can also do sensitisation mobilisation in the community. However, he expressed reservations about the success of the sensitisation programme as he noted an overarching problem that the majority of parents tend to face in Moyo district:

...another thing that might discourage the communities from following up the children in their learning attainments could be because economically, they have to do something to fend for themselves, the facts of poverty. During the rainy season, many parents leave home to go to their far away farms and the children are left alone at home, unmonitored. Many families are torn apart by their economic demands. Most of the time parents leave home to go and fend for the daily needs. Sometimes parents use children to fulfil their economic gains, for example, like on Mondays, sending children to sell and dig for the families' livelihood. (Interview, DEO, 20.7.2012)

The headteachers also mentioned sensitisation programme both at local government level and at school level and role models in the family and community. The rural headteacher added that parents need to be encouraged to fully participate in school-based programmes such as meetings, class days and parents day activities.

The headteacher in the semi-rural school added that educated parents could engage in:

- monitoring children's school activities not limited to their own children;
- giving the necessary basic needs of the children

On a positive note, he observed that with the current education system and the changes in society, many parents including the uneducated have woken up to appreciate education. For example, when you [researcher] came in this morning, there were some parents, some of them were grandparents who do not know how to read and write but because of the interest they have for their children, they came for matters that concern their children's education.

This response was pursued as to what has brought about this positive change of attitude towards education among parents of less education.

The headteacher elaborated:

... role models in the village plays a great role. For example, in a homestead, one notices that the members were previously not taking tea, but after one of the children of that homestead got educated, they now have tea at breakfast [traditionally breakfast consisted of *linya lodo*, (left over food), that rings a bell. The neighbour's children may come in and they may be served tea. When they get back home, they will be nagging their parents, 'why don't you send us to school so that in future we get job, get money and buy sugar for tea?' So you see, the ordinary people equate education directly with employment. These days, Sister, if you move around, people are taking tea, and many have radios at home. (interview, semi-rural headteacher, 23.7.2012)

Some of these responses require explanation. Firstly, sleeping outside of the family home for children as expressed by the headteacher in the urban school is traditionally a common practice among the Ma'di people. Usually the majority of family houses (grass thatched huts) used to have one room or two. Young children slept in the same house with parents. However, once children reached the age of reason, seven and above, they would not sleep in the same hut with their parents for reasons, understandably, of privacy. Often, girls would move to sleep with grandmothers (who by this stage also do not share a bed with their husbands) or with other girls in the neighbourhoods in a separate hut specifically for girls in Ma'di it is called *adra jo* (grandmother's hut). The boys at the same age will also move to sleep with other boys and not with grandfathers (who may marry a younger woman). However, among contemporary Ma'di families, now bigger houses with more than one room are built so children may remain sleeping under one roof with parents but in separate rooms. Secondly, the issue of having tea is often associated with jobs, money and sugar. Although tea or coffee may

have been locally produced, sugar is not, as it is an industrial product, one can only acquire it if one has money to buy it from the shops. It is not easy for the local families to have a steady income with which to buy such items as sugar, which is considered a luxury.

According to the teacher in the rural school, parents need to be helped to own the initiatives such as universal primary education (UPE) or adult literacy so that the strategies developed can be sustainable. This can be done, for example, by helping parents to:

...develop plans when thinking about the education of their children. Even some educated parents do not have proper plans for their children. They should also supplement their income with agricultural activities to avoid total dependence on the salary, which is not sufficient for the family's livelihood. (Interview, rural teacher, 19.7.2012)

The headteacher in the rural school highlights the point that parents need to have foresight and do everything possible for the future of their children through selfless guidance, monitoring and following up of their children's school progress both at home and in school.

... parents should not be selfish. They should be open-minded, focused and should think of the future of the children, guide the children, monitor and do follow up right up to school. In this area it is rare that parents come to discuss their children's education. (Interview, rural headteacher, 19.7.2012)

In general, the educators expect parents with education to put their educational potential to the benefit of their children in various ways. This includes 'parents' activities with children within the family in terms of reading together, helping children in their homework and providing for children's school materials promptly' (Interview, urban headteacher, 17.7.2012). While the headteacher in the semi-rural concurs with him on the provision of school materials, he emphasises monitoring of children's activities by parents both at home and in school as important (Interview, semi-rural headteacher, 23.7.2012). In addition, a role model in the neighbourhood is regarded as crucial in influencing schoolchildren (Interview, urban headteacher, 17.7.2012). Training of parents in better agricultural practices that can allow them time to spend with their children was also suggested (Interview, urban teacher, 16.7.2012).

All the headteachers observed reported that the majority of contemporary parents care about the education of their children, although there still exists resistance among the illiterate based on a false understating of the UPE programme, as described by the headteacher in the urban school:

... those days when we used to shine as the people of Ma'di, parents were meeting the educational requirements of their children. These days many parents think that because of UPE the government will provide for everything as a result even right now if you go to the classes, you will find some children are without the essential school requirements. (Interview, urban headteacher, 22.7.2012)

However, he acknowledges that 'there is gradual change of attitude among the illiterate parents' as well towards the educational success of their children. In practical terms, some parents have risen above UPE misconception. This change of attitude in parents is noted in the rural primary school as the headteacher reports:

... parents try to contribute in terms of paying money for the monthly exams, for feeding some contribute Ush3,000 (€1) per month or Ush9,000 (€3) per term. Those who are unable to pay money bring food items in kind, especially, cassava and development funds hence the improvement in performance. The enrolment has also increased from over 200 pupils in 2008 to over 500 pupils in 2012. Parents are willing to contribute financially. For examination from the district level, P.7 pays Ush. 5,000/= (per child) but if the examination is set within the school, P.3-4 Ush1,800/= (per child) and P.5-6 Ush. 2,500/= (per child). We have exams every month. [The rate of Euro to Uganda shillings is approximately 1:3,400]. (Interview, rural headteacher, 19.7.2012)

In general, while more support is expected of the educated parents with literacy skills in terms of monitoring and getting to do practical reading and help with homework for their children, much more needs to be done for parents with less education and literacy skills in order to increase their direct involvement in their children's education. One teacher reported on a very hands-on direct initiative:

...I have been visiting some parents. I started from the learners when I noticed their performance was declining. I called pupils one by one to find out what challenges they were facing at home. Then I moved to their parents and I discussed with them. This effort resulted onto these children being given more time to study, they were built rooms (huts) for study at home. I managed to visit eight (8) parents. (Interview, rural teacher 19.7.2012)

This is testament that some teachers are willing to visit parents and children in their homes in an effort to engage them more directly in educational issues.

The need for adult literacy programmes for parents was a concern expressed by both educators and parents themselves. For example, one teacher who reported parents saying, 'we have interest to support our children in school but we have weak financial status so we wish the universal primary education programme to continue with increased government support' (Interview, rural teacher, 19.7.2012). Secondly, organising workshops, films and drama about

the advantages of education in the lives of individuals and families was also suggested. According to the teacher (rural), this could help sensitise the masses in both entertainment form but at the same time achieving the aims of educating the people. Generally, people in the village often do not have regular access to films or other modern forms of entertainment except discos. She argued that it would be a welcome opportunity to present educative shows, and once such plans were put in place in the community, it would attract many young and old for the entertainment while underscoring the message of the importance of education (rural teacher, date).

The teacher in the urban area reiterate support for a direct, hands-on approach and urged all parents to:

- ‘visit pupils in the schools’;
- ‘check pupils’ work’;
- ‘ensure that children do their homework’;
- ‘provide a light system at home’;
- ‘give enough food for children’.

He observed that children who are under-nourished tend to sleep in his class. The study confirmed several cases of children who do not go home during lunch breaks for food, and one such incident is narrated in dialogue box 2 below.

### **Box 5.2 - Evidence of Food Insecurity**

On my visit to the semi-rural school to interview the headteacher and the P.6 teacher, an incident occurred.

The two interviews went past 1:00 pm when children had already dispersed for lunch (12:40pm). The school was deserted and quiet. As I left the headteacher’s office, I came across two little boys (aged approximately 8/9 years old) playing under the mango tree near the entrance of the school where I had parked my pick-up. Children in the rural always love to be around cars that come their way. I asked them why they did not go home when the rest had gone. They told me, ‘mum is not at home’ which could mean there was no food for lunch at home. I had brought one big ripe avocado for myself; the spectacle of these children with clear signs of hunger, dry lips and joyless faces moved me. I took my avocado fruit and gave it to them. The two children thanked me and took the avocado, and without washing hands punched the fruit with their bare fingers into two and ate the avocado ravenously right in front of me. I drove away hungry and heavy at heart but happy having fed them but more so for having confirmed what the teacher had reported earlier about some children who are not well fed **(Field Encounter Date: 23.7.2012)**

This was not an isolated case and there were reports of many children who do not go home for lunch because of the long distance between home and school. The urban teacher explained

that, 'some children eat only once a day so they know that going home at lunch time is a waste of time' (interview, urban teacher, 16.7.2012).

From the three sites, the study found there were similarities and differences in the responses of the educators regarding parents' support to their children. The next section discusses these.

### ***General comments***

Additional comments were raised by educators interviewed. First, the need for adult literacy programmes for parents. This was a concern expressed by both educators and parents themselves. For example, one teacher who reported parents saying, 'we have interest to support our children in school but we have weak financial status so we wish the universal primary education programme to continue with increased government support' (Interview, rural teacher, 19.7.2012). Secondly, organising workshops, films and drama about the advantages of education and disadvantages of having no-education in the lives of individuals and families was also suggested. According to the teacher (rural), this could help sensitise the masses in both entertainment form but at the same time achieving the aims of educating the people. Generally, people in the village often do not have access to films or other modern forms of entertainment except discos. It would be a welcome opportunity when educative shows are presented, she said. Once such plans are put in place in the community, it would attract many young and old for the entertainment while underscoring the message on the importance of education.

The two youngsters described in box 5.2, as reported by the teacher that often times when children do not go home for lunch can be also because of long distance between home and school apart from their parents' absence from home. The teacher further explained, 'some children eat only once a day so they know that going home at lunch time is a waste of time' (interview, urban teacher, 16.7.2012).

In addition, he revealed that:

...we [teachers] request parents to sign child's completed homework but majority don't do and children are also lazy. Some pupils prefer to do their homework at school instead of home because at home there is housework and no light to study by night (interview, urban teacher, 16.7.2012).

It is understandable that if parents are not educated, they would not be able to sign their children's books. The clever children themselves know that doing their homework at school is perhaps better than bringing it home for at least two obvious reasons; parents are unable to



help them, domestic responsibilities takes up the time and there may be no light for doing homework after supper.

From the three sites, the study found there were similarities and differences in the responses of the educators regarding parents' support to their children. The next sub-section summarises these commonalities in both aspects.

## **5.5. Similarities and Differences in the Findings**

### *Similarities*

From the educators' report and in their experience that parents are generally interested in their children's education, but those who have a minimal level or no education at all themselves are less interested, with much less direct intervention and involvement in their children's academic studies. However, it was not clear whether this lack of interest was due to lack of knowledge about education or simply a negative attitude towards formal education in general. Secondly, parents across the different categories as reported by educators that every parent in Moyo experience lack of time to spend with their children. Educators noted that educated parents lack time to spend with their children because of their employment away from home. While the less educated parents spend most of their time in the fields cultivating, and on petty trades in order to raise money for school fees and other demands of the family. In the end, the educators concluded that both educated and less educated parents seem to spend their time doing non-academic activities such as recreating with friends after work, doing fieldwork, or engage in petty trade in order to supplement the little money earned from employment.

### *Differences*

On the dissimilarities, the educators revealed that there was a general shift of change in attitude among the less educated parents; that is, from not valuing education to valuing education. From the study's point of view, this was not only limited to the sample group but also included other parents as reported by educators. Educators' report about their own parents, the majority of whom were below the level of primary seven also testified to this shift. Four causal reasons emerged as underpinning. Firstly, as the educators cited that some of these parents developed keen interest in the education of their children because they had seen from their neighbourhoods the benefits of education. Secondly, the educators observed that the less educated parents envisioned better future for their children and that they [parents] saw this

could only be realised by educating their children as it is captured in this report, ‘because they [previous parents] were not highly educated themselves so they made great efforts to send us to school’ (Interview, Urban headteacher, 22/7/2012).

Thirdly, the educators’ reports showed that some of these parents endeavoured to educate their children because they hoped that their children would come to take care of them [parents] when they are old. Finally, some these parents felt to make up for what they did not have as the rural head teacher reported on how her uneducated father used to urge them to report to school the first day when school opens, saying to them, ‘no going to school should remain with him’ (Interview, rural headteacher, 19.8.2012).

## **5.6. Conclusion**

In conclusion, this chapter has shown there was unanimous agreement among educator respondents that there is a difference in having educated parents as opposed to having less/uneducated parents in relation to supporting their primary school children. The education levels of parents and their literacy skills directly influence the education of their children in terms of parental knowledge about education, their example and ability to discuss educational issues not only with children but also with school administration and voluntary participation in school programmes, such as attendance in PTA meetings. Indirectly, it influences the literacy environment of the home as educated parents are employed and are salaried, and therefore are able to provide the scholastic materials of their children. This is likely to impact positively on the achievement of children. From headteachers’ reports, across the three sites studied, parents in the urban area tended to show more interest in their children’s academic activities than parents in the rural area (see table 5.8). Parents of pupils studied in the semi-rural school appear to share close characteristics with those in the urban school as reported by headteachers. In the rural school, the headteacher indicated that parents appear to be more concerned about issues related to money as reflected in their Parent Teacher Association (PTA) meetings (see table 5.8). For this reason, the educators, particularly the headteacher in the rural school emphasised sensitisation of parents more than the headteachers in the urban and semi-rural schools.

For children to perform better in school, the educators viewed that parents must engage in giving a holistic support system to their children and this should include the following.

- Checking pupils’ work at home;

- Visiting pupils in the schools;
- Asking questions to teachers about their children;
- Ensuring that children do their homework;
- Providing suitable light system at home for study;
- Providing adequate space for children to study;
- Providing adequate scholastic materials children need for schooling;
- Paying of school fees fully and on time, and;
- Giving sufficient food and a balanced diet to children.

The headteachers in particular suggested external assistance for parents from the State, Local Education Authority, School and the Community in order to enhance children's achievement at school. This is precisely because the majority of parents have significantly low family income, and this includes also the educated parents. However, the headteachers and teachers cited improvements on existing school-based facilities such as classrooms, teacher's houses and pit toilets but did not mention about non-existing needs for the children such as school library, assembly hall or school a nurse. It was however, observed that such facilities were essential for the well-being and subsequent performance of the children. However, the focus of this study is not the school but the home so further discussion on these items could be recommended for further research later in chapter 8.

Finally, as the educators have noted, the findings in this chapter indicated that although the less educated parents were shifting their attitude towards appreciating education for their children, they were limited by time, financial constraints, and illiteracy. Firstly, lack of time due to engagement in cultivation justifies their absence from home but deprives children of their parents' filial support and love. Second, the lack of money hinders their ability to provide adequately for their children's education in terms of paying school development funds, lunch fees, providing school requirements such as pens, text and exercise books, mathematical sets, paraffin for lighting, and general welfare of the children. Thirdly, illiteracy compromised their responsibility to participate actively in the education of their children at primary school, which is likely to affect children's achievement. This is reflected in their lack of both behavioural and cognitive involvement on practical terms in such aspects as reading for and with children, monitoring their children's progress, checking their books, helping them in their homework, and holding educative conversations with children at home and more importantly, attending PTA meetings in school. Subsequently, the findings showed that due to these multiple limitations on support system on the part of parents, children are negatively affected in their

education. Consequently leading to low motivation in pupils towards education, and poor performance.

Educated parents, according to the educators were able to support their children at school financially, and were able to provide school requirements. However, they too, do not have the time to spend on parent-child interaction. As educators argued by one of the educators that ‘support for primary school children should not be confined to paying school fees, providing school materials, it should include taking care of the general welfare of the child as mandated by universal primary education programme’ (Interview, Urban headteacher, 22/7/2012). In theory, the study established that educated parents were able to do a day-to-day follow up of their children and supervise them closely, however, as the educators reported, they are not able to do so because of their official duties. In the end, the children of both the educated parents and less educated parents in this study appear to face the same challenges in their educational process, that is, non-parental support.

In the next chapter, reports from pupils, parents and senior community members are presented to validate educators’ views, opinions and experience about parental involvement in the education of their children.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **Findings from Pupils, Parents and Senior Community Members**

#### **6.1. Introduction**

In the previous chapter, the views and opinions of eight educators in relation to the links between parents' education and literacy skill levels, and how these influence their primary children's educational achievement in school were presented. Their qualitative responses were presented using tables and matrices (Miles and Huberman, 1994), in addition to narrative accounts, to give a holistic sense of the educators' knowledge about the nature and influence of parents in relation to their children's education and how well they do in school. During the process of assembling their responses, certain recurring themes such as parents desire to see their children do well in school, a lack of time and knowledge about school, low-income levels, and illiteracy among some parents were recognised. These themes require corroboration and triangulation with the views from parents themselves and their children.

Therefore, this chapter addresses the three main research questions using data from 90 pupils in P. 6 (questionnaire) and in-depth semi-structured interviews with parents and nine of their children attending P. 6, three senior community members, and observational notes from the family ethnography study. The family ethnography was conducted over a period of 10 weeks in the home setting and explored the extent to which literacy related activities permeated the lives of the sample participants, and provided an invaluable insight and experience into their day-to-day lives. It is important to remind readers that data from some families are limited due to some cultural and specific household arrangements which rendered access difficult.

The first research question focuses on the relationship between parents' education and literacy skill levels and its mediating impact on the degree and nature of parents' involvement in their children's performance in primary school. The second research question focuses on the available evidence that exists in the family, of literacy related items and resources and how these resources affect the development of children's literacy skills leading to subsequent achievement in primary school. The challenges, if any, parents face in supporting their children's education, and how they expect to be helped, and by whom are explored in question three.

Cross-case displays (Miles and Huberman, 1994) are used for describing the exploration of literacy practices in the home setting. The overall study involves data from 119 participants. These comprised questionnaire responses from 90 P. 6 pupils which served to sample the biographical and educational particulars about themselves and their parents, nine families (n 9) and their P. 6 children (n 9) were interviewed and observed in their homes from July 9th – September 14th 2012, and three senior community members (n 3) were also interviewed.

In total, 21 participants were interviewed in their respective homes.

## **6.2. Demographic Information: Pupils, Parents and Senior Community Members**

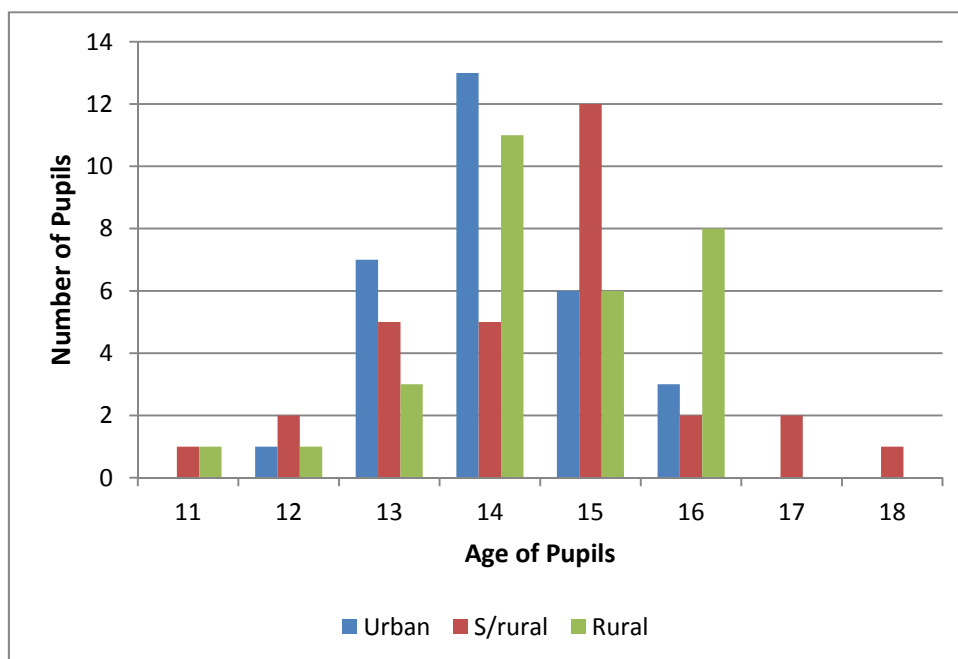
In this chapter, data from pupils, parents and senior community members are presented. A brief description of each sample is important starting with pupils involved and features of families are presented on tables.

### **6.2.1. Description of Participating Pupils**

In this study, 90 pupils, 30 from each of the three schools identified in the urban Moyo town, semi-rural (the mountain area, 10km) and rural area (the Nile valley, 64km from Moyo town) were involved. These sets of pupils were deemed to be literate and mature enough to read, understand questions asked of them, and be able to write their responses in English. A further 9 pupils (part of the 90 pupils who participated in the school questionnaires) were chosen according to their parents' education levels for in-depth interviews and observations, and their views and opinions were gathered in a one-to-one interview following their responses to the questionnaire.

#### ***Age of participating pupils***

Although the cohort selected for this study would typically be 11 – 12 year olds attending primary six (P.6) level, the study found the age of the participating pupils ranged from 11-18 years old and this is represented in figure 6.1 below.



**Figure 6.1 - Age of Participating Pupils by School Location**

Out of 90 pupils, there were only 2 pupils of the standard age (11) for primary six in the semi-rural and rural schools. The youngest pupil in the urban school is 12 years. The majority of pupils were aged 14 and 15 (24). In the urban school, the majority of pupils were aged 14 (13), in the semi-rural the highest number of pupils were aged 15 (12). Although 8 pupils in the rural school were older, aged 16, much older pupils were recorded in the urban and semi-rural schools at 17 and 18 years of age respectively. Headteachers and teachers from the respective schools attributed these age differences to late a start to school, class repetition, and dropping out of school due to domestic and financial problems and resuming schooling at a later time.

### **6.2.2. Description of Participating Parents and Family Features**

The participating parents were identified by the headteachers in the schools in which their children attend, and they represented the diverse sample of parental education levels and socio-economic standing in which the study was interested.

Based on their education, these sets of families in each location type represented high (professionals), average (semi-skilled) and low education and literacy skill levels (unskilled).

### 6.2.2.1. Parents of High Level of Education

Parents identified as professional were coded as Family 1 (F1) and are referred to as professionals. This sample includes a health worker called Regina (not real name) in the urban area and she is the biological mother to the child being studied (Celin); Felix, a male secondary school teacher who is an uncle to the child being studied (Nila) in the semi-rural area, and Rosanna, also a health worker in the rural area and she is the biological mother to the child being studied (Lily). The main features of this family are presented on the table below.

**Table 6.1a - Features of Families with Educated Parents - F1 Urban, Celine (13)**

Features Assessed	Description
<i>Physical Environment</i>	Own newly built house, built in bricks, cemented floor and corrugated iron sheets roof with a clean compound (see photo 6.2). Distance of less than quarter a kilometre from the town centre. Secure doors, windows and locks. Children share in the same house with parents but in separate rooms.
<i>Social Environment</i>	The child has parents, grandparents and a grandmother (semi-literate) living in the family. Both parents are employed. No aunts and uncles live nearby. It is a family of six with one child a minor dependant. Home is in urban community with multi-ethnic groups and is accessible by road, bicycle and foot. It is located about 500 m to the main hospital, 300 m to the school which the child attends. Three languages are spoken concurrently: Kuku, Ma'di and English.  No community amenities where parents can meet.
<i>Resources &amp; Facilities</i>	House has three rooms; a bedroom, a living room and a store. Child has her own wooden bed with mattress, blanket and linen to cover. Cupboards for keeping adequate teacups and plates/utensils. Wooden sofa chairs and a coffee table; all well covered with embroidered cotton clothes.  No electricity supply, lamps with batteries are used. Water source is a common borehole fetched using jar-cans, sometimes pushed on a wheelbarrow (see photo 63). Improved outside toilet with ventilation, cemented floor and corrugated iron sheets roof, the bath shelter is with open roof. The child has adequate personal effects, shoes, slippers, uniform and dresses.
<i>Literacy Environment</i>	Adequate text and exercise books kept in bags and boxes. No book shelves. There is a clock, a calendar, posters, a bible (in both vernacular and English) and hymnal in both languages, and album of the family under the coffee table. Child's study time table is on the wall. No television, magazines nor newspapers



	but there is a radio and mobile phone owned by both parents.
<i>Food Security</i>	Kitchen with back yard garden with different vegetables in it. Larger fields are located 4-6 km away from home, no orchard or family animals but there are about 7-10 chickens on the compound. The children look well fed.

**Table 6.1.2a - Features of Families with Educated Parents - F1 Semi-rural, Nila (15)**

<b>Features Assessed</b>	<b>Description</b>
<i>Physical Environment</i>	<p>Own built house, in brick, cemented floor and corrugated iron sheets roof with separate kitchen with roof thatched in grass and clean small compound (see photo 6.4). Secured door, window and lock. Children sleep in separate grass thatched hut with brick walls and cemented floor. Distance of 100 metres from the local trading centre.</p> <p>Home is located on the main Moyo-Kampala road with the school, the trading centre, and the mission and health unit all within 500 m distance.</p>
<i>Social Environment</i>	<p>The child does not have both parents, father is deceased and mother remarried. Nila is in care of her uncle whom she refers to as a parent. No grandparents but uncles, aunties and cousins live within the same village with kin neighbours. Uncle [father] is employed as secondary school teacher, but wife is a primary seven leaver. It is a family of nine, five biological children and four dependants including Nila. The home is accessible by road, bicycle and foot. No community amenities where parents can meet. Ma'di is predominantly spoken at home.</p>
<i>Resources/Facilities</i>	<p>House has two bedrooms, plus a living room and a store. The child shares sleeping room with her sister and cousins in a separate hut. There is only one bed in the hut between four girls [the younger sleep on a mat on the floor]. Well-made wooden cupboards for keeping teacups, plates and utensils in the main house. Wooden sofa chairs and a coffee table; all well covered with embroidered cotton clothes (see photo 6.12).</p> <p>There is no electricity, hurricane lamps with paraffin oil are used. A tap water source on the compound. Improved pit toilet outside with ventilation, cement slab and corrugated iron sheets roofed, the bath shelter is made of bricks without a roof. The child has adequate personal effects, shoes, slippers, uniform and dresses.</p>

<i>Literacy Environment</i>	Adequate text and exercise books kept on the table rather than on book shelves (see second photo 6.12). These include bible and hymnals in both languages. There are posters on the wall, a calendar but no clock, and the main house has photos of the family on the wall, album of the family on the cupboard. There is a black and white TV in the girls' sleeping room but not functional. Neither magazines nor newspapers but there is family radio and mobile phones owned by both parents.
<i>Food Security</i>	Separate grass thatched kitchen with back yard garden grown with different kinds of vegetables, mostly planted by the children. Larger fields are located about 2- 4 km away from home, there are fruit trees: oranges, pawpaw, mangoes, jack fruits, passion fruits dotted about the compound and around. The family own animals: goats and pigs. Goats have their own shelter and the pig is tied under a plantation of tick tree forest and there are chickens on the compound. Harvested food being dried on the compound (see photo 6.4). The children look well fed.

**Table 6.1.3a - Features of Families with Educated Parents - F1 Rural, Lily (14)**

<b>Features Assessed</b>	<b>Description</b>
<i>Physical Environment</i>	The house belongs to the government, built in bricks, cemented floor and corrugated iron sheets roof with a large clean compound. There are two rooms: a living and bedroom for the parent. It is adjoined to a block of four doors where other staff members live. It has secured doors, windows and lock. It is located 5 km from the local town centre but 64 km from Moyo town. Children sleep in the same block but separate room from parents.
<i>Social Environment</i>	Separated parents. Lily lives with her five siblings under the care of their mother. Lily misses her father though she is well looked after by her mother who is a nursing assistant in a government health unit. No grandparents nor kin neighbourhoods. The home is accessible by road, bicycle and foot. No community amenities where parents can meet. Ma'di is predominantly spoken at home with little English.
<i>Resources/Facilities</i>	There is no kitchen, cooking is done on a charcoal stove at the veranda of the main block. No electricity and tap water. Drinking water is sourced from a nearby bore hole while water direct from the River Nile is fetched for household needs. Pit toilets (3 doors) and a bathroom (roofless) are separate from the main block, shared between four families of health workers. Hurricane lamps that use paraffin and torches are the main sources of light. The health centre is less than

	100 m away from the house, while the school is more than 500 m. Lily has adequate personal effects, shoes, slippers, uniform and dresses.
<i>Literacy Environment</i>	The number of books available was not established as the inner room was a bed room. Lily moves around with a novel in her hands while going about the daily chores. Mother informs that they have adequate exercise books and textbooks for the elder sister in secondary school (see excerpt in section 6.5.2.2).
<i>Food Security</i>	All around the main block, there is garden with peanuts (groundnuts), cassava and vegetables. There is one big mango tree behind the house and no other fruit trees. No animals but a few (5-10) chickens on the compound. Harvested groundnuts are spread on the compound. Children look well fed and are chatty.

### 6.2.2.2 Parents with Average Level of Education

The family of parents with average level of education are coded as Family 2 (F2). They were referred to as semi-skilled because none of them was qualified in any trade. They were Mike, a builder and a carpenter who learned his trade on job in the urban area. He is the biological father of the child being studied (Fred); Ben, a soldier who serves in the national army and he is the biological father of the child being studied (Martin) in the semi-rural area; and Cornelius, a civil servant works with local government. He is an uncle who takes responsibility of the child being studied (Helen) in the rural area. The main family features are presented on the table below.

**Table 6.1.1b - Family of Parents with Average Education - F2 Urban, Fred (14)**

<b>Features Assessed</b>	<b>Description</b>
<i>Physical Environment</i>	Own house, one roomed hut with a separate kitchen, located in the suburbs of Moyo town. There is a pit toilet and a bath shelter outside. Both houses are built in brick walls, grass thatched roof, and a an old kitchen is used for keeping family animals (goats). Only the main house floor is cemented with rugged plastic carpet on the floor. It is located about 500m from Moyo town. Children sleep in a separate hut which is used as kitchen when there is rain. In good dry weather, cooking takes place outside on open fire on three stones (see photo 6.5) from parents.

<p><i>Social Environment</i></p>	<p>Separated parents. Fred lives with her eight siblings under the care of his step mother. His mother separated from his father and is alive. Fred has an older brother, Jimmy in secondary school and they are very close playing and doing home chores together (see photo 6.8). Fred's father, Mike, is semi-skilled mansion and a carpenter learned on job. No grandparents or kin in the neighbourhoods. But the home is surrounded by other families. It is a family of eleven, nine children; four belong to his father and five are dependants. The home is accessible by road, bicycle and foot. No community amenities where parents can meet. Ma'di , Lugbara and seldom English is spoken at home.</p>
<p><i>Resources/Facilities</i></p>	<p>Unemployed father but looks for casual labour. Low and irregular income. No electricity and no running water. Drinking water is sourced from a nearby tap owned by a well off neighbour at a cost of Ush 200/=, equivalent of €0.06 cents per 20 litre jar-can. A pit toile and a bath shelter (roofless) are separate. Battery lamp is used in the main house and a <i>dobo</i> that uses paraffin in the kitchen (see photo 6.1). Torches are also used at night mostly for going to the toilet. The home is about a kilometre from the main hospital, the school and only about 700 m to the main town centre.</p> <p>Inadequate sleeping facilities; no bed, one mosquito net, one mattress between four children. The younger children sleep of a papyrus mat without mosquito net. Fred does not have adequate personal effects, shoes, slippers, but has a uniform and few shorts and shirts, which he keeps clean.</p>
<p><i>Literacy Environment</i></p>	<p>There are not more than 10-20 books available, stored in insecure old open cupboard. There are two science posters on the wall but no clock, calendar nor TV. The radio and mobile phone belongs to their father. Fred and brothers show interest in reading while going about their daily chores such as taking the animals to graze or going to fetch water.</p>
<p><i>Food Security</i></p>	<p>All around the huts there are gardens with corn, and vegetables grown. All members join to work on the gardens except the father who is mostly out of home. There are fruit trees: avocado, lemon, guava, jackfruits, pawpaw, lemon and mango trees around the house. There are animals (goats 7-10) and some (10-15) chickens on the compound. Harvested groundnuts are being dried on the compound. Children are chatty but there is need for more food.</p>

**Table 6.1.2b - Family of Parents with Average Education - F2 Semi-rural, Martin (13)**

<b>Features Assessed</b>	<b>Description</b>
<i>Physical Environment</i>	Own house, located in the semi-rural area. It is a two roomed house built in mud with corrugated iron sheets roofed. There is a separate grass thatched kitchen. A mud pit toilet and a bath shelter in banana leaves. The main house as well has mud floor and no ceiling. It is located about 1 km from the local trading centre and 11 km from Moyo town. Martin and his two brothers join their cousins in the neighbouring home for sleep. The home can only be accessed by foot.
<i>Social Environment</i>	Separated parents. Martin lives with his four siblings but does not share mother with them. His stepmother is the current wife of three (two women have let). All five children are under the care of his step mother. His mother separated from his father. Martin's father, Ben is a soldier who serves over 300 km away from home. No grandparents but the neighbourhoods are all relations. There are no community amenities where parents can meet. Ma'di is dominantly spoken at home, as his stepmother is illiterate. There is limited communication in this family.
<i>Resources/Facilities</i>	Father is employed and has regular income from government. Own semi-permanent house with solar light with one bulb (see photo 6.13).
<i>Literacy Environment</i>	The literacy related resources could not be accessed as child keeps his books in the neighbour's house where they sleep.
<i>Food Security</i>	The surrounding gardens are all cultivated. The children looked well fed.

**Table 6.1.3b - Family of Parents with Average Education - F2 Rural, Helen (14)**

<b>Features Assessed</b>	<b>Description</b>
<i>Physical Environment</i>	There are four huts on the compound designated to different category of people: grandmother, uncle, boys and girls. There is large compound without lawn but dotted with fruit trees, especially mangoes. The home is located about 1 km from the trading centre and about a quarter of a km to the nearest water source, a bore hole
<i>Social Environment</i>	Separated parents. The child is under the care of a maternal uncle. Helen's brother lives with another relation but there are cousins she lives with their

	grandmother. There are close relations in the surrounding.
<i>Resources/Facilities</i>	There are basic resources to survive on. The grass thatched huts: two of them have cemented floors, a mud pit toilet with no door but an old sisal bag is tied for privacy, bath shelter is made of banana leaves.
<i>Literacy Environment</i>	The child's old exercise books are kept in a plastic bag tact out in her grandmother's hut where they cook,eat and sleep. Other literacy related items were not available to observation.
<i>Food Security</i>	There are signs of food availed from daily hard work. No vegetable garden around. Bigger fields of sweet potatoes, sorghum and cassava were good signs. Children may require more food.

### 6.2.2.3 Parents with Low/No Level of Formal Education

The less educated parents form the third set of families studied and are referred to as unskilled parents. Some have no formal education and are coded as Family 3 (F3). These included, Adam, a goat broker in the urban area. He is the biological father of nine children including the one being studied (Zina); Angela a single mother of six is the biological mother of the pupils being studied (Dona) in the semi-rural area; and George, a peasant farmer and fishmonger in the rural area. he is the biological father of the pupils being studied (Joel).

**Table 6.1.1c - Families of Parents with Less/No Formal Education - F3 Urban, Zina (16)**

<b>Features Assessed</b>	<b>Description</b>
<i>Physical Environment</i>	Five huts: the main house, kitchen, for the girls, the older girl and for the grandmother. The boys share another hut with other boys in the home.
<i>Social Environment</i>	Both parents live together. The household consists of nine children plus parents, eleven. It is set among other households who are not necessarily relations (see photo 6.6), and only about 600 metres to the town centre. But uncles and aunties were in the same vicinity. It is accessible by road and foot.
<i>Resources/Facilities</i>	Unemployable parents due to lack of education, training and language. The main house has little furniture. The main door is made from empty tins of USA brand cooking oil as Aid to refugees' community. Inner doors have no

	shutters and locks. No electricity nor solar system. The young boys devised a torch by connecting four batteries for reading; they said it is costly. Dwellers use tin lamps (see Storage for children's books in insecure from pesticides such as termites and rats. Pit toilet is dilapidated and a bath shelter made of banana leaves.
<i>Literacy Environment</i>	Poor scholastic materials, with no sign of a clock, radio, calendar, posters or pictures of the family on the wall. The child kept her books and that of her siblings in their tight sleeping hut.
<i>Food Security</i>	Food is scarce to support the nine children in the family.

**Table 6.1.2c - Families of Parents with Less/No Formal Education - F3 Semi-rural, Dona (15)**

<b>Features Assessed</b>	<b>Description</b>
<i>Physical Environment</i>	Home is located about 14 km from Moyo town and
<i>Social Environment</i>	Parents are separated (reported) due to irresponsible attitude of her father (alcoholism). Dona lives with her mother and five siblings in their maternal grandfather's home. The uncles, aunties, cousins and members of the extended family are evident.
<i>Resources/Facilities</i>	Dona sleeps with two cousins in the uncle's permanent (brick built and corrugated roof) house. Literacy resources are scarce; one text book on the table and a battery hurricane lamp (see photo 6.14). The school she attends is about 3 km where the mission health centre is also located.
<i>Literacy Environment</i>	There are less than 5 textbooks and a box of old exercise books kept in another hut rather than where she sleeps. Dona has her reading timetable on the wall.
<i>Food Security</i>	There is plenty of food from their hard labour in the fields. One hut is designated to sundried food storage.

**Table 6.1.3c - Families of Parents with Less/No Formal Education - F3 Rural, Joel (14)**

<b>Features Assessed</b>	<b>Description</b>
<i>Physical Environment</i>	Own house, in mud and grass thatched, mud floor and with lawn less clean large compound (see photo 6.7). There is a big mango tree in the middle of the compound which serves as a resting site. Distance of about 5 km to the local trading centre but up to 64 km from Moyo town.
<i>Social Environment</i>	Both parents are present. There are older and younger siblings. The home is accessible by road and foot set among other homes. It is very close to the River Nile so there is constant coming in and out of people to buy fish, and children congregate at the riverbank to fish. There are clear signs of high alcohol consumption in the area.
<i>Resources/Facilities</i>	The huts do not have secured doors, windows and locks. Children sleep in the kitchen separated from parents. A pit toilet is unusable and a bath shelter made of banana leaves located behind the kitchen. No animals but a few chickens on the compound. No facilities for parents to meet for educational activities other than ply cards and socialise while waiting for their nets in the river Nile.
<i>Literacy Environment</i>	Literacy resources are scarce (see story in box 6.1 b and second picture in photo 6.16). There is not a clock, calendar nor pictures on the wall but there is a radio owned by the father. It is often on when members are going about the activities of the day.
<i>Food Security</i>	Only sufficient for the day's meal. Fish is eaten frequently with maize meal. All around is cultivated, a good sign of food security.
<b>Common features in all families</b>	Families size is large. Own their homes except one. Households have low income though no bills, no social welfare. Difficulties of poor public infrastructure, no electricity, outdoor pit toilets.



### 6.2.3. General Parents' Occupation

The three categories of parents involved in the wider pupil questionnaire are summarised a table below

**Table 6.2 - Parents' Occupation**

Category of parents	Urban %		Semi-rural %		Rural %	
	Father	Mother	Father	Mother	Father	Mother
Professionals	11	9	7	7	2	1
Semi-skilled	10	10	7	1	3	8
Unskilled	9	11	16	22	26	21

Key:

Professionals = Parents with a high level of literacy skill

Semi-skilled = Parents with average education and literacy skills levels

Unskilled = Parents with low or no level of formal education and literacy skill

The numbers indicate the actual frequency of parents of the designated category.

Noteworthy in the parents' occupation data is the gender inequality between fathers and mothers though not significant, in the professional workforce, though not significant, except in the semi-rural area. There seem to be more professional fathers than mothers. While there are more unskilled parents in the rural area, surprisingly, these are fathers. Nevertheless, the number of professional and semi-skilled parents remains relatively low (less than 50%) across the three sites studied. The data also indicate more unskilled parents from the urban area than the rural area. It appears that the location has an impact on the type of occupation dominant in the area with the urban area providing employment for more skilled persons who tend to reside within that same area. This could be due to uncertainties regarding means of transport in Moyo district. The lower number of professionals in the rural area may also suggest that educated parents in this area may have moved to the urban area for work with their families and therefore sent their children to urban schools. The study did not establish the origins of the families studied so it is not possible to state whether all educated parents registered in the urban actually belong to Moyo town or not. Alternatively, educated parents in the rural areas may have sent their children to study either in the urban area or to fee paying private schools rather than to the rural Government universal primary schools, hence their low number. A further explanation may be linked to the location of the rural area under study.

Taking Flick and colleague's (2000) advice, nine of these families were invited to participate in the ethnographic component of the study in order to gain an understanding of what goes on in the family and to get a first-hand information. The researcher was the sole data collector since she also spoke the same language as the participants. The researcher lived with each participating family and spent between 2 and 3 days and nights with them, sharing in their daily activities, household chores such as field work, food preparations and recreation in the

evenings. This provided an invaluable opportunity to get to know each of the nine families well and to be able to experience and document the literacy related activities and environment in which they live. It also allowed a unique opportunity to observe the extent of parent-child interaction on a day-to-day basis and to see first-hand the range of literacy related materials available for use by both parents and children in the home and community. Finally, it facilitated the opportunity to conduct semi-structured recorded interviews with the parents, their children and senior community members separately during quiet moments in the day.

Questionnaire responses from pupils helped to identify and corroborate that their parents' specific occupation corresponds to their levels of education as previously provided by headteachers from school. Detailed information about the purpose of the study, its aims and the format of the extended site visit was explained to the families by both the Headteacher and by the researcher before seeking formal permission. The study operated according to the ethical standards of the School of Education, Trinity College, Dublin.

The order of reporting starts with the responses from 90 pupils' questionnaires. This is followed by emerging themes, illustrated using interview and observational reports from the 9 pupils belonging to the nine families identified. The responses from 9 families (parents) follows, and lastly, the responses from three senior community members is presented. Fictional names (pseudonyms) have been assigned to all respondents to maintain anonymity and confidentiality of information.

#### 6.2.4. Pupils' Parents' Levels of Education

The criteria used for assessing parents' levels of education was their occupation types. The reports from the children's questionnaire and Headteachers' records, allowed parents' levels of education to be ascertained and this is presented in a table below.

**Table 6.3 - Parents' Levels of Education**

Level of education	Urban area		Semi-rural area		Rural area	
	Father	Mother	Father	Mother	Father	Mother
High (F1)	++	++	++	-	ND	+
Average (F2)	+ -	+ -	+	--	+	-
Low (F3)	ND	--	ND	--	--	--

Key

- F1 - High level of education with qualifications (++)
- F2a - Average level of education with semi-skills (+)
- F2b - Average level of education without skills (+-)
- F3a - Primary level, unskilled with basic education and can recognize letters (-)
- F3b - No formal education (NFE) cannot recognise letters (--)
- No data available (ND)

Only 3 of the 18 parents are well-educated, with qualifications, and they are confined to the urban and the semi-rural areas. Similarly, 3 out of 18 parents have average education with semi-skills, and they are in the semi-rural and rural areas. Out of 9 mothers, 4 never had formal education and 2 had very basic education, and are able to recognise the alphabet. Therefore, only 3 mothers were able to read and write, and one mother in the professional category. The majority of mothers, except in the urban area, are unskilled with low levels of education, and more than half of mothers have had no formal education. These are from the farming and fishing community of parents in the rural area. Three senior community members were purposely selected, one from each site, and details about them is provided in the next section.

### 6.2.5. Participating Senior Community Members

In the context of the study, three senior members were included in this study because of their long involvement in education. They are Anthony, Susan and John, from urban, semi-rural and rural areas respectively. The study included these respondents because they lived in the villages with the families under research. All three were retired members of the community in the field of education. Anthony (urban) was initially a teacher educator and later, like John (rural) served as a District Inspector of Schools (primary), while Susan (semi-rural) was a primary school teacher. Further information about them is presented in Table 6.4 below.

**Table 6.4 - Demographic Information about the Senior Community Members**

<b>Particulars</b>	<b>Anthony (urban)</b>	<b>Susan (semi-rural)</b>	<b>John (rural)</b>
<b>Qualification</b>	Diploma in Education, Tutor in teacher education and inspector of schools	Certificate in education, Primary teacher	Diploma in Education: teaching in secondary school, and later inspector of schools
<b>No. of years in teaching</b>	30+	40	27
<b>No. of years in this community</b>	50+	20+	37+
<b>Reasons for teaching career</b>	Preferred teaching to joining Kings African Rifle (KAR), and wanted to be a role model in his county in education. Wanted to be near his aging parents.	Personal interest in schooling and attraction of teacher role model (smart and kind teacher)	Teacher training was convenient because of coming from a poor background. Impressed by his teachers' exemplary leadership, smartness, and kindness to pupils.
<b>Current responsibility in the community</b>	An opinion leader	Peasant farmer, keeping poultry and piggery	Peasantry, facilitation of leadership programmes under local NGO - NUSAF 11 sub-project, chairperson of parish finance committee, and vice-chairperson of PTA to Moyo secondary school

Although retired, these respondents have remained active in the community. Anthony advanced from primary teaching to teacher educator, and later became an inspector of schools like John. Susan qualified as a primary teacher and remained in that role until retirement. Their views are particularly important in a study of this nature, as both parents and pupils alike have high regard for senior community members, and their opinions carry considerable weight in a traditional African context. Data from the initial sections of the pupils' questionnaire has been used to present the biographical and education profile of the respondents, and the remaining data is presented in the section below.

### 6.3. Questionnaire Responses from the Ninety P. 6 Pupils

In order to understand pupils' performance in school, one of the strategies was to find out if they have been smoothly progressing during their primary education or not. As the education system in Uganda is examination oriented, pupils who do not attain the required standard are required to repeat the same class in the hope that they will improve and advance to the next class. Pupils' responses were as follows.

#### 6.3.1. Question 4: Pupils' Progress before Primary Six

In total, 71 out of 90 (79%) pupils reported that it was their first time in primary six; 25 from urban and semi-rural schools each, and 21 in the rural school. This means there were only 19 pupils across the three locations who were repeating P. 6, which is a fairly good sign that the majority of the pupils were new to the class. However, when probed further in question five whether or not pupils had ever repeated any other classes before reaching Primary Six, 78 out of 90 (85%) reported having had repeated one or more classes across urban (24), semi-rural (26) and rural (28) schools (see table 6.4 below).

**Table 6.5 - Pupils who Repeated Classes before Primary Six**

Primary Classes	Frequency of pupils repeating classes before primary six			
	Urban	Semi-rural	Rural	Total
P. 1	2	2	1	5
P. 2	2	2	1	5
P. 3	2	1	2	5
P. 4	3	3	2	8
P. 5	4	4	9	17
Pupils who repeated more than one class	11	14	13	38
<b>Overall number of times classes were repeated</b>				<b>78</b>

Primary Four and Five seem to be the classes most repeated by pupils because this is the stage when English language ceases to be a subject and become the medium of instruction for all subjects on the curriculum. It needs to be noted that for this study the dominant language, Ma'di, is used at home, which has no representation in literary or in academic fields, except for church books. As English is not used at home, children do not get the opportunity to practise it in all its forms: listening, speaking and writing, therefore, they reported that they find it difficult to use English for their schoolwork. In addition, as educators previously reported in chapter 5 there are no literacy-related facilities for children to access either at home or in the community. Even though there are fewer pupils who repeated classes in the urban school, the urban community is more diverse, and it is likely that pupils are faced with situations which may compel them to use English, especially when they meet with people who do not speak Ma'di. In addition, the urban children may also have access to literacy-related centres or events, and therefore be exposed to English usage more often. Moreover, the incidences of repeating among the urban children (11) as compared to their counterparts in the semi-rural (14) and rural (13) areas is by a narrow margin, although this number increases with distance from Moyo urban centre. This further suggests that children in the rural schools face more difficulties in using English for school work than those in the urban area, which subsequently leads to poorer performance than children in the urban areas.

### **6.3.2. Question 7: Pupils' Responses to Possible Reasons for Repeating Classes**

Across the three schools, out of 90 pupils, 22 (urban), 25 (Semi-rural) and 22 (rural) (77%) pupils reported that examinations were difficult. One of the main reasons recorded was that they experience difficulties reading, understanding and writing their ideas in English. However, 40/90 (44%) pupils; 19 (urban), 11 (rural) and 10 (rural) reported that they were able to read and understand questions in English but this is less than half of the total number. It follows that 35/90 pupils (39%); 17 (urban), 13 (semi-rural) and 5 pupils (rural) stated they were able to ask teachers in class about what they did not understand. It is interesting that 57/90 pupils (63%), 12 (urban), 22 (semi-rural) and 23 (rural) reported that they were able to express their ideas in spoken vernacular only. Given the fact that from primary four onwards in Uganda, English is the official language for both teaching and learning, pupils' claims for using vernacular for academic purposes may not be helpful. In contrast, only 36/90 pupils (40%), 17 (urban), 12 (semi-rural) and 7 (rural) reported being able to express their ideas in written English. It is interesting that vernacular (mother tongue) became the language of instruction for lower primary school children in 2007 with the thematic curriculum launched in

Uganda. However, not all of the local languages have been adopted for instruction. It is therefore understandable that primary six children may speak the local language of their tribe but may not be able to write it and use it for academic purposes. That means that if the vernacular is not one of those that the Government has selected for instruction, pupils are likely to face difficulty in speaking, reading, and writing both languages. This is compounded further by the fact that only 34/90 pupils (38%); 17 (urban), 5 (semi-rural) and 12 (rural) reported that their older siblings assist them in their homework at home, while 57/90 pupils (63%); 15 (urban), 21 (semi-rural) and 21(rural) reported that their younger siblings disturb them at home. Moreover, 49/90 pupils (54%); 18 (urban), 15 (semi-rural) and 16 (rural) stated that their parents give them time to study and engage in their academic work at home. This suggests that more than half of the pupils surveyed are given time at home to do their school work. Furthermore, the pupils provided further reasons for their having to repeat classes, and these are presented according to their school locations.

### ***Urban***

Pupils in the urban school associated their difficulty with reading, writing and speaking English. Laziness, playfulness, stubbornness, unsupportive parents and bad peer groups were also cited as having a bad influence on their school progress. Out of 30 pupils in the urban school, 12 reported that they can express their ideas in the vernacular and 10 said they can read English but writing was difficult, while 8 did not indicate any particular preference. It is not clear whether children resort to reporting issues of play, stubbornness and laziness because they are unable to make meaning of their learning as a result of difficulties in English. This becomes clearer in the data gathered from one of the 9 pupils in a one-to-one interview, which was conducted through their local language. This is captured succinctly by Zina:

I started primary one in 2001 at the age of 5 but because of eye problems I fell out of school for two years. I resumed school in 2004, repeated P.4 three times and P. 5 twice. The reasons for repeating P.4 was ‘I was not able to read or write in English properly so I was not understanding what was being taught and what I was to write. At home, I got no help from my parents because, they are illiterate’. Secondly, I do not have enough time to study at home. (Interview, F3 pupil, 17.8.2012)

Zina explained that her reason for not being able to read and write is because she did not master the English language. She is therefore, not likely to be dyslexic. Notably, the lack of time emerged as a result of her over involvement in domestic duties after school. She reported that when she returns from school, she finds there is no water in the house because her mum is all day selling at the roadside. Consequently, she has to take on house responsibilities such as fetching water, at least three times in a 20litre jar-can, for cooking and bathing. After bathing

herself, she has to bathe the children, prepare supper for the family before she can settle to study by 8:30pm up to 9:40pm and go to sleep very tired. The domestic chores reported by Zina seem overwhelming. Furthermore, it was observed that the conditions for studying at home are less conducive as she stated, ‘my sisters and I use ‘dobo’ (tin lamp with cotton wick) that uses paraffin or diesel oil’ as shown in the Photo 6.1 below.



**Photo 6.1 - Poor Light Sources for Children’s Study**

The quality of light provided by a dobo is poor for reading and is quite unhealthy. The pupil explained that the small lamp (lit on the left) is used by her and her two sisters and a neighbour’s daughter in their sleeping hut while the bigger size (right) is used in the main house. The researcher was also informed that this pupil had suffered eye problems when she first started formal school. However, the cause of her eye problems may not be connected with this poor source of light in the household. What is clear is that children in disadvantaged homes such as this, regardless of location of their residence, face challenges that tend to undermine their school efforts for achievement.

### ***Semi-rural***

In the semi-rural school pupils cited a ‘lack of time for revision’, ‘a lack of appropriate source of light (lack of paraffin)’, ‘difficulty in reading, writing and speaking in English’, ‘laziness’, ‘playfulness’, ‘unsupportive parents’, ‘death of parents’, ‘speaking the local language most of the time’, as accounting for poor performance resulting in repeating of classes. Consequently, out of 30 pupils, 23 said they can express their ideas in vernacular only but the seven admitted to incompetence in both languages; local Ma’di and English, for academic purposes.

## **Rural**

The pupils in the rural school reported similar difficulties as those in the two schools already mentioned and also stated ‘long distance from school’ and ‘being disturbed by siblings’ as their distinctive difficulties. Otherwise, 21/30 pupils, reported being ‘able to use the local language’ to express their ideas in speaking but not in writing.

Overall, the 90 pupils reported English as their biggest obstacle in reading, writing and speaking, leading to class repetition in all of the three schools. Even though they acknowledged their own contribution to repeating classes by being lazy, stubborn, playful, and not concentrating, they also expressed a lack of parental support. It is appropriate that the next section presents pupils’ experience of their parents’ involvement in their education.

### **6.3.3. Question 8: Pupils’ Experience of Parents’ Involvement in their Education**

On a scale of 1=always, 2=often, 3=rarely and 4=never, pupils were asked to rate their experience of parents’ involvement in their education.

Note: In table 6.6, the numbers outside the bracket correspond to the location according the order of; urban, semi-rural and rural schools with 30 pupils each. The number inside the bracket is the total number of pupils out of 90.

**Table 6.6 - The Experience of 90 Pupils of their Parents’ Involvement in their Education**

<b>S/No.</b>	<b>Pupils experience of parental support</b>	<b>always</b>	<b>often</b>	<b>rarely</b>	<b>never</b>
1	Ensure I go to school everyday	29,24,24 (77)	1,3,1 (5)	0,2,3 (5)	0,1,2 (3)
2	Follow my progress at school to discuss with teacher	16,10,4 (30)	3,3,3 (9)	3,3,3 (9)	8,14,20 (42)
3	Pay part of the cost of my education on time	19,10,15 (44)	6,9,8. (17)	4,7,8 (19)	1,4,5 (10)
4	Discuss school progress with me at home	12,9,8 (29)	8,6,4 (18)	6,6,8 (20)	4,9,10 (23)
5	Discuss my progress with teachers	18,6,10 (34)	6,3,5 (14)	1,7,0 (8)	5,14,15 (34)
6	Visit me at school	6,4,4 (14)	9,3,3 (18)	6,3,3 (12)	9,20,20 (49)
7	Provide time and space for me to study at home	15,15,8 (38)	5,3,3 (21)	6,2,1 (9)	4,10,18 (32)
8	Know about their friends	14,11,19 (44)	4,3,1 (8)	2,4,1 (7)	10,12,9 (31)
9	Provide adequately for child’s wellbeing (food, clothing, shelter and health)	21,8,22 (51)	4,4,2 (10)	2,1,4 (7)	3,17,2 (22)
10	Allow child to participate in extra-curricular activities at school	13,3,13 (34)	10,2,5 (17)	4,6,5 (15)	3,4,7 (14)

Among the types of parental involvement queried, 77 (85%) reported that their parents ensure they go to school daily. This is followed by parents’ provision for their child’s well-being



which was reported by 51 (57%) pupils. While pupils experience a relatively positive response from parents in ‘paying part of their school fees’, active engagement of parents in pupil’s academic work is lacking. This was illustrated in such activities cited in numbers 2, 4, and 10, all ranked below 50%, yet it is arguable that these are educational activities which require close monitoring by parents. This finding seems to reinforce the reports by educators in chapter 5 that parents are less likely to monitor and supervise the educational activities of their children regardless of their education levels. Activity No 6, which scored 49/90 (54%), where parents do not visit their children in school. In a one-to-one interview with parents and the nine pupils, it was found that the few parents who actually visit their children in schools do so only at the invitation of school administration. Unfortunately, it was reported that this mainly occurs in relation to discipline problems. There are exceptional cases like Felix (F1 semi-rural family) who visited his daughter’s school to find out whether she actually goes to school, as her performance did not seem to improve. This places parental visits to their pupils’ schools under a negative cloud, as it is often associated with discipline issues and may not be encouraging for their child’s self-esteem among peers, which subsequently may affect his/her performance in school.

Overall, pupils’ experience of their parents’ involvement in their education is less than what children expected of them across the three locations, with the exception of number 1. It was established that children expect more from their parents and these views were gathered through semi-structured questions as presented in the following section.

#### **6.3.4. Questions 9 and 10: Pupils’ Responses to the kind of Support they Receive/Expect to Receive from Parents**

Pupils were asked to list three kinds of support parents provide them with which they think helps them to do well in school, and three more kinds of support they expect their parents to perform so that they might do even better.

The activities were categorised into three groups as follows.

##### **A: Required needs for schooling**

The A category constitutes items such as school fees, uniform, exercise books, textbooks, mathematical sets, pens, school bags, etc.

##### **B: Practical support**

Category B refers to *Interpersonal support*; for example, help with homework, time given to pupils, told to read, told to go to school, discuss with child, discuss with teacher, visit school, give advice, and;

*Affective support* (for example, listen to child, know child’s friends, respect child and involve child in problem-solving)

**C: Basic needs**

The C category are linked to *resource-based* supports where parents attend to the well-being of the child. For this community under study, these needs are basic, according to Maslow’s (1987) hierarchy of needs, they mostly occupy the physiological for survival; that is, ensuring provision of food, clothing, shelter, health care, mosquito nets, provision of light, paraffin, beddings, table and chairs, allow time to play. Maslow’s theory is about human motivation and he suggests five basic needs. At the bottom of these needs is the physiological need, if not satisfied, the other four (safety, love/belonging, esteem and self-actualisation) may be compromised (Maslow, 1987).

The responses of the pupils are summarised and presented in table 6.7 below.

**Table 6.7 - Types of Support Parents Provide for Pupils and Types of Support Pupils Expect from their Parents**

Category of provision	Urban		Semi-rural		Rural	
	Provided	Expected	Provided	Expected	Provided	Expected
<b>A (required schooling needs)</b>	38	40	31	41	26	45
<b>B (practical support)</b>	32	28	28	24	14	19
<b>C (basic living needs)</b>	15	22	9	8	20	28
<b>Total of items</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>92</b>

P=Provided items and E=Expected items

From the 90 pupils who generated a list of 540 items, category A (Provided items see p.275) was cited 95 times by pupils as items being provided by parents; category B (Provided items) 74 times and category C (Provided items) cited 24 times. Less than 50% of the needs of the pupils were reported as ‘provided’ by parents, which reflects an area for concern. Pupils’ response to queries about what they would expect from their parents is more than those already provided. In the urban school, the difference between what is provided and what is not is insignificant, which may indicate that children in the urban school are better provided for than those in the semi-rural and rural area. While parents’ payment of school fees, and providing text and exercise books dominate category A (P =Provided items), category B (P) showed a high incidence of pupils expressing ‘time given to them’, ‘less work’, ‘being helped in homework’, and ‘provision of food’, ‘accommodation and health care’ were the main needs they cited in C (P).

Similarly, among E= expected items (see p.276), pupils continued to express more need for textbooks and, uniforms in category A (E), a need to be given 'time', 'place', request for less domestic work like digging, more help in reading and writing, discussion of school work at home, and being advised, dominated category B (Expected). Interestingly, category C (Expected) showed significant demand by pupils for such items as 'food', 'clothing', 'shoes' 'house' and 'suitcase' for personal belongings, especially in the semi and rural schools, hence the sizeable difference between the items in P and E.

Other needs pupils expected which were not included in the categories above are having parents to:

- "buy suitcase for my personal belongings" (4): 2 from urban, 1 from semi-rural and 1 from rural
- "stop drinking alcohol" (semi-/rural)
- "teach me to read and write"
- "not to be given a hoe to dig in the morning before I go to school" (rural)
- "attend school meetings"
- "to know about my friends"
- "be happy with me"
- "send me to a boarding school", and;
- "cook more food with balanced diet, and I should find lunch ready" (urban).

It is important to explain some of the expectations of these children. First, 'not to be given a hoe to dig...' refers to the fact that in the context of this study, household members in the Moyo district make their livelihoods by physically digging the land to produce their own food. During the rainy season, cultivation is at its peak and some parents/caregivers may request their children to go to the field before leaving for school by 7:00am. While it is for a good intention as the family strives to battle with the fleeting season, for the child, it is at best inconvenient and at worst, it is detrimental to his/her schooling. If children are to first work in the garden before leaving for school, they run the risk of arriving late, tired and most likely disoriented about school. More so, arriving late to school is liable for punishment, as stated by one of the teachers interviewed. So it is asking a lot of a child to work in the field before journeying to school. The second explanation relates to a child wanting to be 'sent to a boarding school'. In the western world, this may not be a common desire for a child to want to leave her family and join a boarding school. However, for a child in a developing world, typically in the Moyo district in Uganda, it would be an added advantage. Being in a boarding

school for such a child mean she has access to basic needs such as food, own bed, time to study, and for extracurricular activities, teacher and peers to assist with homework. As the district education officer mentioned in chapter 5, most well off parents in Moyo district prefer to send their children to schools in Kampala or other major towns because parents belief those schools have far better education quality than those schools in the rural areas. All of these are likely to enhance her achievement in school, hence the desire to leave home as reported by several respondents.

Overall, the survey revealed that pupils expect more from their parents than what their parents are already doing for them. This reflects the reports from educators that parents these days desire education for their children but they are limited by time, money, illiteracy, concern for extended family, limited external support and poor infrastructures in Moyo district. Pupils’ opinions were sought as to whether their parents’ education makes a difference in their own education and achievement in school.

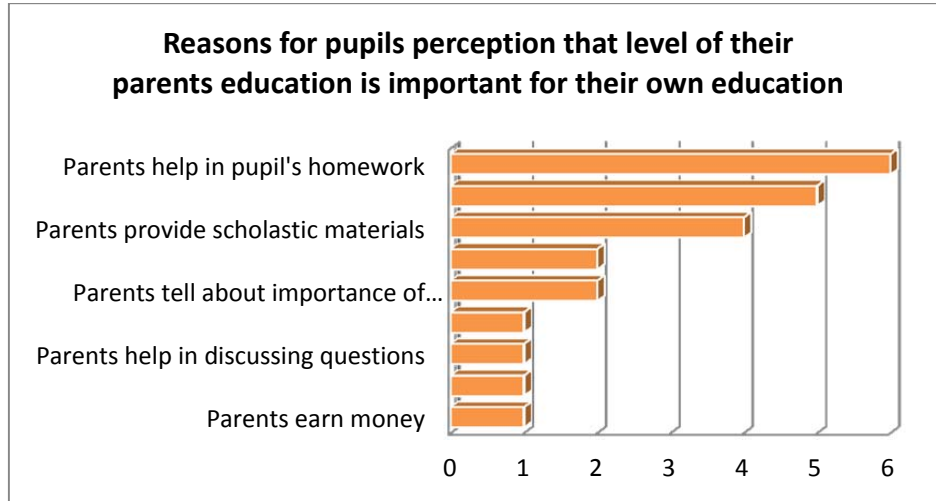
**6.3.5. Question 11: Pupils’ Perception of their Parents’ Education in Relation to their Education**

**Table 6.8 - Pupils’ Perceptions**

<b>School by location</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Urban</b>	22 (73%)	8 (27%)
<b>Semi-rural</b>	25 (83%)	5 (17%)
<b>Rural</b>	24 (80%)	6 (20%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>71 (79%)</b>	<b>19 (21%)</b>

The reasons reported by pupils about their parents’ education as being important in their education are illustrated in the figures below.

*Urban*

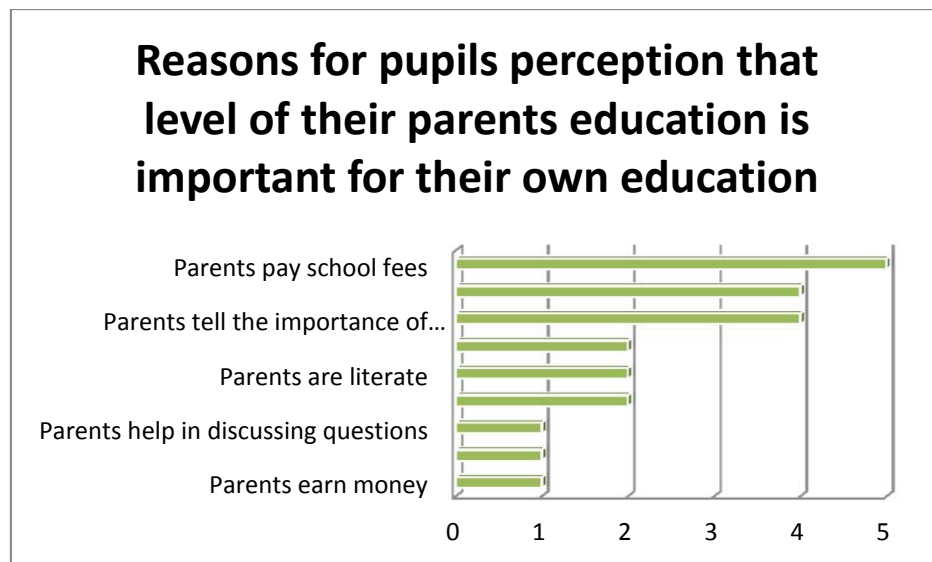


**Figure 6.2 - Urban pupils' Perception of Parent's Education**

The numbers on the x-axis indicate the numbers of pupils who reported the reasons on the y=axis

The pupils in the urban school, ranked parents' ability 'to help children in homework' highest followed by 'parents paying school fees'. Money related issues ranked low perhaps because children in the urban area take for granted that their school fees and other scholastic materials are provided. Instead, this becomes more important for the semi-rural school pupils as shown in figure 6.3 below.

*Semi-rural*

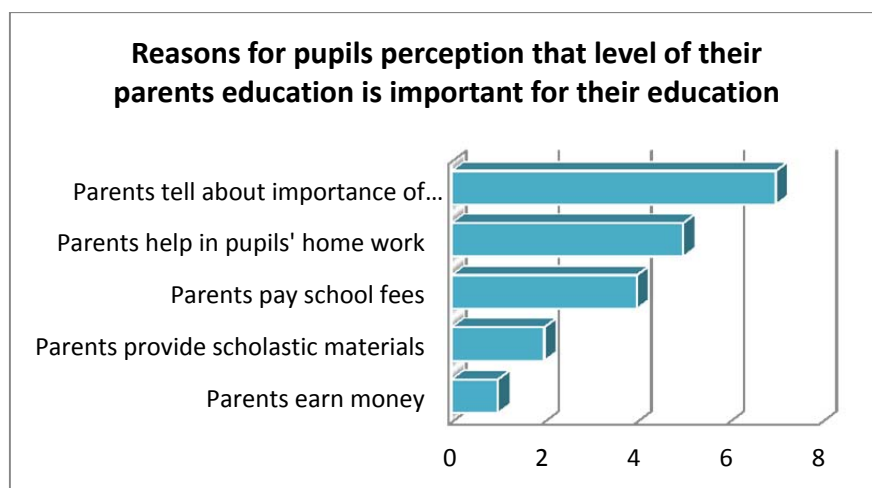


**Figure 6.3 - Semi-rural Pupils' Perception of Parent's Education**

Numbers of pupils who reported (x=axis) and the reasons (y=axis)

The semi-rural school pupils regard parents' capacity 'to pay school fees' as the most important while 'help with homework' and 'talking about education' ranked second in priority. This can be understood in the sense that parents of pupils in the semi-rural area are less likely to get money as the majority of them are not in paid jobs. It is sensible that talking about education immediately follows when money for school is available. However, for the rural pupils where the majority of parents are illiterate, their greatest desire is to hear their parents talk to them about education. This is clearly illustrated in figure 6. 4 below.

**Rural**



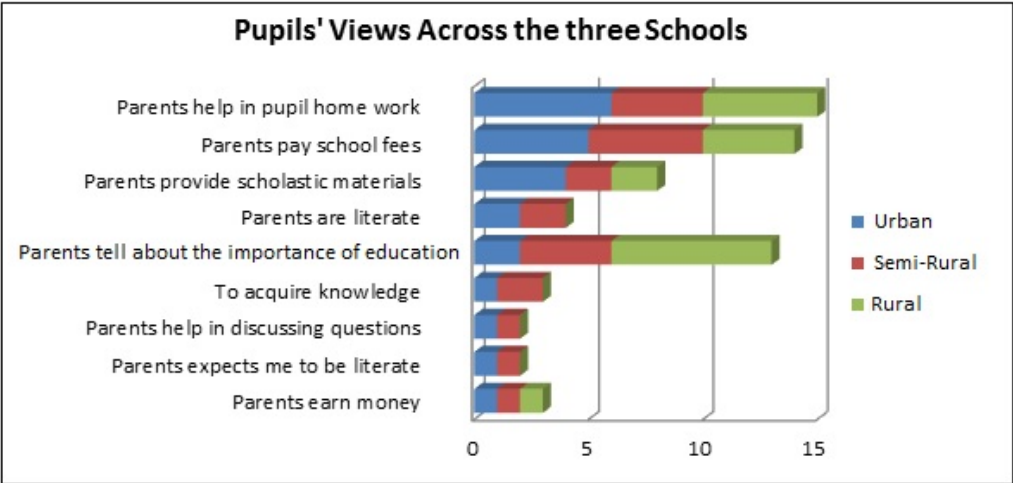
**Figure 6.4 - Rural Pupils' Perception of Parent's Education**

Numbers of pupils who reported (x=axis) and the reasons (y=axis)

For the pupils in the rural school, their parent' ability to 'tell children about the importance of education' is more appreciated than it is in the semi-rural and rural schools. The rural pupils also expressed that if parents are educated, they will be able to 'help them in their homework' and 'pay their school fees'. During a one-to-one interview, it was also noted that this group of pupils were less clear in their expressions than their counterparts in the urban and semi-rural schools, hence only five areas provided were mentioned. This may indicate the poor literacy ability and low level of verbal interaction among the rural children. It could be attributed the cultural behaviour where children rarely engage in conversation with adults like the interview event presented.

As illustrated, the priorities of pupils across the geographical divide of the study regarding pupils' perception about their parents' education in relation to their education are varied. However, pupils seem not to have been able to connect parents' education levels with job opportunity from which parents are likely to earn money and subsequently able to pay their school fees, hence, its low ranking.

A total of 58 (64%) pupils indicated that they think their parents’ lack of education is not helpful in their education because they are ‘illiterate’. In addition, 32 (36%) pupils reported that these parents ‘overwork’ them at home. This may point to the fact that these parents are unemployed so they cannot afford hired labourers and therefore their children have to do the work. Unfortunately, this sometimes interferes with school attendance. If parents are educated, pupils reported, they are likely to get employment and earn money so that their children’s physical contribution, especially in fieldwork would significantly be minimised.



**Figure 6.5 - Pupils’ Views about their Parents’ Education Across three Schools**  
 Numbers of pupils who reported (x=axis) and the reasons (y=axis)

If parents are educated, pupils reported, they are likely to get employment and earn money so that their children’s physical contribution, especially in the field work would significantly be minimised.

**6.3.6. Question 12: Pupils’ Views about whether Parents Regard Education as Important**

Pupils’ opinions were sought as to whether or not they think their parents regard education as important.

**Table 6.9 - Pupils’ Views about their Parents’ Regard for their Education**

School location	by	Yes	No	Reasons not commonly reported
Urban		29	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To become self-reliant</li> <li>To become literate and be able to communicate in English</li> <li>To acquire a profession</li> <li>Jobs and experience</li> <li>Be able to educate one’s own children and cater for their needs in future (e.g. pay school fees and provide scholastic materials)</li> </ul>
Semi-rural		28	2	
Rural		29	1	
Total		86	4	

Out of 90 pupils, 86 expressed a positive opinion about their parents' regard for their education compared with only 4 who did not think so. This correlates with educators and senior community members' report that parents desire their children do well in school. But it appears that not all parents have committed themselves to ensuring high standards for their children.

Four pupils stated that they did not think their parents regard education as important for them because 'parents overwork' them, parents 'do not help in homework', are 'illiterate' and therefore 'cannot tell' them 'about education-related matters'. Pupils were also asked to report about their own contribution in the success of their education, which is reported in the next question.

### 6.3.7. Question 13: Pupils' Views about their Contribution to their Own Education

Pupils were asked to talk about how they contribute to their own academic progress.

**Table 6.10 - Ways in which Pupils Think they Contribute to their Own Academic Progress**

Pupils' Contribution	Urban	Semi-rural	Rural	Total
Listening to teachers and parents	1	4	4	9
Revising, hard work, discussing with friends, doing homework	18	20	26	64
Asking questions in class	1	2	0	3
Going to school everyday	8	1	0	9
Attending classes regularly	2	3	0	5

Although 64 pupils claim they are hardworking, revising, discussing their studies with friends and doing their homework, this seems to be self-actualising. Conversely, reports from parents, teachers and pupils' own responses to other questions and data from the nine pupils (in a one-to-one interview) indicated otherwise. Overall, the lack of time was reported unanimously. Moreover, in response to a previous question, pupils indicated that they are not able to read and understand English so their claim about revision of schoolwork and discussion with friends appear questionable. In addition, in questions 14 and 15, pupils expressed a great need for support in all of the three areas of need, especially for 'parents to help them in homework' which ranked highest in the urban and second highest in semi-rural and rural schools.

The low (3/90) number of pupils participating in asking questions in class understandably seem to reflect pupils' honesty when they reported previously that they were not able to use English in talking, writing and understanding text, hence their inability to engage actively in class. The table also indicates that 9 pupils reported that they go to school every day but only 5 reported that they attend all classes. This implies that not all pupils who leave home for school



do attend classes, which is reflected as school absenteeism by school pupils. This result correlates with the Nila’s (semi-rural) behaviour, who after leaving home, does not reach school and therefore is unlikely to attend classes. This low attendance at school can be related to factors both at home and in school. Finally, pupils were asked to tell about how they feel about taking their primary leaving examinations the following year. Their responses are presented below.

**6.3.8. Question 14: Pupils’ Readiness for Primary Leaving Examinations**

Pupils were asked how ready they were to take their primary leaving examinations the following year.

**Table 6.11 - How pupils Perceive their Readiness to take their PLE**

State of pupils	Urban	Semi-rural	Rural	Total
Ready, I read books, past papers, attended class regularly, and went to school every day	26 (30)	17 (30)	27(30)	70 (90)
Happy because it is my last year in primary	3 (30)	10 (30)	2 (30)	15 (90)
Afraid and unhappy in case I failed	1 (30)	3 (30)	1 (30)	5 (90)

Pupils’ responses show great optimism about their progression to the next class (78%). This is a good sign and shows the strength in their education. However, the difficulties they expressed earlier and the challenges their parents face, tend to undermine pupils’ optimism for achievement in school.

Overall, pupils seemed to have honestly reported about their needs and difficulties as they undertake formal education. They have shown a positive desire to learn and engage but the problem of using a second language, English, which is the medium of instruction tends to pose significant challenges to their educational achievement, and this cuts across the children in the three sites. Similarly, factors related to language, time, poverty and illiteracy emerged as key issues and appears to be a point of concern for all stakeholders in the education of these children. The next section presents data from the in-depth interviews, pupils’ academic document analysis and participant observations from the 9 children who were selected out of the ninety pupils for further observation in their homes. Their selection was based on the different educational levels of their parents as revealed from their school-based questionnaire responses.

## 6.4. Ethnographic data: Description of the Home Backgrounds

The nine children come from families with different economic and educational backgrounds (see section 6.2.2 for family descriptions). The location of their homes are referred to in distance from the main town of Moyo. These differences are crucial as to whether or not they play a role in influencing parental involvement in their children's education in addition to their education levels. These interviews were intended to give a deeper insight in to their experiences of parental involvement in their education.

### 6.4.1. Children of Educated Parents (F1)

Three pupils (all pseudonyms): Celine 13 (urban), Nila 15 (semi-rural) and Lily 15 (rural) were interviewed in this category (see table 6.1a).

At the time of this research, Celin's mother was on maternity leave and had all the time she needed with her children. Her father works with an NGO, also in the medical field in South Sudan. Below is the newly built home with limited resources and facilities such as electricity and water.



**Photo 6.2 - Family (F1) House in the Urban Area**  
*Taken by Researcher on 30.8.2012*

Water is drawn from the nearby borehole (100m) using 20 litre plastic jar-cans rolled in a wheelbarrow (by children, see picture below) and battery powered lamps are used in the house.



**Photo 6.3 - Children Drawing Water using Wheelbarrows**  
*Taken on 30<sup>th</sup> July 2012*

This is considered a satisfactory dwelling place with close access to water, health and commercial centres, and school for Celine and her siblings.

In the semi-rural area, Nila's home is located 10km away from Moyo town (see table 6.1a for details) .

A section of the house is shown in the photo 6.9 below with ground nuts (peanuts) spread in the compound to dry in the sun for food security.



**Photo 6.4 - Family (F1) House in the Semi-rural Area**  
*Taken by the researcher on 12.8. 2012*

At the level of a semi-rural village area, this structure is reasonably a comfortable home. Neighbours, too, have a similar type of accommodation. Her uncle's wife is a P.7 leaver.

Unlike Celine's location, there is no post office, bank or other major offices, and means of transport is difficult to acquire. These services are located in the main town area.

Lily lives with her mother and siblings in a health centre premises where her mother works as an assistant nurse in the area designated rural. It is located 64km from Moyo town. The health centre is close to the river Nile where a block is designated for the nurses working in the health unit. The picture of the house is not included as it belongs to the local government and permission was not granted to take a photo of the block (see table 6.1a rural for details).

They use of hurricane lamps, or lamps that use batteries, which implies costs for buying paraffin or batteries for the torches is paramount.

#### **6.4.2. Children of Average Educated Parents (F2)**

These children, Fred 14, Martin 13 and Helen 14 belong to parents (F2 category), all three are in broken family situation living with either stepmother or grand parent. For more details about their home features, see table 6.1b section 6.2.2. In a one to one interview, these children expressed fear and none of them was outspoken.

Fred lives with his father, a stepmother, Betty, and 9 children in the family. They live within the suburbs of Moyo town relying on the basics for their survival. There are two huts: one for the parents as the main house which is one roomed, and the kitchen where Fred and his brothers also sleep. The kitchen is used only when there is rain otherwise cooking takes place under the avocado tree in the compound as shown in the Photo below.



**Photo 6.5 - Cooking on Open Fire**  
*Taken by the researcher on 12.8. 2012*

The family buys water from the neighbour's tap at a cost of (200/=, equivalent of €0.06cents) per 20 litre jar-can. The water is located about 100m from the compound and it is brought

home in plastic jar-cans: the boys lift it by hand but their stepmother carries it on her head (see table 6.1b for further details).

Helen in the rural location lives with her maternal uncle and grandmother who has a broken hip. Together with her are two cousins whose father is also bedridden from an ulcerous wound he got from fishing in the river Nile. Helen's parents were traditionally separated because it is alleged that they have blood relations and therefore her biological 'father' is barred from coming to see her at home. Her mother is living with a new partner so practically, Helen is torn between three separate homes: her uncle's, mother's and father's residence (see table 6.1b for details).

### **6.4.3. Children of Less/Uneducated Parents (F3)**

The last three children, Zina 16, Dina 15, and Joel 14 belong to unskilled parents. These parents have low education levels of primary schooling or none at all, and they have limited or no literacy skills. In addition, they have irregular or no paid employment due to a lack of skilled profession arising from illiteracy related issues. Therefore, the study found that their main occupation is peasant farming, fishing or they are engaged in petty trade. They all live in grass thatched huts as shown in the photo below.



**Photo 6.6 - Homestead of an F3 Urban Respondent**  
*Taken by the Researcher, 11.8.2012*

Zina lives with her parents, grandmother and eight of her siblings in the outskirts of Moyo town (see table 6.1c for details).

Dona lives with her estranged mother and five siblings in her grandfather's home located 14 km from Moyo town. It was reported by her Mother, Angela that Dona's father developed an intolerable, irresponsible antisocial behaviour, which led to her to return home to her father's home. Dona's grandfather is a very progressive farmer and has a whole separate hut for food stuff. Although Dona has a hut to herself, her uncle requested her to sleep with two other cousins in his permanent house with secure iron doors. Her mother revealed that there was a trick behind the use of these iron doors to prevent the girls from sneaking out for discos at night because when opening the door, it makes a noise loud enough to wake other sleepers in the homestead including her mother (see table 6.1c for details)

Finally, Joel lives with his parents and four siblings in their home located 64 km from Moyo town but very close to the river Nile. He has a brother and a sister older than him and two younger ones. While the two older siblings have their own huts, and a hut for their parents, Joel and his two younger brother and sister sleep in the one roomed grass-thatched kitchen (see hut on the right side of the photo). This can be inconvenient as Joel reported for study purposes. Besides, during dry season when temperatures are high, the kitchen is too warm for sleeping in after cooking.



**Photo 6.7 - Homestead of an F3 Rural Respondent.**  
*Taken by the Researcher, 30.8.2012*

As can be seen, none of the nine children, including those of educated parents, has an affluent standard of living, reflecting the general rural location of Moyo district.

Below are the data from interviews and observations conducted in their respective homes. They will be referred to here as children instead of pupils. Data in this section come from two sources; partly from their school-based questionnaires and partly from a one-to-one interview.

#### ***6.4.3.1 Question 1: Children' Views About whether their Parents' Education Matters in their School Progress***

The nine pupils reported that they think their parents' education is important for their academic achievement for the following reasons, namely:

- “parents can tell us the importance of education”;
- “parents can be able to help us in our homework”;
- “parents can be able to afford to buy scholastic materials”;
- “parents can provide food”, and;
- “parents can be able to treat us when sick”.

Individually, one child stated that parents' education is good because, ‘they can explain to me what I don't know, buy the right books, and will be able to buy paraffin for lighting’ (Lily, rural). Nila (semi-rural) was unable to express her ideas while, Celine (urban) stated that, with her educated parents ‘we discuss about my education, they pay my school fees and discuss together at home’.

The children associate their parents' education with both ‘money’ and ‘knowledge’ about their own education. Overall, they expressed positive views about the importance of having educated parents, citing such practices as ‘parents ability to encourage them to attend school, help in their homework, explain words they do not understand in English, pay school fees, and be able to buy exercise and textbooks for their education.

These pupils reported that they wished all parents had sufficient education and literacy skills so that they could assist their children in school matters. The two sets of pupils who have repeated classes before primary six, think they have inadequate support from their parents and mention their own laziness (F1 children) also contributing to their failure. The children of semi-skilled parents likewise, expressed similar views.

#### ***6.4.3.2 Question 2: Children's Responses to whether it was their First Time in Primary Six***

Out of the nine children, only one, Joel (F3, rural) was repeating primary six which was seen as a good thing. It is a common occurrence for pupils to repeat the same grade without progression to the next class when they do not attain the standard performance expected by the school. The following question probed into their previous performance in the primary education before level six.

### 6.4.3.3 Question 3: Pupils' Responses to why they Repeated Class (s) before Primary Six

Their responses and the reasons for repetition are on table below.

**Table 6.12 - Progress Review of Pupils Studied showing Classes Repeated in Primary Cycle**

Family	F1 Children			F2 Children			F3 Children		
<b>Pupils</b>	Celine	Nila	Lily	Fred	Martin	Helen	Zina	Dona	Joel
<b>Classes repeated</b>	P.5	P.4, P.5 (2x)	P.5	P. 3, 5	P.2, 5	P.5	P.4 (3x), P.5 (2x), 2 years out of school	P.3, P.5	P.1, P.6
<b>Status in P.6</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> time	1 <sup>st</sup> time	1 <sup>st</sup> time	1 <sup>st</sup> time	1 <sup>st</sup> time	1 <sup>st</sup> time	1 <sup>st</sup> time	1 <sup>st</sup> time	Repeating
<b>No. of years lost</b>	1	3	1	2	2	1	7	2	2

*Source: School record and interview with children (2012)*

The table indicates that all nine children studied across their different family backgrounds repeated a class or more in the course of their primary education. Although 8 of them are in their first year in primary six, equally 8 have lost more than one year during the six years in primary education, the worse situation being that of Zina with a total loss of seven years in primary. Of the children of parents with high education (F1), Nila's records are the worst but the other two had only one class repeated. This is marginally better when compared to the other two groups. Although the F2 children were found to be contending with more serious domestic problems, their performance appears to reflect a good average. This indicates that these individuals have potential to do better in school if they had assistance and steadier families backgrounds. It is unfortunate that by the time these children reach primary six and seven they are in their mid to late or above teenage years and therefore instances of their sneaking out for night discos can be expected. It is also helpful to review their overall performance over the last five years since they joined formal school.



#### 6.4.3.4 Question 4: Data from Documentation: Progress Report of the Nine Pupils

These nine children (pupils) were followed during 2012-2013 in order to assess how many will succeed complete their primary education, and how many will transfer to secondary education. In order to accomplish this goal, a comprehensive mapping of the children's academic progress was undertaken. A record of their primary six (at the time of research), and of their primary seven (end of primary cycle) major examination were compared and presented in table 6.12 below. Ideally, it should be a period of 7 years.

The values of the grades are as follows:

#### Standardised grading system in Uganda

Division 1 - Excellent; Division II - Good; Division III - Fair; Division IV - Weak; and Division U (unclassified) - Failed

**Table 6.13 - Progress Review of the Nine Pupils from Primary One to Seven**

Result in grades: Test results from pupils' previous examinations: Academic performance									
Family categories	F1			F2			F3		
Individual pupils	Celine	Nila	Lily	Fred	Martin	Helen	Zina	Dona	Joel
P.1	I	I	II	I	I	I	II	III	I
P.2	II	II	II	II	II	II	II	III	I
P.3	IV	III	III	III	I	I	III	III	II
P.4	III	III	III	III	III	III	III	II	I
P.5	IV	U	II	III	III	III	IV	IV	I
2012 P.6 mock exam	IV	IV	U	II	-	U	U	-	IV
2012 P.6 end of year exam	III	U	IV	II	-	IV	-	-	III
6	Pupils' primary leaving examinations (PLE) in 2013								
2013 P.7 Mock exam	IV	-	-	III	-	III	-	U	II
2013 P.7 Final exam	II	-	-	I	III	II	-	III	II

Note: The results of P.6 final examinations of Martin, Zina and Dona were not available. A likely explanation is that they did not take these examinations.

#### Comments

As would be expected, the pupils' academic results show varied strengths.. All nine had fairly good performance in the lower primary (P.1-3), with the exception of Dona achieving a grade 111. Results show that all of the children started well in the lower primary but declined as they advanced. Among the pupils, only Joel (F3) appears to do as well throughout much of his schooling. The grades seem to hold steady as compared to some of the other categories, which seem to deteriorate even more. This decline in performance can be linked to a switch in the

language of instruction which the pupils themselves commented on from the vernacular in the lower primary to English in the upper primary level. Despite this shift in language, the boys tend to perform better a little better than the girls. Moreover, none of the boys come from educated parents. This may be attributed to the overload of domestic work on the girls more than on the boys.

At the end of their primary six, only Fred got division II, Celine and Joel got division III, Lily and Helen barely passed in fourth grade while Martin, Zina and Dona results were not recorded (see likely reason above). Nevertheless, under the universal primary education, all nine children continued to their final year (P. 7) in primary education. The subsequent results revealed clear differentiation. Reports from the headteachers confirmed that Nila and Lily dropped out of school in their first term in primary seven (P.7). Nila eloped with her boyfriend at 15 years of age while Lily developed behaviour problems leading to her escaping to live with her father who was estranged from her mother. In addition, Zina was removed from school by her father and together they moved to the neighbouring district and the reasons were not made clear to the school administration. The remaining six pupils performed remarkably well and all transitioned to secondary education. In the context of this study, it is interesting to examine what contributed to their strong performance.

Out of the nine children three girls dropped out before completing primary school (Zina, Nila and Lily). Of the three, Nila did not proceed to primary seven while Lily and Zina transitioned to primary seven but dropped out in the first term.

Both Nila and Lily belong to parents who were considered educated (F1, see section 6.4.1, p.285) although they dropped out of school. Interview data revealed that Nila did not feel fully part of her uncle's family and this was coupled with her language difficulties at school. In fact her termination was a process which began with her habit of sneaking out for night dances while still in primary five. It is arguable that her fears and her problematic behaviour were a tactic to hide her academic weaknesses. Lily's problems could be due to the separation of her parents, which seemed to have negatively affected her life and education. As one of the senior members in the semi-rural area previously stated, 'stability in family is the key'. She claimed that when family is stable, children feel happy leading to better concentration in schooling.

It was surprising to see that Fred who got a first division grade comes from parents with an average education. This was a challenge to the assumptions behind the thesis. A likely reason is that his older sibling, Jimmy, by then in his first year secondary education might have

proved instrumental in his performance from the view point of providing academic peer home support. Jimmy desired his brother to do well in school so that he could join him in secondary education (Research journal, 3rd August 2012). As a result, he was observed to be constructively critical of how well Fred was doing and helped him in every academic task, correcting his test papers, reading and playing games with him and his other two brothers (Research journal, 4th August 2012).

Helen and Joel achieved second division grades. While Joel reported he was repeating primary six, he was also being helped by his sister who had dropped out of school from senior two due to an unplanned pregnancy. She was at home so it was an advantage for Joel as both his parents were illiterate. Celine was a student of weak academic ability student but she had a warm loving family with all the necessary educational resources she needed. As her mother confirmed, she is a slow learner and hence her division grade performance in comparison to the support available to her (Research journal, 31st August 2012) . Moreover, Celine was the only pupil from educated parents who had a room to herself. The study attributes her good performance to her parents' constant encouragement and adequate provision of her needs, not only school requirements but also her welfare. In addition, because her grandmother lived with her family, Celine was not as burdened by domestic chores as Dina and Dona were, as her grandmother did the cooking for lunch, swept and mopped the house and ensured the compound was cleaned (Research journal, 30th-31st August 2012). In this way, Celine had time for extra study and to complete her homework, hence the study timetable she prepared for her and her sister as noted in their living room.

Martin and Dona both achieved division three grade, which, considering the constraints of their home backgrounds is a good performance. While Martin, like Fred has an older brother with whom he shares a sleeping space, his father also ensured they have a solar light in their main house. This means they are able to study before leaving for their sleeping place in the neighbouring homestead. Despite her shyness, Dona's mother Angela, though illiterate, trusts and gives her a lot of encouragement to do well in school and this is evidenced by her strong performance.

A common theme underpinning the successful performance of these pupils in school is the presence of supportive parents, siblings or other adults in their lives. It appears that these supports both encouraged the pupils to do well, and also facilitated their studies on a practical level.

#### 6.4.3.5 Question 5: Pupils' Expectations of their Parents' Support

Pupils were asked to list three things they expect their parents to do for them that in their opinion could help them do well in school

**Table 6.14 - Pupils Expectations**

<b>Parental category</b>	<b>Expectations as reported by pupils</b>
Professional (F1)	Buy textbooks, pay school fees, monitor if I am in wrong direction, Give time to study (Celine) Give time to study, pay school fees and ensure that I go to school every day (Nila) Provide paraffin for light, buy uniform, clothes, shoes (Lily)
Semi-skilled (F2)	Send me to school, buy me exercise books and pay my school fees (Fred) Provide paraffin, send me to school daily and give me time to do my homework (Martin) Buy books, provide paraffin and food (Helen)
Unskilled (F3)	Buy more textbooks, pay full school fees on time, buy uniform, books and pens (Zina) Buy school material, provide adequate food, give time for studies, and advise on working hard at school (Joel). Dona did not fill in this section.

Note: when pupils talk of school fees, they refer to what the headteachers' explained to be an 'emergency fund' paid to the school by parents. Cases of emergency constitute repair of pit latrines and teachers' houses. At the time of the research, each child pays an amount of Ush. 5,000 (equivalent of € 1.50) per child per term. Sometimes, failure to pay this leads to a child being sent home.

The children of professional parents indicate interest in their academic work in terms of requesting textbooks, time to study and paraffin for light. Their request would suggest that there is currently a lack of adequate scholastic materials, which is likely to affect their performance in school. They also reported that they expect both material resources and personal involvement from their parents/guardians in relation to their education by way of telling them to go to school every day, advising them to keep good company. But above all, ensuring parents pay their school fees on time was reported to be of particular significance.

Similarly, the children of parents in the other two categories report almost identical expectations, but they also include the issue of good security which is not mentioned by those of professional parents.

#### 6.4.3.6 Question 6: Assessment of Literacy Skill Abilities

Data from pupils' questionnaires and interviews were carefully assessed for pupils' literacy related abilities in English and also in their own language. The interviews were conducted in

both Ma'di and English as it became apparent that pupils were not able to express their thoughts exclusively in English. It was on a one-to-one basis in their home setting. As a teacher of English with non-native English speakers, I used both the local language and English for encouraging the children to express their views. The results showed that the nine children had varying literacy abilities in the areas tested.

Using a Likert scale of ten points, where 1 is the least ability, and 10 the strongest ability on literacy abilities. While area 4 required a YES and NO response. These are shown on table 6.14 below.

**Table 6.15 - Summative Mapping of Pupils' Capabilities in Academic and Related Literacy Tasks**

Sources of information		Children interviewed and observed (n.9)								
		Educated parents			Less educated parents			Uneducated parents		
Rating out of		10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
1	<b>Areas tested</b>	Pupils' completed questionnaires in their respective schools								
	<b>Children tested</b>	<b>Celine</b>	<b>Nila</b>	<b>Lily</b>	<b>Fred</b>	<b>Martin</b>	<b>Helen</b>	<b>Zina</b>	<b>Dona</b>	<b>Joel</b>
	Hand writing	7	4	6	6	6	8	4	5	7
	Vocabulary	6	2	5	7	5	6	3	4	7
	Grammar	8	2	6	4	4	5	2	3	5
	Average length of sentence in English	6	1	5	4	6	6	2	2	6
2	<b>Individual interviews with pupils in their homes</b>									
	Fluency	6	1	7	5	3	8	3	4	7
	Confidence	5	2	9	3	2	6	6	3	7
	Content of information	7	2	8	6	3	7	5	4	8
	Accuracy of response	7	4	7	7	4	7	6	4	8
	Repeat the questions	2	7	2	3	5	2	5	6	2
3	<b>Pupils' personal related literacy activities outside of school</b>									
	Homework	7	3	4	5	4	5	2	4	8
	Reading	7	2	6	6	5	7	3	3	6
	Writing	8	2	3	5	4	5	2	2	5
	Discussion of academics with peers	7	1	5	7	3	6	5	3	4

4	Engagement of pupils in extracurricular school activities									
Debate	YES		YES	YES	YES	YES			YES	
Choir	YES	NO	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	
Athletics & Games	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	
Church activities	YES	YES	YES	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO	

#### Comments

Overall, all nine pupils had firm and clear handwriting except Zina, whose handwriting was weak and at times illegible. With regards to syntax, three of the nine children showed significant weaknesses: Nila, Zina and Dona. Closer observation during the fieldwork indicated that this weakness could be attributed to a lack of practice of the English language outside of school than to a lack of home literacy resources. This is likely because, for example, Nila, was noted to have relatively richer literacy related resources than all the other pupils studied including Celine. But because she reported fear of asking her older siblings or her uncle for help, this seems to have impacted on her ability to speak, write and understand English text as her scores in area 3 indicates. The source of her fear in asking for help is not clear. In contrast, both Zina and Dona do not have someone to help and interact with in English at home. This isolation seems to be further compounded by their lack of active participation in extra-curricular activities at school as indicated in area 4. Moreover, playing with other children could encourage spontaneous interaction in English.

It was observed and confirmed that the six other children who did well interacted freely, though not so with their parents or caregivers but with their siblings and members of their club. As was the case with Helen in her church, where she reported that she had the responsibility of being the chairperson for the alter-servers. Despite her difficult background with separated parents, she displayed fluent (8), accurate responses (7) with reasonable meaning (7) and questions did not need to be regularly repeated (2). A similar attitude was observed in Lily and Joel but there was an undercurrent of innate shyness in them, which seemed to compromise clarity in the children's conversation with the researcher. The study interprets this shyness as cultural traits. Among the Ma'di of Uganda, children who talk with their heads held up are described as being bold. The culture tends to discourage children from speaking at eye-to-eye level with their conversational partner. Such behaviour is most likely expected of children in this rural community especially when the co-conversant is a stranger and older than them, as in this case with the researcher. This resonates with some of the

assertions made about ethnographic studies (Hamersley and Atkinson, 2007; Sarantakos, 2013). Although the field work attempted to diminish this psychological barrier by undertaking both participant observation and conducting interviews in the children's home setting in order to allow them gain confidence and trust, the cultural symptoms seem to be embedded deeper in the children than anticipated.

Overall, across the three category of families, the pupils' expectations of their parents suggest that there are inadequate resources for their schooling at home, parents overwork them, and they are not practically involved in the children's school related activities. Now it would be interesting to hear the views from the parents of these pupils to see if there is correlation with what their children have reported or not. As demonstrated in table 6.14, the English literacy abilities of the children appear to be weak. This can have bad impact upon their achievements in school since schooling is conducted through English. The results in table 6.14 correlates strongly with other evidence that these children have academically mixed abilities but when assistance is available, they perform better in school. This is evidenced in the results of children of parents with varying levels of education: Celine (weak but supported) and Nila (weak but unsupported) from parents with high levels of education; Fred (bright supported) and Helen (average supported): children of average parents and, Joel (supported) and Zina (unsupported): children of parents with low levels of education. The good performance of Celine, Fred, Helen and Joel, in their final primary leaving examinations indicated that the innate intelligence is not the strongest indicator of success. Instead other variables such as the support from parental encouragement (Celine) and other members in the family (Fred and Joel) and good peer group (Helen) enable children to perform in school than expected. Notwithstanding the home-based interviews with the children, the aspect of potential researcher bias could not be avoided, given the fact that these children may never have been interviewed formally by a stranger before.

#### **6.4.3.7 Main Challenges Pupils Face**

The main issues that emerged from the 90 pupils including the nine children were concerns about language, literacy, time, domestic responsibility, inadequate resources, role models and reading culture in this community and these are summarised below.

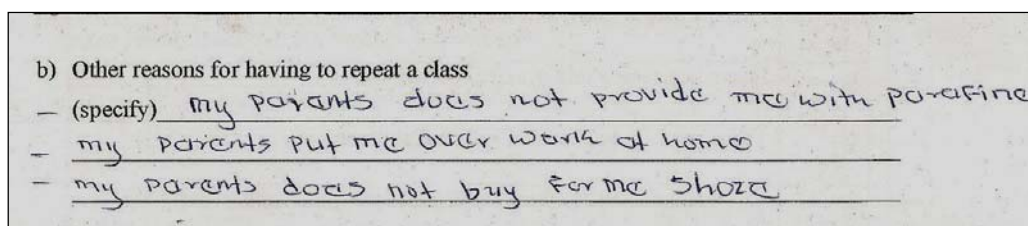
##### ***Language and literacy skills***

Difficulty in language expressed by pupils cut across the three schools studied. The same difficulty was evident from among the 9 children who were further interviewed and observed

in their homes. All nine expressed difficulty in using English for academic purposes. Six of the nine reported that they cannot use vernacular language to express their ideas even though it is their local language. In addition, it is not recommended for academic writing in the upper levels of primary education. For the children of unskilled parents, their parents' illiteracy posed yet another difficulty for children and these are illustrated in Zina's report:

...I am 16 years now and still in P.6. Ah... you see...I repeated P.4 three times and P. 5 twice because, I think, I was not concentrating. The reasons were that in P. 4, I was not able to read and understand what I was reading in English. Writing was even more difficult with spelling problems because I would not know how to pronounce the words properly. At home my parents could not help me because, they could not read nor write. (Interview, F3 pupil, 7.8. 2012)

Overall, Zina spent five years repeating classes without advancing to the next class. According to the educators (Chapter 5), this is one of the reasons that leads to low motivation and eventual dropping out of primary school children in the rural area. Yet, for girls at the age of 16, her likelihood of either becoming pregnant or getting married as reported by the educators, before completing primary education seem imminent. The writing difficulty expressed by almost all pupils is also illustrated in another pupils' excerpt from the questionnaire.



**Figure 6.6 - Language and Writing Difficulties  
(Helen, F2 Pupil, Rural Area)**

Two important aspects stand out in this piece of writing. First, the standard of language (English) clearly indicates and confirms pupils' reports that they face difficulty in expressing their ideas in English. At primary six, despite curriculum requirements, they are not competent in handling tenses, spelling and punctuation. Martin (semi-rural) and Joel (rural) disclosed in an interview with me that 'I fear to ask the teacher in class'. This fear is further compounded by unsupportive parents (not wilfully) as reported by these children, where they neither have the time, resources, nor the skills (for illiterate parents) to assist them in their academic work. This introduces the problem of lack of time.



### ***Time factor***

Educators previously reported the problem of a lack of time experienced by parents. Pupils themselves reported the same scenario. For example, Joel expressed a lack of time after school in the following terms:

...I have no time to study at home because we have to take care of the family animals – goats. Then we have to go to the Nile to have bath and return home when it is dark and there is no light for studying. Sometimes we use a lamp that uses dry cells but the battery does not last long and dad says there is no money to replace. Until our dad gets money from,... we can't use the lamp. Alternatively, we use straws to light our way in the house when darkness falls. Straw light cannot be used for reading and mum does not allow us to take too much straw from the house because she said the house would leak during rainy season. (Interview, F3 rural pupil, 30.8. 2012)

Joel's story reveals layers of problems. They range from a lack of time for his home study, domestic responsibilities, lack of resources, to limited family income. As reported consistently by the pupils, especially those from average and low levels education family categories (F2 and F3), without meeting the basic needs of the children, they recognise that performance in school is not possible. Domestic responsibility among rural schoolchildren is common.

### ***Domestic responsibilities by school going children***

Coming from school with homework to do, one of the pupils interviewed and observed in her home expressed:

... when I return home from school, I find there is no water in the house because mum is all day selling at the roadside. I have to fetch water at least three times [using 20litre jar-can] for cooking and bathing. I bath and then the children. I may start studying by 8:30pm up to 9:40pm by then I am very tired and go to sleep. (Interview, F3 urban pupil, 17.8. 2012)

This comment is from Zina who has shown great resilience and patience to continue with her education, who at 16 years is still in primary six. Her mother engages in petty trade thus, she is not in position to put her daughter's school tasks in as a first priority. Photo 6.8 below illustrates Zina preparing supper for the family after school.



**Photo 6.8 - Domestic Responsibilities of Pupils**

*Taken by Researcher on August 2012*

Although Zina reports that ‘my parents think education is important that is why they want me to study so that I can be self-reliant in future’, the dream of that self-reliance seem to be elusive if the situations doesn’t change for her. Nonetheless, Zina empathises with her parents... ‘I think they are not happy because they cannot assist us academically’. Fred adds another view on domestic responsibilities:

...sometimes we are compelled to abscond going to school when our step mother goes to her home and dad is not at home ... we must remain to mind the home. We are not only engaged in cooking but so many things such as minding the animals, the poultry, fetching water, firewood for the cooking and bathing the younger siblings. (Interview, F2 urban pupil, 12.8. 2012)

### ***Inadequate resources at home and in the community***

Parents’ preoccupation with activities to support the family’s livelihood cannot be over stated. As money is spent on school fees, food, health and other needs of the family, which are considered the basic needs, providing adequate scholastic materials for the school going child is further down the pecking order. This was strongly expressed in the pupils’ list of expectations of their parents. Here is an example from one of the 9 pupils interviewed and observed. When asked what else does he expect from his parents, Fred (urban) responded, ‘my school fees needs to be paid on time so that I am not sent home’. The school fees is Ush 5,000/= (equivalent of €1.25) and development fund, 2,000/= (less than €1). Yet, this is the amount of money which Fred and his brothers, and indeed all of the children interviewed in this study are concerned about. Close observation revealed that Fred and his three brothers all sleep in one roomed hut [supposed to be a kitchen] where there is no bed, one mattress, one mosquito net, and just one blanket to be shared (Researcher journal, 3rd August 2012). The

source of light is poor; a tin lamp with a wick using paraffin. Similar inadequate accommodation facilities were also reported by Martin (semi-rural) and Helen (rural). Moreover, both in the schools these children attend and in the community, it was observed and further reported by senior community members, that facilities such as library or community centres for schoolchildren are lacking. Consequently, children are unlikely to have role models in the environment that can motivate them in their education. This is the next issue for consideration.

### ***Role models and reading culture***

The three educators and three senior community members interviewed reported that generally, there is no reading culture in Moyo district. Parents read neither to children nor for themselves. Participant observation revealed that some children rely on older siblings, for leisure and assistance in academic matters. For example, in the photo below (F2, urban), Fred and his three brothers attend different classes (primary 2, 3, 6 and year one in secondary level) but they all support each other as shown in photo 6.9.



**Photo 6.9 - A Cognitive Activity: Siblings Play “Ludo” on Papyrus Mat**  
*Taken by the Researcher, August 2012*

This is an example, which is encouraging and tends to help these children in their learning. Even with limited support from their parents, they appear to learn from one another. For example, just before they settled to play what they called 'ludo' using dices and numbers, Fred arrived from school (12:45pm) with his examination papers. The other three including their stepmother were eager to know what marks he got. Sharing the papers with his family members, it emerged that he got 74% in Religious Education, 73% in Social Studies and 54% in English. This was a point of concern, as his brother Jimmy exclaimed in surprise (year one), 'Hah! What happened?', 'Let's see the questions you failed', he continued turning the pages and looking for red crosses. One of the questions asked was, 'Complete the following sentences.....' The answer was, 'Do you?' Instead, Fred's answer was, 'Isn't I?'

All laughed as Jimmy went on correcting the mistakes. Obviously, Fred did not understand the question tag as well as the parts of speech to which he was required to respond. This incompetency in the language of instruction tends to reinforce the dilemma of the pupils surveyed and interviewed in that they find examinations and understanding English difficult. It appears that this kind of linguistic deprivation and a lack of time hinders mainly the children of the semi-rural and rural, particularly of parents of low education levels from engaging in active interaction both at home and in school, thereby compromising their academic potential. The next section presents the interview responses from parents themselves.

## **6.5. Interview Responses from Parents**

This study portrays a community where families have to educate their children for life in a society where English is the official language but never the home language. Families largely subsist on agriculture and rudimentary fishing from the river Nile. There is no government welfare system to assist unemployed parents. Homes do not have running water or electricity, and people, including children, walk long distances on foot, or, if well off, on bicycle or motorbike. Public means of transport is rare and expensive (Researcher observation journal, 31.8. 2012).

This section presents responses from the families, parents in particular of the primary six school children interviewed and observed in their home setting.

### **6.5.1. Parents' Practices of Literacy Skills**

In line with interactional constructionism, the practice of literacy skills: speaking, reading, writing and listening were observed by the researcher and reported by participants as they occurred in their daily lives in the home environment. Both symbolic tools of the local and English languages were monitored. A very brief description of the three categories of families to which the children belong is provided in order to give a window into their lived experiences, and contextualise the parents' responses.

### **6.5.1.1 Respondent Parents: Professional (F1)**

Regina is a nurse who worked in the district hospital, and only recently, she was transferred to an outreach government dispensary, about 25 km from Moyo town. At the time of this research, she was on maternity leave and had all the time she needed with her children. Her average earning is about USh 700,000 (€212.00) per month. Her husband works with an NGO, also in the medical field, in South Sudan.

In the semi-rural area, Felix is married with five children of his own and four dependants including Nila, his niece. He is a secondary school teacher with average salary of about USh 800.000 (€242.00) per month. He has his own permanent house built in the village and his wife has no professional job as she stopped in P.7. According to System Approach for Better Education Results (SABER), teachers' salary is exceptionally low which is insufficient for a family's basic subsistence. For example, the annual salary for primary teachers was USh 3,276,000 (€1,023.00 at the rate of 1 euro to UGX 3.200) compared to the starting salary for a medical officer in public sector which was USh 9,467,857 (€2,869.00) or USh 788.988 (€239.10) per month (SABER, 2012, see table 6.19 for more information).

Lily's mother Rosana, works as an assistant nurse in the rural area located 64km from Moyo town. As a single mother, she is rearing six children of whom one is in secondary school and four are in the primary and one is only two years old and has no opportunity for pre-schooling. Her average income is about USh 400.000 (€121.00) per month.

### **6.5.1.2 Respondent Parents: Semi-skilled Parents (F2)**

The children of the semi-unskilled parents included Fred 14 (urban), Martin 13 (semi-rural) and Helen 14 (rural). These parents do not have permanent jobs and they have low family income, although they live in their own houses. Their average earnings from casual jobs is less than USh 250,000 (€75.80) per month.

Mike, Fred's father lives with his family of 9 children in the family within the suburbs of Moyo town. Two of his previous wives left for various reasons ranging from irresponsible alcohol consumption to negligence of children. Now he is with a third wife Betty, who cares for all the other seven children (she has two) left by the previous women. Mike dropped out of school from secondary education due to lack of school fees. He has self-trained to be a carpenter and a builder. With no permanent job, his income is low and irregular.

Ben, Martin's father is a soldier who had two wives previously but separated from them, this included Martin's mother. Martin now lives with his step brothers and sister and a second step-mother who is illiterate.

Cornelius is a senior four leaver, who like Mike has no permanent job but he has worked with different non-governmental organisations. At the time of this research, he was working with the local government in the neighbouring district. Because his place of work is far (40km), he comes home only on weekends and public holidays. For Helen's background, see section 6.4.2, paragraph three.

### **6.5.1.3 Respondent Parents: Unskilled Parents (F3)**

The last three children, Zina 16, Dona 15, and Joel 14 belong to unskilled parents (see table 6.1c). These parents have low education levels of primary or none, and they have limited or no literacy skills. In addition, they have irregular income of not more than US\$ 100.000 (€30.30) per month because they are unemployable due to a lack of skilled profession arising from illiteracy related issues. Therefore, the study found that their main occupation is peasant farming, fishing or engaging in petty trade. Their homes consist of bricks, mud and wattle with an earthen floor and spear grass thatched roofs.

Zina's father, Adam is an uneducated peasant. He also deals in buying goats and reselling them to the local butchers in Moyo town.

Angela, Dona's mother in the semi-rural area stopped in P. 2 and she is a single mother of six. She resides with her children in her father's home. Her main occupation is tilling the land to produce food and brewing local beer for sale in order to pay for the needs of her children.

Lastly, George, Joel's father and his family live in the rural area near the river Nile. His main occupation is fish mongering and some subsistence agriculture. George and his wife did not attend any formal education and therefore they are illiterate.

The data in the following sections was provided through parental interviews and direct observation in the families' homes as described above.

## **6.5.2. Question 1 Language Usage**

There are at least two main languages; local Ma'di and English (official) in operation. They may be used at home concurrently or one over the other.

### **6.5.2.1 Language Spoken at Home**

When parents were asked which language is used most at home, all nine parents reported the dominant language spoken at home was the Ma'di vernacular. Two families (F1, urban and F3 rural) tend to switch codes from Ma'di to another local language other than English in their everyday interaction. Only one family (F1, urban) reported that they often use English at home.

#### ***Literacy Activities: Parents and Children at home***

In response to the research question that addressed the link between parents' education and literacy skill levels, and the educational achievement of their primary school going child, an in-depth semi-structured interview and participant observation were conducted with the nine participating families. This aimed to investigate whether or not parents' education and literacy skills have influence on the literacy activities at home with their children and if so, to what extent.

### **6.5.2.2 Oral Language**

The responses from professional parents with a high level of literacy skills studied across the three sites indicated that the local language, Ma'di, is the dominant language spoken at home. However, two families out of 9, reported that English were also concurrently used besides Ma'di. For example, Celine's family in the urban area (professional) speak Ma'di, Kuku and English. In the case of the rural family (Joel) results from the fact that Gimara sub-county borders another county where the people speak a totally unrelated language (the Kuku and Aringa languages) with the Ma'di tribe so the use of both languages occurs naturally.

Parents were asked if in their opinion there is a link between their education/literacy levels and the extent to which they speak the local language at home which is likely to influence their schooling child. All nine sets of parents in the three locations were consistent in their response in that they identified a link.

On the one hand, all parents reported that the literacy skill of speaking the local language is important for them and for their children, and on the other hand, they indicated that exclusive

use of the local language at home deprives school children from practice of English. The various reasons cited are summarised in the table below.

**Table 6.16 - Speaking the Local Language as Reported by Respondents**

Parents' level of education	Oral Language Skills (in the local language)			
	Parents	Child	Level	Reasons cited
<b>High</b>	Proficient	Proficient	Good	Identity, heritage, communication with older members in the family and community
<b>Average</b>	Proficient	Proficient	Excellent	Mother tongue, communication with kin
<b>Low</b>	Proficient	Proficient	Excellent	Mother tongue, heritage, pride, identity and culture.

Regardless of their educational and literacy skills levels, all parents acknowledged that being able to speak the local language is important because it is a symbol of identity, a tool for communication, especially among kin and elderly members of the community, and is a prized heritage of the culture. On the other hand, speaking the local language predominantly in the home could have consequences for the school child. As Felix (semi-rural), a secondary school teacher reported:

...when the mother tongue is dominantly spoken at home, children do not get the opportunity to practise the language of school, the English language, and this tends to affect how well or poorly the children perform in school. (Interview, 12.08.2012)

This impact is evident in the pupils' reports on class repetition.

However, the professional parents think that being able to speak the local language is important and this ability is associated with such concepts as identity, communication, transmission of culture and heritage as Regina (urban area) expressed:

...it is important to speak the local language because it is my mother tongue (heritage) so that I could not only identify with the people of my tribe but more importantly to be able to pass it onto my children. (Interview, Professional urban, 31.7.2012)

Regina (Professional urban) added another advantage of being able to speak the local language; that is, for telling stories to her children after supper at home. In addition, she reported using the vernacular to explain words to her children, which they are not able to understand in English. This was confirmed during the in-situ observation period. It was observed that Regina gets particularly engaged talking when with her children. For example, her 9 year old child told her that she did not answer a question in her Social Science examination because she did not understand what the word 'importance' meant. She translated the word 'importance' to the vernacular, 'okpo' or 'loso-loso' in Ma'di language and her



daughter quickly understood. Notwithstanding the positive notion about the use of vernacular at home, the professional parents reported having insufficient time in general to interact with their children. As Felix (semi-rural) reported when asked ‘When you are at home, do you get to converse with your children?’ His response was:

...Not so much because I have to catch up on some commitments in the home and in the community, and also spend time with my friends. I see them improving on listening and speaking skills at home through telling stories, proverbs, riddles – among themselves and with other adults, like my wife after her day’s work at the centre or in the field, other adults including uncles, they have no grandparents (Interview, S-R professional, 12.8.2012)

Felix expresses the difficulty educated and employed parents face in getting personally involved with their children on a daily basis. Similarly, Rosanna (F1, rural) shares Felix’s situation as she stated:

... I have no time to stay with them [children]. I provide textbooks for those who have reached secondary school but not enough money for the primary children. (Interview, professional R, 22.8.2014)

The primary child in this statement appears to be facing two disadvantages: one of inadequate attention from parents, and two, that of insufficient material provision. The low level of income among professional parents is also made apparent.

Parents with average (F2) and low levels of education (F3) also concurred and reported that to be able to speak in the local language is important. While parents with average literacy levels expressed a lack of time to engage with children, likewise, parents with less education also expressed that they do not have adequate time with their children as they have to spend long hours digging in the fields. Furthermore, they also reported having no other language to communicate with their children than the vernacular. Overall, it was observed that because the vernacular is used so much at home, the children get no chance of improving their literacy skills in English.

While educated parents could use the vernacular for explaining English vocabulary to their children, the less educated parents appear to have no other option apart from using the local language. For this reason, these parents reported that their children are deprived of developing the language of instruction for their schoolwork.

To summarise, all families reported having a difficulty in helping their children’s literacy ability, the less well educated most of all. None of the three categories have the time needed, and the less well educated have also the disadvantage of not having the language themselves.

### *Speaking the English Language*

As noted earlier, generally English is not used in the everyday life of all nine families visited. However, family Celine's family (urban) attempt to use it frequently at home. Professional parents reported that they are fluent in English and they described their level of speaking as 'good' except Rosanna (rural) who described her spoken English as 'moderate'. Professional parents reported that their children were able to speak English but they described their level of speaking as 'moderate' (urban and semi-rural) and 'weak' (rural).

The level of speaking English by children belonging to parents with average (F2) and low levels of education (F3) ranged from moderate, to poor as shown in table 6.17 below.

**Table 6.17 - Levels of Speaking English for the 9 Families**

Parents' level of education	Oral Language Skills in English			
	Parents	Child	Level	Reasons cited
<b>High</b>	Proficient	Moderate	Moderate	To communicate with others who do not speak the mother tongue, official language, instructional language, to access information, all books in Uganda are printed in English, to fill in forms, and access information online (Functional)
<b>Average</b>	Moderate	Weak	Moderate, Weak	Official language, language of the school, to enable one to go out of his/her district
<b>Low</b>	N/A	Poor	Poor	Official language, language of the school

The professional parents attach a wide range of importance to the ability to speak English, which is not just confined to Moyo district but to the rest of the country and globally.

Like the educators, these parents emphasised the necessity of being able to speak English for all parents and their school going children. The rationale is especially important in the Ugandan context where it is the official language and language of instruction in schools.

Parents with average and low levels of education considered being able to speak English as important. Angela, Dona's mother reported 'because it enables one to acquire knowledge from books, communicate with other people whose local language is different and for future life'(Interview S-R, 14th August 2012)



George, Joel's father metaphorically attaches importance to the English language for his primary six child in these terms:

.... I sent him to school to learn English for his future. English is the 'hoe' for the future which you must put on your shoulder and go everywhere with it. (Interview, Unskilled, R, 30.8.2012)

### **Figure 6.7 - Parental Emphasis on a Common Language**

George, presents a typical image that depicts a traditional peasant farmer (like himself) among the people of the Ma'di to whom hoe and the land are inseparable - his livelihood and the future of his children both depend on tilling the land manually using the hand hoe. George compares this important tool of his tradition with modern tools for successful education; that is, the English language, pen and knowledge of the book which have become his aspirations for his son.

Two events were observed during home visits, which starkly demonstrate the difference between involvement by the educated and less educated parents in the ways they verbally engage with their children. Case 1: Toy car (educated parent, urban area) and Case 2: Toy baby (less educated grandparents, rural area) and these are illustrated below.

### Box 6.1a - Case 1: Toy-car Celine's Family (Professional, urban, 31.8.2012)

The time is 6:20 pm. After everyone had had a bath, we all came and sat on a mat on the compound outside. Little Joe begins his game using his gumboots. He turns the two boots upside down and builds, what he called 'a bridge' for his toy car to cross. His 'toy car' is a live green grasshopper. The fragile grasshopper loses one leg from rough handling but he insists it crosses the bridge. His mother watches while preparing vegetables for the supper. The conversation that transpired between mother and her four-year-old son:

Mum: What are you doing with your boots, my dear?

Joe: Building a bridge.

Mum: What is a bridge?

Joe: A way on top of water.

Mum: Good, boy, you know that.

Joe continues to build his bridge and places his 'car', the green grasshopper below the opening of the two adjoining boots.

Mum: [frowns] Ah, Joe, you said a bridge is a way on top of water now I see you are driving your car under the bridge. Where should your car be?

Joe: Up, on the bridge.

Mum: Well said, my dear. [He picks the grasshopper and puts it on top of the sole of the boots. This action was repeated several times because the grasshopper walks off the edge and falls off the 'bridge' The grasshopper had lost the other leg and it could hardly walk across the 'bridge' now].

### Box 6.1b - Case 2: Toy Baby, F3 (rural)

The time is 2:15pm after lunch. The family sit under the mango tree to thresh dried maize. Their grandchild, Grace, 2+ years old finds the work boring as her little hands could not manage to thresh the maize from the cob. She wants something to play with. She has no toy baby or other toys to play with. Interestingly, she takes one of the big maize cobs and hands it to her grandmother, saying, 'This is my baby, please, tie my baby (maize cob) on my back'. Her grandmother consents, she removes her headscarf and uses it for tying the 'baby toy' on Grace's back as is done ordinarily by women and child minders. Grace, contented, gets up and walks about pretending she is lulling her baby to sleep. After some ten minutes, she returns to her grandmother to undo the baby because she wants to feed.



In these two cases, both similarities and differences can be observed:

*Similarities:* age of children, presence of adults, use of available resources, and leisure time.

*Differences:* gender, education levels of parent and grandparents, type of resources used by children.

In case 1, there is visibly a verbal engagement between the educated parent and her son. They conversed in English, which at age four in this context is a rare skill. The mother continued asking him questions right from the beginning of his play: ‘What are you doing?’, ‘What is a bridge?’, and challenged him about how a bridge is used. On the contrary, in case 2, although the grandparents had the opportunity to converse in the local language, they did not. Instead, as the play unfolded, it appeared the uneducated grandmother simply responded to what the child requested. She did not engage the child in any conversation about her toy baby [maize cob] in such matters as, the baby’s name and sex, the song she sang for her baby when it was crying (lullaby), etc., as other mothers or baby minders would have done in the tradition. Similarly, Grace’s grandfather, who looked at the entire event also did not get involved. Between Joe and Grace, it appears that the learning potential seemed to have been more enhanced for Joe, (that cars go on top of bridges and not under) than for Grace. Her play seems to have met no challenge or constructive engagement so that she could have increased her knowledge about having babies and how to care for them.

Regina’s reasons for asking her children about whatever they are doing with regards to their schooling goes beyond the content of school curriculum:

....Yes, I ask them, [children] for example, to ascertain whether this child really reached school or not. It is good to ask the child, ‘What did you learn today?’ If a child tells me, ‘I did exams/test today.’ I will want to know what type of questions came in that exam so that I can assess this child’s potential and whether or not she/he is serious. (Interview, Professional U, 31.8.2012)

Regina apparently uses her education to enhance her children’s education and also for monitoring behavioural activities of her children outside of home. Although she normally would not have had time for her children, she has taken full advantage of her maternity leave to follow her children’s school activities very closely. The next section presents the skill of reading as practised in the home settings.

### **6.5.2.3 Question 2: Reading Skills**

Reading is an important aspect of literacy. Parents in the category of professional and semi-skilled all reported being able to read in both the local language and in the English language. Parents described their level of reading as good, moderate and weak, and this is elaborated in the table below.

**Table 6.18 - Reading Skills in Ma'di and English**

Parents' level of education	Reading skills					
	Vernacular			English		
	Parents	Child	Reasons cited	Parents	Child	Reasons cited
<b>High</b>	Proficient Moderate	Weak	Promotion of mother tongue, record and read history of the people	Proficient Moderate	Moderate	The majority of books are printed in English,
<b>Average</b>	Moderate	Weak	Pride to be able to read your language, heritage, participate in society	Moderate	Moderate	
<b>Low</b>	Poor, N/A	Poor	Read bible, sing church hymns and get around freely	N/A	Poor	Everything in school is in English, to be able to go out, to access information

While Felix (semi-rural) reported a proficient ability in reading in both the local language and in English, Regina (urban) and Rosanna (rural) in the same category, reported that their reading was only 'moderate' in the local language and 'fluent' in English. The reasons for weaknesses in reading the local language arises from a lack of printed literature, except church books. Generally, printing of literature in the local language has not developed to any degree in the society. Yet, the advantages of being able to read in both languages is clear, as captured in Regina's explanation: 'To be able to help my children in "translating" words in the local language into English and vice versa' (Interview, Professional U, 31st August 2012).

Regina thinks that the ability to be able to read in the English language is important because as she went on to say, 'In Africa, most information is written in the English language' (Interview, Professional U, 31st August 2012). For George, to be able to read in the local language 'Is important because it is your own language – the one you are born with... it is a mark of pride, an identity among so many other tribes in the country' (Interview, Unskilled R, 30th August 2012).

Parents think there is a connection between their reading ability in both the local language and the English language and their children's performance in reading in school. Rosanna reported that her 'reading habit may act as a catalyst, and encourage my children and thereby lead them to perform better in school'. In addition, she remarked:

....[the] attitude of children towards education needs to be motivated. When they see other people who are successful, they want to be like them. Even their own peers who do well make them put more effort in studies. (Interview, Professional R, 22.8.2012)

Rosanna recognises the importance of being a role model as it motivates children to do better, and this includes seeing parents read themselves.

For Regina (F1, urban) the ability to read both languages focuses on the interplay between the two languages in the life of the school going child. She explained that if a child did not understand some vocabulary in the English language, a parent who knows both languages can explain in the local language, ‘It is like a moment of eureka! ... for the child to comprehend the term’ (Interview, Professional U, 33.8.2012). She further stressed that when English terms are translated, giving local examples, children will understand more quickly, and that can boost their interest in reading, writing, and their general attitude towards education will be positive which subsequently raises their performance. For this reason, in her view, it is important as a parent to be literate in both languages of the home and of the school so that she can assist her children better with their school queries and homework. The 9 parents interviewed considered it extremely important for their children to learn to read fluently in English for the following reasons.

Professional parents said

- “It can help her read school materials, and write her exams” (Interview, Professional U, 31.8.2012);

The semi-skilled parents:

- “It is the media of instruction country wide” (Interview, Semi-skilled S-R, 18.8.2012);
- “It is the language of instruction and most texts are in English” (Interview, Semi-Skilled U, 2.8.2012);

The unskilled also noted:

- “They are the two important languages in the life of our children (mother tongue and official language)” (Interview, Unskilled S-R, 14.8.2013);
- “The child can understand the questions for passing his examination, also for his future” ( Interview, Unskilled R, 30.8.2012)

It is important to state that not all of the families presented favourable conditions for literacy activities during the observation period. Due to the fact that most of the parents were out of the home to fend for the family’s needs, four families only, including that of Regina who was on maternity leave, presented particularly rich moments for observation. For instance, when asked if parents read books for themselves, Regina (Professional, urban) reported that she reads at least two books a month, and Rosanna (Professional rural) she said often reads leaflets, brochures and religious books. In Regina’s family the evidence of reading materials of the two languages (Vernacular and English) was visible in the house, unlike Rosanna’s. In Regina’s household literacy moments like that in box 6.2 were recorded.

## Box 6.2 - Family Literacy Event

While Joe plays with his toy bridge (Case 1, Box 1a) and ‘toy car’ (live grasshopper), Grandmother is bible reading. Joe sees mum read the bible, and asks,

Joe: Will there be prayers?

Mum: Yes. When Celine finishes her bath, we will pray. Regina reads Proverb 16:17-19 “It is better to eat greens when you like each other than to eat fatty meat without love”. Now let me read in it in Kuku (her language), grandmother says, which translates:

‘Bia nyesu na kinyo nango a ‘doötilön lurwök ko ngutu nyanyar ‘börik’. Lwölwong nyesu na lokore nagona welet ko ngutu maman ‘börik,’

She then gave the bible to her daughter, Regina to read Proverb; 15: 17-19 in the local language, Kuku. She struggled to read. Now and then, her mother corrected her pronunciation. Then the nine year old daughter who is in P.4 took interest and wanted to challenge her mother by reading in the local language. She was better than her mother. Then the mother asked the nine year old to read a passage from the bible in English. The little girl managed to read through with problems with a few words such as, ‘strength, shield’ and the darkness overcome – no electricity. There were battery lamps but the communal activity had to shift from reading to storytelling. This family used the local and the English language concurrently.

**Time 6:30pm:**

This illustrates that not only parents but also grandparents who are literate become role models by reading themselves, and in turn their children/grandchildren are motivated to read. This exercise continued until supper which was followed by storytelling and singing songs. The next section presents data on writing as a literacy skill as practised in the respondent families.

### 6.5.2.4 Question 3: Writing Skills

Writing was the literacy skill least practised in the homes visited. Parents of all three categories reported that with the introduction of mobile phones, the written tradition which was already rare seemed to disappear altogether as the tendency is increasingly to communicate by phone. This was also confirmed by the three headteachers interviewed. When asked how they communicate with parents, they said their most frequent means was by mobile phones, or verbally through their children. Written letters were seldom used.

However, parents reported that the skill of writing was very important for the following reasons:

- “Filling forms”( (Interview, Professional R, 22.8.2012);
- “Communicating with teachers and headteachers” (Interview, Professional S-R, 12.8.2012), and;
- “Applying for jobs” (Interview, Semi-skilled urban, 3.8.2012);
- “Writing letters” (Interview, Unskilled S-R, 14.8.2012);
- “Recording dates of birth and fishing expeditions” (Interview, Unskilled R, 30.8.2012).

Yet in practice parents reported that they rarely write themselves.



Nevertheless, for the school children, Felix reported:

....how I connect the oral with written for the children is by asking each school-going child in my family to write his/her termly request for school and give it to me. They do this either in Ma'di (vernacular) or in English. If you [child] don't write, I do not provide, only pay the school fees so they are forced if not encouraged to write. (Interview, Professional S-R, 12.8.2012)

With regards to writing in the local language, he added:

...It is only my child in senior five (S.5) who can read in the local language but they cannot write it. The problem is there are no books in the local language. (Interview, Professional S-R, 12.8.2012)

Another writing practice was observed when Celine (F1 pupil urban) and her 9 year old sister prepared their own study timetable, written out and pinned on the wall in their living room as illustrated below.

DAY	SUBJECT
MONDAY	S.S.T
TUESDAY	SCIENCE
WEDNESDAY	S.S.T
THURSDAY	SCIENCE
FRIDAY	SCIENCE
SAT	MATHS
SUNDAY	ENGLISH

**Figure 6.8 - Pupils' Sample of Home Timetable**  
(F1 urban, collected on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2012)

In this family, parents seem to encourage writing from an early age. In the semi-rural area also a similar practice of children writing out their timetable was noticed in the family of unskilled parents. The difference here is the timetable was in the hut where the girls keep their books but there was no indication that they study in this room whereas with Celine's' timetable it was visible to the rest of family members and so monitoring was possible. When Celine and her younger sibling gets down to study, it is like a stimulus for the youngest sibling also to emulate the older sisters' literacy practices. Generally, the researcher observed that the interaction between siblings was very good and this starts early in their development. For example, on one of the visiting days this is what took place at home (F1, urban) as presented in box 6.3.

### Box 6.3 - Family Literacy Writing Activity

30/08/2014

The time was 4:30pm: Writing

The time is 4:30pm. There was no particular activity going on in the family but the children are active. The compound clear without lawn and the children started to practice writing with their fingers on the ground. Julie, a six year old girl begins to write numbers from 1-10, and Joe, a 4 year old boy joins her while their mother looks on. Joe gets obsessed with writing number 2 and not any other number despite his mother asking him what the next number was. He wrote the figure 2 on every space available to him on the ground.

Although the literacy activity was child led, the parent was interested in what the children were doing. It also provided an example of having a clean compound where children could play safely and practise literacy skills when there was no other available resource for writing. The two children wrote with their fingers on the ground while their mother followed. It was observed that the 9 families did not have children's writing materials in their homes. Although Regina and her husband are highly educated, it appears they could only afford one writing board (observed) to be shared between two young children. This again reflects the financial constraints experienced by parents, regardless of their educational levels. As a result, in this case, the clean, open, dry, soft and sandy soil on the compound seemed to have offered a natural writing space for the children. Thus, keeping the family compound clean is essential, and at least, as observed, all the 9 families visited maintained good standards of cleanliness in the home environment.

Apart from these cases, it was observed that six of the participating families did not encourage the practice of writing in their families. Instead, further observation revealed that when parents, especially mothers were sending a child to the nearby kiosk to buy something or to someone in the neighbourhood, they gave verbal instructions. To ensure that the child understood what s/he is sent for, the mother would query the child before departing by asking, 'What have I said?' The child would repeat what the mother had requested him to do. Where s/he made errors, the mother would repeat her instructions. This practice reflects the prevalent oral tradition in the community. It is good as the child gets to learn how to report messages accurately and thereby build on his/her vocabulary, knowledge and concepts about the reality surrounding him/her. However, it could be asked whether such methods reduce the opportunities for developing writing skills among parents. Alternatively, children themselves could be encouraged to write down the verbal instructions or make a list of what is required but no such habits were observed.

Some of the pupils interviewed reported other strategies which encouraged personal practices of writing. For example, Joel, (F3 pupil, interview, 30/802012) who has uneducated parents

reported that because his parents are illiterate, he practises writing by setting questions for himself and writing answers. This was an encouraging effort on his part, but unfortunately, it was discovered that his writing was not corrected, either by his teacher or by anybody else at home. Joel revealed that he refrained from asking the teacher for fear of being bullied by peers.

#### **6.5.2.5 Question 4: Listening Skills**

Participating parents reported that they rarely listen to their children read to them or vice versa. Listening either way, requires time and patience. For example, when asked if he gets time to listen to his children, Felix reported:

...Not so much, because after teaching, I have to catch up on some commitments in the home and in the community, and also, spend time with my friends. I see them improving on listening and speaking skills at home through telling stories, proverbs, riddles – among themselves and other adults, like my wife after her day’s work at the centre or in the field, other adults including uncles. (Interview, Professional S-R, 12.8.2012).

Felix reported having no time to listen to his children although he provides them with books to read including church books. However, parents like Regina displayed significant presence and patience with her children. While the majority of educated and less educated parents face the challenge of a lack of time to spend with their children, Regina utilised her maternity leave to the maximum by engaging in literacy activities at home with her children. It was observed that despite her preoccupation with house chores such as cooking and washing, she was available to direct and correct her children in every activity including academic and moral instructions (at meal times). For example, it was observed that she had time for recreation, listening to children’s stories and asking them questions. One of the folk stories was, ‘The Lion and the Twelve Beautiful Girls’ told by her 9 year old girl (P.4) (see box 6.4 below). It is an equivalent of the English children’s song, ‘Ten Green Bottles Standing on the Wall’. After the reading sessions and supper, the children gathered with their mother, grandmother and the researcher to listen to the folk story.

#### **Box 6.4 - The Lion and the Twelve Beautiful Girls (folk story)**

Once up on a time, there was Lion and 12 beautiful girls in a certain village. Among these girls, there was one who was prettier than them all, and her name was, Lia. However, Lia can be so stubborn and naïve that she gets into trouble so very often.

One day, the twelve girls decided to go to the bush to gather firewood for the cooking. Good firewood can only be found far away from home, and so they had to walk so many, many, many miles and finally they arrived in the thick bush where there were plenty of good, dry wood to gather. The girls quickly got busy chopping wood. Seeing so much wood available, Lia was excited, but instead of joining with the rest of the girls to gather wood, she busied herself admiring butterflies, birds; and gathering and eating the sweet wild

fruits of the forest and playing about. The girls warned her that it was dangerous for them to stay long in this part of the forest because there were lions but Lia would not listen.

When the girls had finished gathering their wood and were looking for the best rope for tying the wood, Lia was only beginning to chop;

When the others were arranging their wood on the rope, Lia was looking for rope;

when others were tying up their bundles of wood, Lia was arranging hers;

when others were making the ring for carrying the wood, Lia was tying hers;

when others were raising their bundles of wood on the head to leave, Lia was making the ring; and so on, until the girls left while singing songs which aided their movement. Lia was still in the bush and there was nobody to help raise the bundle of wood on her head. Lia struggled for a long time and it was getting late but finally she managed to lift the bundle on her head and soon was rushing to catch up with the rest of the girls.

As she dashed through the narrow forest path with the heavy bundle of firewood balanced on her head, she heard a voice calling, 'Pretty lady, pretty lady; stop, smile, and greet. Is there no courtesy in your custom that you should rush without saying, hello?' She stopped and slowly turned to find she was facing the Lion of the forest. She was petrified; she could neither run nor scream. The Lion asked, 'Are you only one who came to pick wood?'. Trembling, and with great fear, she replied, 'No, the rest have gone ahead'. At this, the Lion was pleased that he would have a good catch for the evening. Suddenly, he grabbed Lia and ate her and so the girls were eleven.

The Lion ran so fast that he caught up with the girls singing their way home. The Lion called out to the last girl in the queue as he did before, 'Pretty lady, pretty lady; stop, smile, and greet. Is there no courtesy in your custom that you should rush without saying, hallo?' The girl stopped and the Lion repeated the same tactic to all the girls until he reached the first girl leading the rest. Having sung her part she waited for a response and got none. She wondered why the girls were not answering. Naturally, she stopped and slowly turned but to her horror, there was no one left behind her except the Lion of the forest, galloping to catch up on her. Realising the danger about to befall her, she threw the bundle of firewood and ran as fast as she could and climbed a coconut tree. She was the only one who survived to bring the sad news about the 11 girls who were gobbled by the Lion of the forest. At which the men of the village called for a hunt till they found and killed the Lion of the forest. In order to recover their beautiful girls from the Lion, the elder of the village cut the little toe of Lion, and the girls all came out one by one until and they were happily united with their families.

There are many rich cultural elements which the children could learn from this story. This kind of family gathering for recreation purposes was only experienced in this family. As far as this story is concerned, when the child finished narrating the story, their grandmother asked the children what lessons they had learnt from it. Their responses are summarised in the following points:

#### **Lessons learned from the story**

1. *Team work*: work with your friends
2. *Social norms*: children may not stop to talk with strangers
3. *Process/Sequence*: teaching about how firewood is gathered and brought home for the cooking
4. *Numeracy*: how to count
5. *Greed*: greed can lead one to one's fate like it did with the Lion.

The occasion provided an opportunity for mother, grandmother and children to converse and ask questions, listen and have fun through the storytelling. This appeared to be possible because the adult involved showed both interest and patience in what the children were doing.

With regard to the semi-skilled parents, they did not report having listened to their children reading to them or telling stories to children. This is not limited to semi-skilled parents as a professional parent in the semi-rural reported:

...On my side, my place of work is far from home so staying and conversing with the children is impossible. I come home only on weekends and that's not enough for interacting with children effectively... It is unfortunate that they have no grandparents. (Interview, Professional S-R, 12.8.2012)

Yet, one of the educators reported that children can learn from storytelling, riddles and sayings using the local language:

...introduce children to cultural activities and values e.g. through informal education for example, cautioning children against dangers through sayings such as “ori ati dri ku, nyi izi ulerii dura” (don't sit on oven mounts, you shall marry a witch). The idea is to discourage children from sitting precariously near fire places. Other saying include “ori letia ku, nyendre kodra ra” (Don't sit on the road, your mother will die.). “Ava aci si ku, moyi ka nyi nyara” (don't play with fire, the hyena will eat you) (Urban teacher, interview, 16.7.2012)

Some parents who were unskilled with a low level of education such as Angela (semi-rural) reported that as she neither reads nor writes, she tells stories to her children in the evenings after the day's work. However, this was not observed during the two days' home visits.



However, grandparents in this category, who were not literate, also played an important role in the lives of school going children in such areas as caring for the younger siblings as seen in the photo 6.9 (Unskilled home urban, photo taken by researcher, 7.8.2012).

**Figure 6.9 - Role of Grandparents**

Nevertheless, a different type of conversation and listening does take place in the families of semi-skilled parents. One such conversation was witnessed in the urban family when working together in the field. The children worked together with their stepmother, Betty, while their father was out searching for casual jobs. Betty reveals that she was brought up in a rural area

and was used to digging. On this occasion, three of her step-sons were with her: Fred, a primary six pupil, was holding their 3 months old baby, while Jimmy in senior 1 and Joshua in primary 3, Betty and myself were in the nearby garden planting maize and beans. We worked in pairs where one digs a hole and the other follows throwing in the maize seeds and later the bean seeds. My recorder was on (placed safely in my pocket) and this was the conversation that transpired. It is translated from Ma'di into English here.

Betty: When I was young my mother made me dig as if I were not her child (*she digs the holes and Joshua throws the seeds and covers with his bare foot*). Now I sort of thank her for making me learn how to cultivate and get food from my own field. I don't have to look for somebody".

Jimmy: Hah, last time when I was with my mum, she told us if somebody is lazy she will return him into her womb". (*everybody laughs, he digs and I throw the seeds and cover with my foot in gumboots*)

Betty: Isn't that great, (*Aah, Jimmy, throws 3-4 seeds of maize in one hole and not more, please – and she continues*) ... in the womb for the second time where you don't have to dig! (*ha, ha, everybody laughs*). Would you not like going back into the womb?

Jimmy: No, it is good to live in this world.

Researcher: What do you like best in this world?

Jimmy: "Fonyi, bara!" (Education, my dear!). Socialising with others is also good.

Betty: Respect; are you forgetting this important value? If you are not respectful, you cannot succeed in school.

Researcher: What is the connection of respect with school?

Jimmy: Hah, if you are stubborn, you can be sent away from school.

Researcher: Have you ever been sent home for being stubborn in your school?

Jimmy: Oh, no! Not me. There are stubborn students. Yes, in the boarding they leave school by night and sneak to the town centre to dance or watch video. Then the teacher on duty comes checking in the dormitory by night. If he finds your bed empty, all your beddings: mattress, blanket and all, will be collected away and you will have to answer for it in the office before the headteacher the following morning. Often, they are suspended from school.

Betty: Are you sure you did not attempt to sneak out by night?

Jimmy: Never! I don't bother going out for such things.

Researcher: Anyway, will those students be allowed back to school?

Jimmy: Yes, they will return but the problem is you will have lots of notes to copy. You will be terribly behind other students in many things.

Betty: Do you think they learn from such punishment?

Jimmy: Oh yes, they learn a good lesson. They never repeat it. One who repeats will now be sent home for good. Another type of punishment is you are asked to dig 50 holes for sinking poles for fencing the school. In addition, your parents must provide one roll of barbed wire which costs almost more than the school fees.

- Joshua: Even in our primary school, there was a girl in P.4, taller than you (the researcher) got lost in a dance (all laughed).
- Researcher: How are the children in primary disciplined if they are found to have sneaked for night dances?
- Joshua: Hash lashes on the buttocks, eeh! Then you are sent to call your parents.
- Jimmy: Hah! Some parents will even go and beat you up in front of the assembly in school. The shame! In the end, you get double beating, from the teachers and from your parents.
- Betty: I told you respect is better for schooling.
- Researcher: Let me ask you, boys, is it really difficult to listen?
- Jimmy: Very easy.
- Researcher: Then why do you think many children do not listen even to their parents?
- Jimmy: Haah...I ..I really don't understand. Maybe they think they know better.  
(*By this time we were approaching the grounds near the tick trees*).
- Jimmy: It is better not to plant under the trees because the crops don't do well; tick tree suck a lot of water. (Observation, urban F2, 4.8.2012)

From this conversation, there was free interaction between the children and their stepmother, Betty. They learned from each other about school, cultural values such as respect as being important for success in life and school. The children also learnt about concepts regarding appropriate agricultural practices. Moreover, working together for their survival seemed to bond their relationship in the family.

In general, the challenges parents face in having literacy opportunities and activities with their children that could enhance their literacy development is captured in the views of one parent:

...In Moyo district, parents are not very close to their children even if they are educated, only a few are... Lack of time - work in the field takes most of parent's time. Secondly, most parents do not stay at home at their free time. Those who are in government services [educated parents] prefer to spend their leisure time with friends than with families, they then come back home late and sometimes drunk. (Interview, Professional S-R, 12.8. 2012)

There is, however, a high aspiration for their children's success in school among all the 9 couples who participated in this study. However, it is not clear whether parents understand what actually matters for children to perform in school. The next section presents the expected specific responsibilities parents undertake towards their children's educational achievement.

#### **6.5.2.6 Question 5: Parents' Responsibilities for their Children's Education**

Parents were asked to respond to some of the specific duties in relation to their children's education in primary school using a likert scale where 1=always; 2=often; 3=rarely and 4=never.

**Table 6.19 - Expected Parental Responsibilities in Relation to their School going Children**

<b>Expected parental responsibility</b>	<b>Parental actual involvement</b>	<b>Professional</b>	<b>S/skilled</b>	<b>Unskilled</b>
Ensuring child attends school	Efforts taken by the parents to ensure their child attends school everyday	1	2	2
Discussing school progress with child at home	Efforts taken by the parents to discuss at home the activities done by their child at school	1	3	2 (illiteracy hinders)
Paying part of the cost of education on time	Efforts taken by the parent to pay school fees as part of school development on time	1	2 (not on time)	1
Monitoring problems on academics at school	Efforts taken by parents to identify problems faced by their child at school in their academic development	3	3	4
Identifying problems on academic issues at home	Efforts taken by parents to identify problems faced by their children at home in their academics development	2	3	2
Assisting homework	Efforts taken by the parents to help their child with the homework given by the school	3	3	4
Identifying homework	Efforts taken by parents to identify the homework given to their child by teachers	3	3	4
Guiding on examination	Efforts taken by parents to guide their child on preparation for school examination	4	4	4
Monitoring academic performance at school	Efforts taken by the parents to monitor their child's academic performance at school from time to time, e.g. by visiting school	2	3	4
Motivation	Efforts taken by the parents to motivate their child to study at home	2 (in terms of school requirements)	2 (lacks adequate provision)	2 (lacking in role model)
Time limitation	Efforts taken by the parents to provide time limitations to their child for learning, playing and personal activities	3	3	3
Getting reading materials	Efforts taken by parents to provide additional reading materials etc. (for example, newspapers and magazines)	1 (children don't read)	4 (lack finances)	4 (illiteracy, remoteness)



	for their child at home			
Tuition	Efforts taken by the parents to provide extra tuition for their child at home or school	2	4	4
Monitoring activities	Efforts taken by parents to monitor their child's activities in other places etc. (for example, shopping centres, playgrounds, going to church, etc.) besides home and school	3 (educators think parents never do this)	4	2 (observation revealed children go about alone)
Role modelling	Efforts taken by parents to be exemplary in literacy related practices (for example, personal reading, visiting libraries and attending /participating in community events)	2	3	1 (storytelling, non-literacy activities)
Space	Efforts taken by parents to provide space for home study for the child (e.g. own room)	2 (often shared room)	4	4
Resources	Efforts taken by parents to provide reading and scholastic materials, light for home study	1	2 (inadequate)	2 (inadequate)
Well-being	Efforts taken by parents to ensure sufficient food, clothing and safe health for the child	1	2 (inadequate)	1 (inadequate)

*Adopted and modified from Vellymalay (2010:433)*

The table shows that the areas least attended to by parents are those relating to the academics of their children: homework, preparation for examinations and setting a time limit for children's activities to allow time for academic work. These are areas which cut across the 9 families and they appear to relate to the school needs of the children which require parents' actual presence and active involvement. For the semi-skilled and unskilled parents, these issues were rated 'rarely' and 'never' signifying their constraints either by time, literacy incompetence and finances.

As for parents' knowledge about their children's school, it was treated separately as this was a significant emerging theme, especially among less educated parents as reported by educators. This is presented in the next section.

#### **6.5.2.6 Question 6: Parents' Knowledge about their Children's School**

Reports from educators indicated that parents rarely follow their children to school or their academic progress. While the percentage of parents in the urban and semi-rural areas who attend PTA meetings range between 50%-74%, the attendance rate of parents in the rural area dropped to between 25%-49%. The reasons for failing to attend PTA meetings as reported by headteachers ranged from a lack of time, a lack of interest in school matters, fear of money related issues that might arise in the meeting, less commitment from community leaders and a lack of knowledge about school matters. Consequently, it appears that some pupils have taken advantage of this complacent attitude for absenting themselves from school.

Parents with high levels of education such as Regina (F1 parent, urban) expressed concern about whether or not a child actually goes to school after leaving home. She gave this as her reason for her continually asking her children about their day at school. During an interview, a teacher testified to this occurrence in relation to one of his pupils whom he described as:

...a rascal and tricky - often absent from school. The father cares and several times he came to school to follow him up. It was found out that this boy leaves home for school but he does not reach school. He branches off to the shops, in the bush or links with other children who are not attending school. (Interview, teacher S-R, 16.8.2012)

Such concerns proved to be a shared factor as Felix, Nila's uncle, discovered her mischiefs as he reported:

... after P.3, she [Nila] started to develop strange behaviour. She goes to discos; she has friends who are not education conscious. I have followed her to school twice and found that she was not in school in the afternoons. I have caught her in a disco twice,

and my brothers who go to discos have reported to me that they had seen her at a disco. (Interview, Professional S-R, 12.8. 2012)

Felix explained that his intention of going to the disco was specifically to prove the reports he got about Nila as being a frequent disco attendant. Nila and her two sisters sleep in a hut separate from their parents' main house (permanent house). Felix reported that the girls go to bed normally after supper but later, it was discovered, they get out of the window to go to a disco.

The responses from these professional parents link education directly to genuine concerns about their children's educational opportunities and the benefits gained from it. However, there is a worrying trend developing in the data, not only in the urban area, but also in the suburban area, as is the case with Nila. Unfortunately, owing to corruption, some educated individuals within the community particularly are supporting activities which are potentially detrimental to the education of school-going children - the night discos and video machine venues, for their own personal and material profit. Nevertheless, Regina and Felix have demonstrated in different ways how to monitor their children's activities at home, in school and outside. The close follow up of children among educated parents contrasts with Angela (F3 parent, semi-rural).

When asked whether she notices her daughter bringing books home from school to study at home. Angela expressed having 'no knowledge about it' (Interview, Unskilled S-R, 14.8.2012). This confirms what educators reported about less educated parents having 'no knowledge about school agenda' (Interview, headteacher, urban, 17.7.2012). She also reported that she visits her child's school only when called by school administration. In Angela's response, multiple layers can be identified where she seems to epitomise the characteristic features of the less educated parent as reported by educators and senior community members:

Firstly, Angela does not appear to care to find out whether or not her daughter brings books home to read from school. There seems to be a significant lack of supervision in relation to the children's academic activities.

Secondly, she reported having no idea whether or not the children read in their bedroom. This points to a lack of supervision of children's educational activities to ensure they read, revise, and do their homework. Instead, she reported having surrendered this responsibility entirely to her brother, who is educated (graduate) but rarely at home because of the nature of his job (constructor, moves from place to place). Because of his level of education, he is employed,

and has built a bigger, permanent house that provides the children with a space to sleep in (domicile hut).

Thirdly, Angela reported that she does not ask her brother about the activities of the children, trusting that her brother can substitute her responsibility as a parent. The lack of parental attention to children's activities due to other commitments or illiteracy, and its likely educational implications for the school going child is well summarised by Felix's report:

... having no mum at home during the day and so children cook for themselves – I think this also hinders their education. On my side, my place of work is far from home so staying and conversing with the children is impossible. I come home only on weekends and that's not enough for interacting with children effectively. (Interview, Professional S-R, 12.8. 2012)

This response seems to indicate that educated parents are aware of the impact their lack of time has on the education of their children, but have little other choice. Conversely, the less educated appear not to be fully aware of the extent to which their inability to engage in their children's school activities bear on their children's performance, as is the case with Angela.

All nine pupils interviewed across the three cases testified to the importance of parental education in supporting their work at school. The next section presents the views from parents on this subject.

#### **6.5.2.8 Question 7: Parents' Views about their Own Education and Levels of Literacy Skills**

Across the three sites, all the 9 parents unanimously acknowledged that there is a link between parents' education and literacy skill levels which is likely to influence a school going child.

##### ***Professional parents (F1): high education and literacy skill levels***

Parents with a high level of education (F1) shared a common element in their responses. They regarded their education and literacy skills as tools that have overcome their own difficulties in their families. This notion is specifically expressed in the following data.

Regina, the female health worker in the urban area reported:

....my parents valued education even though they did not go far with it themselves. They encouraged me to go far with education so that I could support my own family in future...like now, the father of these children is out of job at the moment, but the children do not feel the difference because I am able to provide both for their well-being and education. What I am able to afford is because of my earnings from the job - I believe it is as a result of my education. (Interview, Professional U, 31.8. 2012)

Similarly, Felix, a secondary school teacher in the semi-rural appreciates his level of education because:

.... [I am] able to pay school fees not only for my children from the salary I get from teaching but also the children of my late brother. My father had three wives and we were 18 children in the family but despite their lack of education, they worked hard in the garden, those days, haaah! Growing cotton..., and mum brewing *nguli* [local beer] to educate us. I remember, my father often said, ‘Let illiteracy remain with us [parents]’... even though the salary is low, at least, I am able to care and educate my children. (Interview, Professional S-R, 12.8. 2012)

Rosanna, a health worker likewise acknowledged that there is a link, and that being educated made a significant difference to her life and family. Like the parent in the semi-rural context, she said she was able to pay her children’s school fees through her employment and she added:

...My education lessened my problems, ...My colleagues who did not succeed dropped out of school at primary level and got married earlier. The difference is, I can get whatever I like; I can go to the bank and ask for credit for my small project, which the uneducated cannot because they are not earning. You see, Sister being uneducated has multiple disadvantages like you cannot help your child when she/he is defeated in homework – you can get wrong information, like dates about your children’s birth, you may fail to administer right medicine with right doses, which may lead to unnecessary deaths, and so on.... (Interview, Professional R, 22.8 2012)

These parents see their education as a means that solves their domestic, economic and personal problems. In retrospect ( see, Anthony’s story in box 6.5). He is one of the senior community members interviewed (urban), formerly a school inspector in the 1970s.

Despite the lapse of six decades (1950s-2012) the attitude of preventing children from going to school among less educated parents seem to persist, especially where children have to struggle for the sustenance of their family. On site evidence in photos 9 and 10 below illustrates this on-going approach to life among many.



**Photo 6.11 - Diverse Domestic Responsibilities on Children**  
*Taken on 19.8.2012*

Photo 6.11 indicates how children are used to accomplish domestic chores for the well-being of the family, and in photo 6.11 two school girls, still in their school uniforms gathered bundles of firewood to carry home straight from school

However, on a positive note, all the professional parents and the three senior community members interviewed in the home environment acknowledged that there is an increasing change of attitude amongst less educated parents. They claim that the majority of the less educated parents from observing other families have begun to realise the benefits of education. They argued that now more than ever, they desire their children to be educated, though they face very serious challenges of illiteracy, poverty and poor infrastructure, which hinder the nature and level of their efforts to enhance the education of their children. This shift of attitude is summarised in the words of the Deputy Commissioner at the national level who reported that the majority of:

...illiterate parents have confessed, 'Since I have not gone to school myself, so let my children go to school and get the education I did not get,' and desire for education makes uneducated parents work this hard. (Interview, Education Officer, National, 18.9.2012)

All three professional parents attested to the fact that although their parents had low or no level of formal education, they endeavoured to educate their children in order to 'stop the generation of illiteracy' (Felix, F1 semi-rural, interview, 12.8.2012).

### ***F2 category: semi-skilled parents with average education and literacy skills levels***

The F2 are a category of parents who completed either ordinary or advanced secondary education ("O" and "A" levels) or may have started but dropped out of school but have no qualification or formal skill. The study found this category depended on casual jobs such as local builders, carpenters, mechanics, and retail shop-keepers without written contractual documentation. Out of the three parents interviewed, only Ben, who is in the defence forces, had legal documents. They are known by their pseudonyms as Mike (urban, a builder), Ben (semi-rural, a soldier), and Cornelius (Rural, a self-trained attached to non-governmental organisations).

In response to the question of whether or not there was a link between parents' education and literacy skill levels that is likely to influence a school-going child, their responses were striking. Mike, identified a positive correlation between his level of education and the difficulties he experienced. He lamented the unabated challenges he faces in supporting his

children's education: lack of permanent employment leading to critical financial constraints, as a consequence of inadequate formal education.

Mike is a self-trained builder after completing ordinary secondary education ("O" level). He had no particular qualification and acknowledged the link between his education and that of his children. He believed that if he had a committed and faithful partner it would make a significant difference despite being unemployed. He reported:

...I can read notices on the way and in places. Without education I would not be able to do things like building and carpentry calculations. Moyo doesn't offer much opportunity for work, but there are two problems with semi-skilled jobs: payment is irregular and very low. This is because we often make agreement verbally...verbal agreement is tricky, you know. Secondly, I lack tools, they are expensive otherwise, I could do joinery. For this reason, I have to travel to do on and off jobs in the Republic of South Sudan. (Interview, Semi-skilled urban, 3.8.2012)

He clearly appreciates his literate ability but without valid credentials as a point of reference he is limited. Typical of this category was Cornelius, who like Mike reported that he sometimes finds himself spending long hours (8 hours or days) looking for work. When such casual jobs are found, the pay is minimal, unreliable and can hardly sustain the family. Insufficient income was reported as a cause of multiple problems in the families in this category, which often resulted in serious family dysfunction. The characteristic features reported by respondents and also observed included:

- frequent broken marriages;
- involvement with more than one marriage,
- large family size;
- scarce resources for family sustenance;
- minimal provision for school children;
- less attendance to school programmes;
- less supervision and less likely assistance to children in academic matters, and;
- more likelihood of having illiterate mothers.

For example, because he is rarely at home, Mike sadly revealed that his second wife (the first one took to drinking and separated from him) developed an irresponsible parenting attitude. He discovered through neighbours that his wife was sedating (administering volume tablets and leaving unattended) her 18 months old child so that she could go out to night discos. This

led to their marriage breaking up and at the time of the interview, he was with a third wife with nine children.

Mike's lament that 'I do not have valid papers' sends a strong message. In this way, their casual employers become manipulative because the job contracts are only done verbally. However, for Cornelius, who initially worked with a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) mobile telecommunication company, and now works with Local Government, reported a positive side to job seeking. He reported that moving from place to place in search of work sometimes has advantages:

...because of the type of my job I have penetrated in places like Eremi, Abeso, Pe'ecoa in the mountains of Metu to erect telephone masts where I also learned how to grow vegetables from the people. The mountains have conditioned the people there to practise intensive agriculture [pause] unlike in my own area along the Nile where the land is flat and abundant. These movements have made me compare life styles of people I have met with mine. It has made me to both appreciate my own and learn from other people how I can do certain things differently. (Interview, Semi-skilled R, 24.8.2012)

Nevertheless, generally, the semi-skilled parents report facing significant domestic and marital problems; these ranged from finance, unemployment, broken marriages, big family sizes, and a lack of time to spend with children.

Ben's family (in the semi-rural area) presented a typical example of such marital and domestic difficulties. He serves in the national Army and reported that despite having a regular job in the army, it is poorly paid and he could be transferred from place to place at any time, which does not allow him to spend time with his family. At the time of the interview, he was 300km away from home and so I had a telephone interview with him as his wife (illiterate as she admitted) declined to answer further questions apart from responding to greetings. Ben has five children born to three different wives, two of whom had left him and the current wife has two children, while also caring for the other three children left by the previous women. Similarly, Cornelius (in the rural area), who works with the local government 50km from home after having worked with different NGOs in the district, shares in this predicament of being semi-skilled. Cornelius completed senior four, but when the civil war struck in the early 1980s, it interrupted his study. He is newly married without children but he is supporting five children belonging to his sisters whose marriages all failed due to alcoholism and some customary laws. He reports:

...my main worry is the movement of this child (Helen), between three homes - from home here to her father in the town, to her mother, and back here. Moreover, I do not know what times she goes to see her father and what she does while there. Since I am



not always at home, I have not monitored what times she actually returns home or whether she actually goes to school. Despite the lack of time, I intend to meet the father about this so that if he thinks he can take care of her, she should move totally to his home. (Interview, Semi-skilled R, 24.8. 2012)

Cornelius, reiterates the mobile nature of his job which blends in with the general description of the semi-skilled parents, in that it prevents them from monitoring their children's activities. However, what he did not reveal was the customary sanction (revealed by Helen's father in a separate interview, see section 4.3.5 p.140). In this situation, while Helen's uncle takes on an unprecedented financial burden, she grapples with the emotional and physical traumas, which inevitably affect her education.

### ***F3 Category: unskilled parents with low or no level of formal education or literacy skills***

The study established the less educated parents (F3) as poorly positioned in relation to supporting their children's education. It was observed that a lack of literacy skills and household poverty were the dominant challenges experienced.

George (F3, rural), is a fishmonger in the river Nile and a peasant farmer. He reported that there is a significant difference between educated parents and less educated parents. When asked to describe his own illiteracy status, he said, "... illiteracy is like being blind, a disease I don't want to pass it on to my children" (Interview, Unskilled R, 30.8. 2012). He expressed helplessness and frustration because his illiteracy does not enable him to give the academic help his children need.

The main occupation for this category of parents include agriculture and fishing. For example, Adam (urban) and Angela (semi-rural) reported that with the increase in population, family fields are now located at a distance ranging from 4-10km from their homes. Both parents must spend long hours (6-12hours or several days at a time) in the field; digging, planting, weeding, harvesting, and gathering wood for use at home (cooking), and the surplus is for sale. The surplus of farm produce such as cassava, sorghum, sweet potatoes, peas and vegetables (onions, okra, egg plants, tomatoes, and some fruits: mangoes, avocado, pawpaw, oranges and banana, etc.) is often sold to get money to buy non-farm items such as soap, paraffin for lighting, salt, sugar and to support the general welfare of the family.

Adam (urban, unskilled farmer), also engages in trade (buying goats and reselling them to the town butchers), while Angela, (a single mother of six, semi-rural area) in addition to field work, engages in brewing nguli or marwa (local liqueur and beer). Both of these parents

reported that the money gained from these activities is minimal; it cannot meet the needs of their school going children. One of the senior community members, John (rural area), graphically expressed a school going child's experience in this type of family:

...My father was a fishmonger; he also hunted hippopotamus and other animals in the River Nile. When he got the fish, he took it to Yumbe (*a neighbouring district*) for sale, a distance of over 50km either by bicycle or on foot. On two occasions, I followed him to collect money for my school fees and I got nothing. (Interview, SCM R, 31.8. 2012)

This experience highlights the considerable struggle reported by unskilled parents. They are predominantly unemployed, engaged in agricultural activities, petty trade, and illiterate. When asked what they did with their leisure time, the response was prompt from Angela:

...you are fatigued - you want to rest with friends – do my hair, family responsibilities and usually travel to attend funerals of relatives. (Interview, Unskilled S-R, 14.8. 2012)

As for assisting their children in school, she reported the disadvantage of illiteracy in many ways:

...Hmmm [pause], the problems of being illiterate are so many, especially when you are alone... [pause]. See, I am unable to check the work of my child even though I know she needs my help... Yes, I can distinguish between a cross and a tick of the red pen of the teacher but I can't justify if the teacher is honest or not. (Interview, Unskilled S-R, 14.8.2012)

These challenges were noted across urban, semi-rural and rural divides in this category of unskilled parents. They further reported challenges they face due to their illiterate status:

- “unable to read to your child”;
- “no knowledge about the required books for the child”,
- “socially confined”;
- “no proper job opportunities”;
- “constantly digging in the field”;
- “frustrating experience of financial demands”;
- “frustration having to depend on others to read and write for you”
- “restricted travel because of language limitations”, and;
- “limited participation in school activities, for example, PTA meetings”.

As far as parents are concerned, all 9 couples plus the 3 senior community members expressed that formal education is essential not only for supporting their children in school but also for the livelihood of the entire family.

Ethnographic data from the study provides insight into the second research question which addresses the literacy related evidence that exists in the family which is likely to contribute to the development of children’s literacy skills and subsequent achievement in primary school. This is presented in the next section.

## **6.6. Study Research Question 2: Literacy Environment in the Home**

The availability of learning resources or the lack of them in the home environment has a significant impact on the school going child. There is sufficient evidence in the literature that growing up in a home rich in cognitive stimulation and educational opportunities not only influences literacy development but also has a lasting impact on a child’s desire to learn (Gottfried et al., 1998; Kellner and Share, 2005; Kasirye, 2009). Family ethnographies highlight these aspects in the three family categories studied.

### **6.6.1. Professional Households: Literacy Environment and Resources**

The F1 family category of parents (see table 6.1a) are employed in regular paid jobs. The study found that there was an adequate supply of text and exercise books (30-50 books) and other literacy resources in the three families of professional parents (F1) for both parents and children. There was also value placed on educational items by the arrangements and neatness observed in the households (particularly evident in the F1 family, semi-rural). With the exception of the family in the rural area who lived in a government block provided for health workers. The photo 6.11 (main house), and 12 and 13 (girls’ sleeping hut) below illustrate available literacy related materials in the respective dwelling places.



**Photo 6.12 - Family Literacy Evidence**

In the main house F1 Semi-rural), there is a display of parents’ photographs and on every table and cupboard. It is evident that in this family, the education of parents, especially that of the

father, has made a difference in creating a literacy rich environment. In the main house there is order and respect for educational materials. Although, in the girls' sleeping place, despite the high number of literacy materials available (more than 30 pieces of books, past test papers), and academic related posters, there seems to be less order and care for these materials. This may be attributed to their parents' lack of supervision over the school children, which was confirmed by Felix, their father when queried about how he ensures that his children, including Nila, study at home. He reported, 'well, yes, I see her sit to study but how she is faring is doubtful because in the end you don't see the result in her performance' (Interview, Professional S-R, 12.8. 2012). Felix acknowledged but he did not clarify his doubts about whether or not the child studies effectively by not getting personally involved. He clearly stated in a one-to-one interview that he does not have the time. This example illustrates that perhaps having a home rich in cognitive resources is not in itself effective. It is likely not to have an automatic impact on a child's performance in school. Rather, there is evidence to suggest that a practical parental involvement may be likely to have a more positive impact, as is the case with Regina (section 6.3.2) and her children reading together. However, there is concern about the health and well-being of the children. This came across when their mother instructs her older daughter, 'Please, at some stage you need to give this child (5 year old) some medicine. She has fever' (Research journal, 12.8.2014), before she left for her business. Emily (F1 S-R), their mother, who only stopped in primary seven raises some money by brewing local beer to supplement her husband's low salary from teaching. It can be surmised that in this family the relatively strong literacy environment is likely to contribute to the literacy development of the children. However, similar to the other families, from the report of the parents, they have no time to monitor, supervise and assist the children in their school work. It is interesting to examine whether this time factor affects the professional parents in the rural area in the same way or not.

In the rural area, Rosanna claims that the children have adequate books for their studies but this was not made available for observation. The type of residence rendered some parts of the house inaccessible to outsiders including the researcher. However, where the children sleep, a number of available literacy related evidence such as textbooks (more than 5 in number), exercise books (old and new, not less than 50 pieces between 4 children), calendar, maths sets and posters were seen. As with the previous household, the children are not orderly in keeping their educational items. There were no bookshelves or cupboards so the books were heaped on the ground, on boxes and under their beds but each child knew his/her own property. Nevertheless, this seems an inappropriate way of storing books, given the circumstances that

termites and rats are common pests in the area. It will be interesting therefore to see the family category of semi-skilled parents fare in literacy related items and resources in their homes.

### **6.6.2. Semi-skilled Households: Literacy Environment and Resources**

This category of parents are those with average education, and literacy skills. These parents have no specific qualifications for full-time job allocation and therefore are mostly employed on a casual basis.

In the three households in this category, all of the children interviewed had parents who had broken marriages. The children lived either with stepmothers (urban and semi-rural) or with grandparents (rural). The three children did not have a sleeping place of their own but shared either with siblings, other children, such as neighbour's children or with grandparents. Bedding facilities in these kind of sleeping arrangements were inadequate as the children variously reported: Fred (urban), 'Four of us sleep in this kitchen [one-roomed]. We have no bed but one mattress. We place it on the papyrus mat, one mosquito net, and we all share one blanket'. This was confirmed by the researcher and they used a poor source of light, a tin-lamp with a wick that uses paraffin. In the kitchen, there is a large broken table used for keeping the kitchen utensils but not reading purposes. Instead, there is a small open locker positioned behind the door and this is where the children keep their exercise books and other school materials. There was only poster about physical science pinned on the wall where the boys sleep. There was no sign of a clock, calendar or other pictures of members of the family. However, there were two carton boxes packed at the far end of the room. The contents were not examined as this may be perceived to be intrusive. It is likely that those boxes contained more exercise books or some clothes of the boys as there was no suitcase(s) noted in the room. It is evident that the literacy resources available in this household are insufficient for school going children in this family including Fred.

In the semi-rural family, Martin reported a similar case:

I use hurricane lamp for studying. I sleep with my brothers and cousins outside my family home. We are altogether four in one room. I sleep with my brother on a bed with a mattress but the other boys sleep on papyrus mat on the floor. We have one mosquito net. (Interview, S-R pupil, 17.8. 2012)

Although in Martin's family house (semi-rural) there is a clock, plastic chairs, tables and a solar source of light, he and his siblings can only use this light till supper time and no more. Their house is mud walled but with a tin roof as shown in the photos 14-16 below.



**Photo 6.13 - Semi-Rural F2 Household Solar Equipment**

In the foreground of photo 6.13, placed against the plastic chair is the solar panel, while the second photo indicates the lighting system within the house. It was observed that safety measures were not a priority in this household as the cables are left hanging loosely in the open air notwithstanding the presence of young children in the home. It was also observed that there was only one switch and one energy saver bulb for lighting, hence its position in the middle above the dividing wall. Similarly, literacy related resources could not be ascertained in Martin's household. The living room we sat in had at least a wall clock but there were no other artifacts such as calendar, textbooks or exercise books. What was evident was the solar batteries and other cell phones charging on the table as illustrated in photo 18 above. Martin reported that they keep their books at their sleeping place, which is in another household therefore was not accessible to the researcher.

Likewise, in the rural area, Helen sleeps with her grandmother, which according to Cornelius, her uncle, is not a convenient space as he expressed:

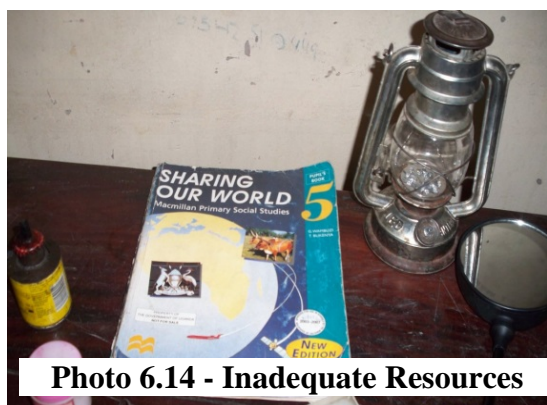
....in most cases girls at Helen's age (14-year-old in primary six child) sleep with their grandmother [in one roomed hut] where they do not feel confident to study because of lack of space to study. [Pause] But if they have their own room, they can feel free to read and talk about their school work. (Interview, Semi-skilled R, 24.8.2012)

This statement expresses the lack of freedom of all of the children interviewed reported experiencing with the exception of Celine in the urban professional family when sharing a room with people not of their age and in an environment not tailored for study such as grandmother's hut. Helen kept a plastic bag of school books in the same hut. She presented this to the researcher and it contained all her belongings, including her clothes. Her uncle was already in the process of preparing a separate hut for her and her cousins so that they can

study. As the kitchen is her main dwelling place, there were no evidence of other literacy related resources in the room. This included a lack of chairs, table, clock, calendar or any educative posters. It was observed that convenient space for storage of school materials was a problem in both urban and semi-rural households.

### **6.6.3. Unskilled Households: Literacy Environment and Resources**

A lack of home learning items and resources in terms of literacy related materials in the home environment was evident in all of the homes visited, but the situation in the F3 family category was far different. It was observed that there were less than five textbooks to be shared among 3-4 children and the source of light was poor and unhealthy for studying as illustrated in the photo. In the urban F3 family, the living room had no calendar, clock, posters or pictures of



**Photo 6.14 - Inadequate Resources**

any kind.

In fact, three of the nine children who participated in this study overall, used hurricane lamps that use a battery as shown in photo 6.14. However, at the time of the home visits, only one of these lamps was functional and that was found in the F1 (urban) family homestead.

The children (F3, semi-rural and rural) reported that the batteries were out of use and that they would be replaced if money became available. In the meantime, they must use the tin lamp as illustrated in photo 6.1.

#### ***Children sleeping separately from parents***

Children also slept separately from their parents' main house, and it was observed that the sleeping facilities and text materials were inadequate (less than 5 textbooks in evidence, see photo 17). This was the situation in all of the semi-skilled and unskilled households across the three sites visited. Close observation also revealed that there were no additional literacy related items such as a clock, calendar, magazines, newspapers available apart from radios.



**Photo 6.15 - Poor Storage of Learning Leading to Waste**

Other print items found were exercise books of less than two years old. Storage of these materials was precarious, and some of them were in bad condition. Pupils in these families kept their exercise books in their parents huts (photos 19-23) or where they slept. In both places, there were no bookshelves or hard iron boxes for keeping the books in. Due to a lack of proper storage, scenes of books destroyed by pests like termites and rats were evident (semi-rural), eventually the remaining pages were used as toilet tissues in pit-latrines as illustrated in the second photo 6.15 above.

However, it was noticed that even in the seemingly hard situation, one pupil (F3 semi-rural) managed to draw out a study timetable as visibly cello-tapped on the bare wall (see first photo 6.16, F3, semi-rural).



**Photo 6.16 - F3 Household**

Although generally there seems to be inadequate facilities for the inhabitants across the F3 family category, for example, the last two photos above (rural) and (urban), indicate that not all is bleak. There is a sign of available food for the members of the family and children appear to be healthy as they work hard together for their livelihoods as a family. Generally, the



literacy related items and resources in the nine homes visited were not sufficient and these were described as:

- Fairly adequate textbooks in the F1 homes with 30-50 items and less than 5-10 to read at home in the F2 and F3 homes;
- Rare evidence of a stimulating literacy environment at home F2 and F3 homes;
- Little or no time to spend on literacy events as parents spend time apart from children in all F1 homes;
- Noticeable lack of reading materials at home (F2 and F3 homes);
- Reports from unskilled parents that they lacked knowledge of what books to provide for children (F3 homes);
- Illiteracy of parents that tended to thwart their attitudes to literacy matters (F3 homes);
- Visible lack of role models in relation to literacy practices in the families (F1, F2 and F3), and in the wider community, and;
- Noticeable lack of reading culture in the family (F1, F2 and F3) and in the wider community.

Overall, the availability of literacy related items and resources in the three sites tend to follow the level of parents' education and literacy skills. Apart from the items that required money, all 9 homes showed good sign of food security for the sustenance of their children. The next section presents the findings regarding the final research question in the study which explores challenges parents face in their efforts to support their children in school.

### **6.7. Research Question 3: Challenges Parents Face in Supporting the Educational Needs of their Children**

Parents' views were sought to identify the problems they face and how they expect to be assisted and by whom. Data collected from educators, parents, senior community members and children unanimously revealed that parents, regardless of their levels of education, all face relatively similar problems. Although parents are eager for their children to do well in school in order to secure a better life and opportunities in future, the general lack of time for children and financial constraints are limiting their efforts. As a point of reference, it is helpful to show the general earning rates of the employed parents in various fields of occupation. The table below illustrates selected payroll for civil servants in Moyo District in Uganda.

**Table 6.20 - Civil Employee Payroll for Moyo District**

Employee Number	Employee Post Held	Pay per month	
		Pay in Ush (/=)	Equivalent in Euro ( € )
<b>Local government</b>			
L53911016833	District Chairperson (Local Council V)	2,000,000	560.00
L53909012601	Senior Assistant Secretary	788,996	220.92
L53909012577	Parish Chief	277,963	77.83
L53909012218	District Accountant	719,913	201.58
L53909012338	Senior Accountants Assistant	401,701	112.48
L50709080796	Town Clark (Principal Township)	1,100,597	308.17
<b>Education</b>			
L53909012472	District Educ. Officer	1,477,955	413.83
L53909012436	Senior Inspector of Schools (primary)	865,899	242.45
L53909012473	Assistant Inspector of Schools	595,904	166.85
L157277	Graduate Primary teacher	795,543	222.75
L154948	Diploma holder primary teacher	663,881	185.89
L681284	Grade 111 Primary teacher	313,950	87.91
53909012644	Office typist	288,864	80.88
<b>Health</b>			
L53909012474	Senior Clinical officer	1,145,513	320.74

L53910001627	Health Inspector	819,156	229.36
L53909012340	Nursing Assistant	276,046	77.29
L53912002090	Enrolled Nurse	360,813	101.03
L53909012615	Enrolled Midwife	496,039	138.89
L53909012302	Laboratory Technician (Medical)	819,156	229.36
<b>Support Staff</b>			
L53909012655	Driver	169,393	47.43
L53909012805	Office Attendant	169,393	47.43
L53909012729	Cleaner	242,917	68.02
L53909067528	Security guard	152,917	42.82

*Source: Moyo District, extracted from the Government of Uganda, Ministry of Public Service Payroll Information Report (2012/2013)*

As can be seen, the amount civil servants earn is generally low and this varies with the education levels of the individual. Whatever amount individual parents receive, it is expected to cater for feeding, medical, clothing, and education of children in every aspect. An overview of the basic requirements gathered from respondent parents is provided below.

**Table 6.21 - Basic Requirements for a P.6 School going Child**

Items	Unit	Unit Cost	Cost/Term	Cost/year	Total cost per year	
					UGSH	EURO
Uniform	1	35,000	35,000	35,000	35,000	10.00
Sports uniform : T-shirt	1	7,000	7,000	7,000	7,000	2.10
Sports uniform: shorts	1	7,000	7,000	7,000	7,000	2.10
Underwear	2 pairs	2,000	8,000	10,000	10,000	3.03
Exercise ruled books	1dozen	0.580	7,000	21,000	21,000	6.36
Graph book	1	3,000	3,000	9,000	9,000	2.70
Counter ruled books	6 pieces	3,000	6,000	18,000	18,000	5.45
Arithmetic Ex. book	1 dozen	1,170	14,000	42,000	42,000	12.73
Mathematical set (Oxford)	1	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	0.76
Ball point pen	1 dozen	12,000	12,000	24,000	24,000	7.27
pencil	half dozen	2,500	0.800	2,400	2,400	0.72
Hurricane lamp (buttery powered)	1	20,000	-	20,000	20,000	6.06
Hurricane lamp using paraffin	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	4.54
Paraffin	1 litre	3,800	38,000	114,000	114,000	34.54
Battery Cells	1pair	3,000	36,000	108,000	108,000	32.72
		30,000				
			<b>146,300</b>	<b>438,900</b>	<b>438,900</b>	<b>133.00</b>

Additional cost of living for parents working in Moyo district.

- 1 Solar lamp costs Ush. 50,000/= (€15) (Research informant, 30.8.2014).

Renting a house in Moyo town

- A hut with at least 2 rooms costs from 30-50,000/= (€10-15) per month, and;
- A permanent 3 roomed house, with light, water and sanitary facilities would cost from 50,000 to 150,000/= per month (Research informant, 30<sup>th</sup> August 2014).

Medical care for common health problems in Moyo

- 1 dose of anti-malaria treatment including doctor's prescription and laboratory investigation, costs 50,000/=.

Other common health issues reported by parents were abdominal parasitic diseases (45,000/=), cold and cough (12,000-15,000/=(€3,36- 4,50) per child per attack). When this is put against the salary of a civil servant such as teachers or nurses who get an average of 360.000/= per month (Conversation, Professional F1 U, 31.8.2014), it is insufficient.

When these demands are placed against the government's UPE capitation grant per child per year, Ush 7,560/= (€2.30), it rates significantly a minimal support to parents in comparison to the amount parents are expected to cover for their children's education (over 400.000/= (€121,20) per child per year).

What is more evident is the average number of children in the families studied, which ranged from 5 to 9 children. Practically, we can expect out of these 9 children 2 are in pre-school, 3 in primary, 2 in the secondary school, 1 in a higher institution, and 1 dependent. The 360.000/= (109.10) of an enrolled nurse or 300,000/= (€90.00) salary per month of a grade 3 teacher will be over stretched, not to mention the semi-skilled and unskilled parents who have no regular salary. This situation strongly correlates with parents' reports that they are not able to support their children adequately in school, in terms of time and provision of required resources as they have a low salary. Understandably, they have to spend extra time in activities that can generate more money to supplement their low income. In the same way, the frequent requests reported by pupils about the need for school fees (development funds), scholastic materials, uniform and food throughout this study appears to be justified. However, these issues seem multifaceted, which seem to be beyond to scope of parents to resolve.

In addition to the issues about a lack of time to spend with children, financial worries and constraints, and the burden of caring for extended family members, which were reported by all

three family categories, parents in the F1 category reported that they face the following additional challenges:

- “need to spend leisure time with friends rather than with family members”;
- “a lack of available community facilities”;
- “remoteness of residence”.

Parents in the F2 category reported facing the following challenges:

- “reading neither to children nor for themselves”;
- “not helping children in their homework due to a lack of time and literacy skills (uneducated parents)”;
- “children spending most of their time separated from adults, including parents”, (cultural elements), and;
- “children rarely interacting with parents on academic matters”.

Parents in the F3 category additionally reported:

- “illiteracy as a hindrance between parent-children interaction on academic and school matters”;
- “rarely visiting school to discuss their children’s school progress”;
- “no external help, e.g. from government to boost their efforts”;
- “illness, and unable to afford treatment neither for themselves nor for their children”;
- “lack of communication in the official language”, and;
- “confinement and isolation from the wider community”

These challenges appear to present significant implications for the school going children in the Moyo district. These areas of concern are categorised as personal, economic/physical, structural/educational, social and cultural based and are summarised in table 6.21 below.

**Table 6.22 - Summary of the Challenges Facing Parents Studied in Moyo District**

<b>Personal</b>	<b>Economic/Physical</b>	<b>Structural/Educational</b>	<b>Implications</b>
<p><b>Time</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Illiteracy</li> <li>• Leisure</li> <li>• Exposure</li> <li>• Priority</li> <li>• Role model</li> <li>• Poor pupil motivation</li> <li>• Poor pupil achievement</li> <li>• Multiple basic needs</li> </ul>	<p><b>Poverty</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low income</li> <li>• Unemployment</li> <li>• Underemployment</li> <li>• Poor provision</li> <li>• Insufficient space and food</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Remoteness:</b> far distance from major city and towns</li> <li>• Lack of support system by State (social policy)</li> <li>• Poor/lack of literacy facilities in the community</li> <li>• Thematic curriculum</li> <li>• Poor resource in schools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Lack of English practice at home</b></li> <li>• Underperformance</li> <li>• Class repetition</li> <li>• Low motivation</li> <li>• Dropping out of school</li> <li>• Teenage pregnancies</li> <li>• Early marriages</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Social</b></p>	<p><b>Cultural</b></p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Extended family demands</b></li> <li>• Neighbourhoods</li> <li>• Peers</li> <li>• Broken families</li> <li>• Lack of competition</li> <li>• Lack of community role models</li> <li>• Concerns for siblings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Lack of reading culture</b></li> <li>• Rare parent-child communication</li> <li>• Alcoholism in the community</li> </ul>	

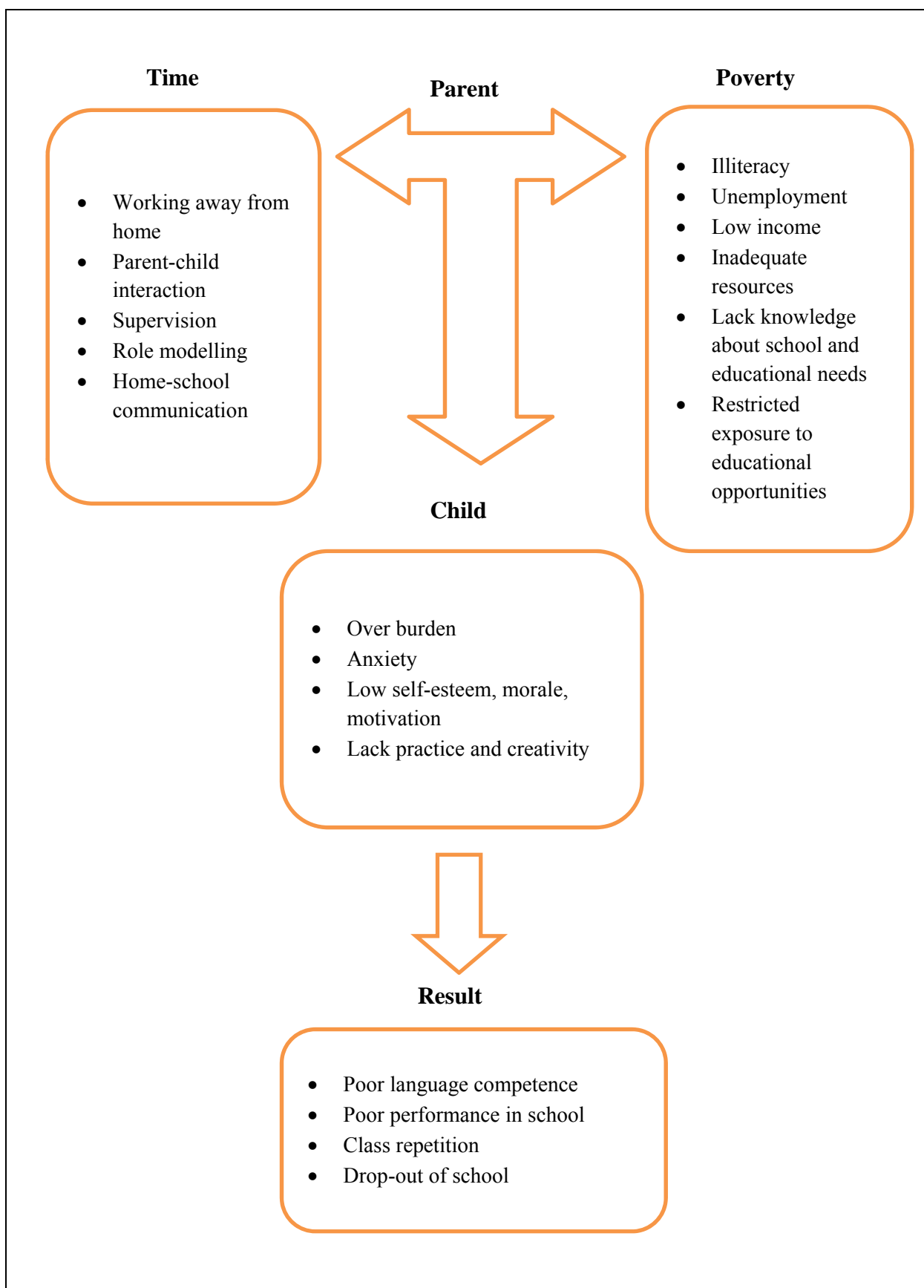
Professional parents reported spending long hours (8-12) each day away from home as civil servants. When they return home, they often spend the balance of time with friends rather than with family owing to external pressures to be seen to socialise with work colleagues.

The semi-skilled parents reported that due to the fact that they are not qualified for official jobs, they likewise spend between 8-12 hours per day or several days at a time away from home searching for casual jobs. Often, the monetary returns from these types of jobs is very little to support the family hence the necessity for long hours.

As for the unskilled, although they seem settled in their homes as their main occupation as subsistence farmers (rural and semi-rural) and engaging in petty trade (urban) or fishing in the river Nile (rural), these activities do not earn them sufficient income for a sustainable life. Similarly, these parents reported working in long hours (6-12 hours a day to several days at a time) in the fields, which does not allow them time to spend with their children. This is because with the rise in population in the area, most of the cultivation takes place at least 4-10km away from home and this distance is covered on foot. Although the dry season (December – February) is a period when there is no cultivation and this ensures all members of the family are at home, this category of parents reported that they are not able to assist their children because of being illiterate. It appears that all the overriding concern of all three groups of parents is in the provision of a basic livelihood for their families.

The themes of time and poverty are emerging as major challenges around which the other difficulties revolve and subsequently impact negatively on the school child across the three categories as summarised in the diagram below.





**Figure 6.10 - Implications of the Main Challenges for the School-going Child**

*External support expected by parents*

The challenges, ranging from a lack of time to spend with children, financial worries and constraints to illiteracy appear to present significant implications for the school going children. Parents were asked to state what types of support they expect and from whom to enable them provide better for their school going children. In various ways, parents placed more responsibility on the state and its agents for assistance and these are presented below.

### **State**

- Through the Ministry of Education and non-governmental organisations with interest in education should expand and provide adult education programmes for parents so that they can better assist their children in school (F1, F3 urban, F2, F3 semi-rural, F1, F3 rural).
- Offer full scholarships for capable children in secondary education. This can motivate children to work hard in primary level (F1 rural)
- Teachers' salary be increased so that 'they concentrate on teaching our children' (F1 urban, F2, urban, semi-rural and rural, F1 semi-rural).
- The ministry of education and Sports needs to ensure education policy caters for children to master English early in school so that they can progress smoothly in their education and in life (F1 rural and F2 urban).

### **School**

- Through the senior woman teacher, schools could assist parents to demystify the traditional fears about adolescent age. 'Traditionally these things are not talked about but I think they are important, especially for the girl-child' (Interview, F1 semi-rural, 12<sup>th</sup> August 2012).
- Teachers need to make it part of their duty to visit their pupils and meet parents in the home (F2 urban, semi-rural and F1 rural).

### **Community**

- Through the government local councils, safe recreational activities should be put in place (F1 urban).
- Local councils at village level should identify very poor families and forward their needs to the local government for assistance, and; Parents should work as a team to monitor what their children are doing in school and at home and share information about them. This can assist parents who have to work ways from home for long periods of time (F1 semi-rural).

In addition to parents' perspectives, it was deemed relevant also to include data from senior community members who reside in the same vicinity with the families observed. Their views and observations about the nature and extent to which parents support and engage in their children's education in Moyo district are important owing to the cultural context within which this study occurs. The next section presents their opinions, observations and experience on the theme of this study.

## **6.8. Report from Senior Community Members (SCM)**

Data collected from this group of participants is presented in two subsections: responses from questionnaires and responses from interviews.

### **6.8.1. Responses from Questionnaire Schedule to Senior Community Members**

The first reports on the responses from a 6 part questionnaire given to respondents complete over two weeks, and the second sub-section provides the responses from semi-structured follow-up interviews conducted in their homes by the researcher.

#### **6.8.1.1 Question 1: SCM Views about Parents**

The first question sought the views of the senior community members about what they know regarding parents' involvement in their children's education.

Using a likert scale, where 1 = always; 2 = often; 3 = rarely and 4 = never, the three senior community members rated the following as activities they have observed parents engage in, in relation to their children's education.

**Table 6.23 - Roles Parents Engage in as Observed by Senior Community Members**

	Parental role	1	2	3	4
1	Ensure that their child goes to school	S-R	U R		
2	Keep track of their child's progress at school			All	
3	meet part of the cost of education		U S-R	R	
4	Take an active role in monitoring their child's school work			All	
5	Discuss school progress with their child			All	
6	Visit school administration to discuss their child's progress at school			U S-R	R
7	Provide place and time for their child to study at home			All	
8	Participate in the construction of buildings at school		U S-R	R	
9	Know about their child's friends in and outside of school			All	
10	Participate in the planning process in the school about how their child should be taught			R	U S-R
11	Provide advice to school administration		S-R	U R	
12	Build healthy parent-teacher alliance			All	
13	Contribute towards health facilities in the school		S-R		U R
14	Read their child's work at home			U S-R	R
15	Have their child read to them at home		U	S-R R	
16	Encourage their child about education		All		
17	Are exemplary to their children about education matters		U	S-R R	
18	Provide scholastic materials for their children at home		All		
19	Care about the health of their children		U R	S-R	
20	Provide lunch for their child during school term		U S-R		R
21	Listen to their child's needs		U R	S-R	

Key: U= Anthony (urban), S-R = Susan (semi-rural) and R = John (rural)

With the exception of Susan (semi-rural) who rated activity 1 where parents 'always' ensure that their child goes to school, the three members were unanimous about parents 'often' being engaged in activities 16 and 18 in a positive way as highlighted in brown above. However,

they were also unanimous in their opinions that parents ‘rarely’ engaged in activities 2, 4, 5, 7, 9 and 12. Moreover, activities such as 2, 4, 5 and 7 are closely related to children’s academic life, and 9 and 12 are linked with influential persons in the education of their children. According to John (rural) parents in the rural area ‘never’ attend to three important activities; 6, 13, and 14, while Anthony (urban) and Susan (semi-rural) also observe that parents do not engage in number 10 and Anthony further concurs with activity 13. John was critical about activity 13, reporting that instead of parents contributing towards the health hygiene facilities in the school, ‘those near the school premise use the school facilities’ without contributing. This seems to indicate that parents living around the rural school do not understand their role towards the upkeep and maintenance of the school, or from earlier evidence cited, possibly cannot afford to do so. This was also stressed by the head teacher when she said that ‘the parents in the rural area require frequent meetings in which they can be sensitised’ to education and its value, and to their role in that equation (Interview, Headteacher Rural, 19th July 2014). In addition, John also noted that reading to children is unlikely as most parents in the rural area are illiterate. Consequently, their encouragement of children about education may be ‘a lip service’ (Interview, SCM Rural, 30th August 2012), reflecting their lacking of practice and knowledge in this area. He further cited that mothers in particular, are the main providers of scholastic materials to their children and care about the health of their children. This correlates with the views of educators and parents about the fishing culture along the river Nile, which draws men and lures boys away from education matters at an early age leaving the women and girls to take up the burden of domestic responsibilities. Although John ranked parents as ‘often’ listening to their children’s needs, he noted that they ‘rarely’ respond positively and quickly. This could point to either cultural aspects, or possibly to occasions when parents are not able to meet the needs of their children.

Overall, this data strongly correlates with that provided previously by the other stakeholders in the study, namely, parents, educators and the children themselves.

### 6.8.1.2 Question 2: SCM Views about Pupils' Home Background

Senior community members were asked to give their perception about pupils' home backgrounds and rate the following non-school factors that may affect pupils' performance in school, where 1=very important; 2= important; 3=not sure; 4=less important and 5=not at all.

**Table 6.24 - Non-school Factors Affecting Pupil Performance in School**

S/N	Non-school factors	1	2	3	4	5
a	Health of child	All				
b	Nutrition	All				
c	Family support	All				
d	Reasonable family economic status		All			
e	Peer group support in the neighbourhood		U R		S-R	
f	Coming from a good neighbourhoods		All			
g	External support (State, LEA, Community)		All			
h	Parenting style	U	R	S-R		
i	Parental supervision	R	S-R U			
j	Pupil's personal interest	All				
k	Domestic responsibilities	S-R	U R			
l	Stability in the family	All				
m	Parents' education and literacy skills	U	S-R R			

*Key: Key: U= Anthony (urban), S-R = Susan (semi-rural) and R = John (rural)*

The senior community members are in agreement that factors a-c, j and l are 'very important' factors while they also agree that factors d, f and g are important. While Anthony (urban) thinks parenting style (h) and their education and literacy skill (m) are equally very important, John acknowledges areas h, k m to be important but Susan (semi-rural) is not sure about its effect on the child's performance in school.

### 6.8.1.3 Question 3: SCM's Rating of Home Factors Hindering Pupils

Senior community members were asked to rate home-based factors that are likely to hinder primary pupils from getting prepared for their primary leaving examinations using a likert rating scale where 1= always; 2 = often; 3 = rarely; 4 = never.

**Table 6.25 - Factors that Hinder Pupils from getting Pupils prepared for PLE**

S/N	Hindering home-based factors to pupils	1	2	3	4
a	Rebellious behaviour by the child	U S- R	R		
b	Distraction in the community (e.g. night dances, video shows, market.)	U S- R	R		
c	A lack of parental supervision		All		
d	'Don't-care' attitude about school	All			
e	Peer groups that do not have positive attitude to school work	S-R	U R		
f	Domestic responsibilities	S-R R		U	
g	A lack of reading materials at home		All		
h	A lack of proficiency in the English language	S-R	U		
i	Parents being educated with literacy skills	R	S-R		U
j	Parents not being educated without literacy skills	R		U S- R	
k	Frequent absenteeism from school by pupils	All			
l	Domestic conflict/problems	R	U S- R		

Key: U= Anthony (urban), S-R = Susan (semi-rural) and R = John (rural)

The senior community members attributed the failure of pupils to a lack of parental supervision, a complacent attitude towards education, inadequate educational resources at home, and infrequent pupils' attendance at school. All of these issues either directly or indirectly seem to point to parents' lack of supervision and limited financial resources.

Throughout the study, the theme of economic hardship affecting the families under study and subsequently their school going children appears to recur. It tends to place the health, the wellbeing and the general sustainability of families as paramount in the first instance, before anything else such as formal education can be catered to. This theme has come out strongly from respondents included in this study.

#### 6.8.1.4 Question 4:SCM’s Knowledge about External Help to Parents

This question sought to assess senior community members’ knowledge of any other provision put in place in the community by external groups such as state, local education authority, and the school towards the improvement of pupils’ educational achievement in Moyo district.

**Table 6.26 - External Help for Parents**

<b>External Groups</b>	<b>Urban</b>	<b>Semi-rural</b>	<b>Rural</b>
<b>State</b>	Staffing of schools with trained teachers, improved school infrastructures, UPE and UDE schemes and provision of relevant syllabi	Launching of universal primary education, provision of scholastic materials	Universal primary education, capitation funds, instructional materials, and teacher recruitment and payment of teachers’ salaries, relevant policies to guide performance achievements
<b>LEA</b>	Supervision and monitoring of programmes, regular inspection of schools and advice, opportunity for teacher professional development	Recruitment of teachers, provision of scholastic materials	Performance assessment of teachers, reprimand of no-performing teachers school inspection, and regular salary payments
<b>School</b>	Extracurricular activities draw parents closer to pupils, clean school environment – exemplary to villagers	Promotion of sports, music and drama competition	Headteacher mentoring staff, holding regular school staff meetings, termly tests for pupils
<b>Community</b>	Participate in construction of teacher’s houses, establishment of parents’ schools which perform better than government schools	Parent funds, and voluntary services to schools, e.g. building teacher’s houses	Participation in PTA meetings, provision of instructional materials

Overall, congruent with what the 3 headteachers had previously mentioned, the senior community members confirmed that the already existing facilities are in place such as construction of classrooms, teachers’ houses, provision of scholastic materials, food (lunch)



for children in school. They called for the supervision of teachers and teaching standards, and for regular payment of teachers by the State and LEA, and for greater parental involvement at school level. Further comment on this matter is provided in their interview responses later.

#### **6.8.1.5 Question 5: SCM's Knowledge about Strategies that Work for Parents**

When asked to indicate which of the above efforts have been successful and why, the senior community members provided the following responses.

Anthony from the urban area did not give a response but Susan (semi-rural) reported that all of the efforts she had mentioned in the second column have been successful because, 'parents have shown love and interest both in the school and their children'. John (rural) noted that 'provision of instructional materials have helped teaching and learning, payment of regular salaries deters teachers strikes, except that the pay is low, performance assessment compels teachers to do their best and school inspection also compels teachers' presence in school, engaged in preparing and teaching their lessons'. However, all the three senior members expressed that more could be done in support of parents in raising pupils' academic performance in Moyo district. Anthony (urban) appealed to parents to 'send children to school at the right age and to attend PTA meetings at all cost or else face penalties'. To the state, he appealed for 'bye laws that would enforce the age of children's entry to school... award best performing pupils with scholarships at the end of both primary and secondary levels of education and provide lunch to all children in day schools. (Anthony, urban, questionnaire, 2.9.2012)

Susan (semi-rural) reiterated, 'better teachers' salary, increased capitation grant and deployment of adequate teachers in schools'. She also calls on the local education office to 'hold regular meetings about teacher transfers, regular inspection of schools, and build more schools' (questionnaire, August, 2012). While she expects schools also to hold staff, parent-teacher association and school management committee (SMC) meetings, she expects the community to make prompt payment of funds expected of them to schools. In the rural area, John similarly highlights the necessity for a fair salary for teachers by the state, intensive inspection and feedback by local education office, provision of meals for children by parents and he expects the community to protect school property and offer a good learning environment for its pupils.

From all three respondents, a number of common issues come to light which influence the subsequent achievement of children, notably the low salary for teachers, regular meetings by

school administration and parents, meals, especially lunch in school for all children and regular inspection of schools.

#### **6.8.1.6 Question 6: SCM's Additional Comments**

Other written comments contributed by senior community members included the following.

- Increase teachers' salary by 100%
- Give bursaries and scholarships to best pupils (also cited by John, rural)
- Provision of lunch to children in all primary schools in Moyo district
- Scholastic materials and library books should be available in all schools (Anthony, urban)
- The central government and the district local councils to tighten the by-laws requesting all school age children to go to school;
- Build adequate housing for teachers near the school they teach in;
- Government should increase UPE capitation funds in schools and release it timely. (Susan, semi-rural)
- Political good will in monitoring school performance at local council level;
- Radio education programmes be run also in local languages.(John (rural)

In summary, the senior community members' responses to the questionnaire stressed parental active participation in the education of their children by attending PTA meetings, personal supervision of their children to ensure; regular attendance to school, discipline, and provide time, space and scholastic materials. Further data were collected through interviews and this is presented in the next section.

#### **6.8.2. Interview Responses from Senior Community Members (SCM)**

The same interview questions and format were used with SCM as with the educators and parents the findings are presented under the thematic questions as posed below.

1. Is there a difference in having educated/uneducated parents in relation to primary pupils' achievement at school?
2. Roles parents with and without education and literacy skills play in their children's education
3. Roles parents played in previous generations
4. Specific differences education and literacy skills make in each respondent's family
5. Interventions needed to support pupils and parents

6. Any other comments

**6.8.2.1 Question 1: SCMs' Educational Backgrounds**

Data in response to question 1 is presented in the table below.

**Table 6.27 - SCMs' Views about the Impact of Parents' Education on their Children's Educational Achievement.**

<b>Respondent</b>	<b>Response</b>
Anthony (urban SCM)	There is a difference
Sylvia (semi-rural SCM)	There is a difference
John (rural SCM)	Yes, but to some extent

For Anthony the difference lies in the fact that:

...The educated parents have had school experience and they know the problems the child is facing at school... an uneducated parent may be only supporting the child from the material side but may be short-sighted. They may not be able to supervise the children in academic matters. (Interview, SCM urban, 2.9.2012)

Whereas, the difference noticed by Susan is marked by one defining element, poverty, as she elaborated:

...Some parents are willing to educate their children but due to poverty, they are unable to support their children in school. They fail to provide because they are poor. Parents today have good will to send their children to school but the biggest problem is the grip of poverty, almost in every home. (Interview, SCM semi-rural, 1.8.2012)

While in the rural area, John thinks there is a difference but to some extent and he places responsibility on the children themselves as he reflected on his own experience in the following terms:

I personally come from an uneducated family but I have made it to high levels. It sometimes depends on the interest of the children. However, the educated parents have better chances of helping their children than the uneducated parents. (Interview, SCM rural, 30.8.2012)

In varying ways, the three senior members of the community are in agreement that having an educated parent makes a difference for a primary schooling child. These differences exist in parents' attitudes, economic capabilities and also the children's own attitude to schooling as a result of parental influence.

### 6.8.2.2 Question 2: SCMs' Views about the Roles of Parents to their Children

The data presented below is in relation to the roles which parents with and without education and literacy skills, play in their children's education.

**Table 6.28 - Parental Roles**

Participants	Educated parents	Less educated parents
Anthony (urban)	Supervise, knows school related problems the child is facing, can correct areas of literacy skills; poor reading habits, can test child's level of reading, exemplary in academic matters, limits	Supports child materially, are short-sighted in school related matters, unable to assess child's learning process, may not be exemplary in academic matters
Susan (s/rural)	Follow what is needed for the education of their children in school, provide food, uniform	due to poverty ... not able to provide for their children,
John (rural)	Expose child to wider learning opportunities, e.g. through radio, newspapers, have better chances of helping their children, participates in school management committee, have confidence-in participating school meeting, can compare child's work with teachers' lesson plans	Less able to help their children

Anthony's reflection on his own life and analysis of the two types of parents highlights parents and teachers as role models.

...Like in my house, when I was teaching at Lodonga, I had open cupboard with books in and my two children would come to ask me, 'baba, we want to read. They want to read because they see me reading books yet at this time they were not capable of reading. Now and then, they would tell me I have finished this one I want another one even just looking at pictures. All I care about is that they do not ruin the books so I do not leave pens or pencils around otherwise, they would be writing on the pages. (Interview, SCM urban, 2.9.2012)

This comment presents rich parent-child interaction about literacy-related matters. Firstly, the children initiated activity by asking their father for books to read. Secondly, it reveals a parental attitude to listen and respond positively to children's requests and selecting books that are appropriate for the age of the children. Thirdly, and above all, it demonstrates a parent valuing educational materials - monitoring children's activity by not leaving pens and pencils

around to ensure that the children do not destroy the academic materials, which was seen as a potential issue earlier in the chapter during the ethnographic study. He also recalls how some educated parents during his time (1950s-1970s) went as far as ‘teaching their children at home’. He cited, for example, ‘our former Brigadier Kili; in his house there is blackboard. In the evenings, he teaches his children; mathematics, English, etc.’ Brigadier Kili was the Minister for Education and Sports in Uganda during Idi Amin’s regime. Although the president’s reign was popularly known for terror and torture, the other side of the coin is that, Amin ensured every citizen did their part to the best of their ability to educate the young, and this was monitored from the central government down to the village level, and his minister could not do any less. Thus, in Anthony’s view, it is important that parents should know what the child does at school so that s/he is able to assist. This insight could be attributed to his background as a teacher educator. He was even critical of some local radio broadcasters and described their communication as misleading. This is captured in his response about local radio communication:

...Like our local TBS radio where some people read badly and people complain that they are misleading children by mispronouncing even local words like, Kalangala, with wrong intonation. (Interview, SCM urban, 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2012)

There seems to be a clear difference between literacy skill levels even among people considered to be educated in the community. Although Susan stressed poverty as prevalent in Moyo district, she also recognised the rising number of educated parents in the district. However, the government policy is that every child must go to school and this is enforced through universal primary education which has one of its targets, the attainment of literacy and eradication of poverty. As Susan explained, parents are responding as local authorities make efforts to go around the villages to ensure that parents send all children of school-going age children to school. This is an evidence of a positive collaboration between local leaders and parents for benefit of school going children. It would be valuable if a similar effort is extended to combat night dances and uncensored videos in the surrounding, which seem to deviate child from their education.

The study has revealed a high degree of conformity with this requirement in that parents seem to send their children to school and to understand its importance in their children’s lives, but other issues have emerged which impact upon the effectiveness of simply sending the child to school without appropriate supports or follow up from the home environment.

### 6.8.2.3 Question 3: SCMs' Views on Parental Support in Retrospect

When asked to reflect upon how parents valued and influenced children's education in previous generation, senior community members revealed that their own parents had mixed feelings towards education. As time passed though they came to value education, despite not being as educated as the respondents are. Generally, it was reported that two generations ago, parents showed interest in education through engaging in hard labour to generate money to send their children to school and this was noticed by all three participants as follows.

...they worked hard in the 'shambas' (kiswahili for fields), suffered growing cotton and paying my school fees. They allowed to me to continue with education despite community's displeasure at seeing me not getting prepared for marriage. (Interview, SCM urban, 2.9.2012)

Initially it was not easy for Anthony to win his case for schooling. His father and the community's interest was that once he matured, he should get married and have children, and this is captured in his story in box 6. 5.

#### **Box 6.5 - Anthony's Struggle for School in the 1930s**

At the beginning my father did not want me to go to school. I started school at the age of 11. He said I should look after goats, a responsibility for a boy not for girls but he had a vision. In that I was the 2<sup>nd</sup> oldest child so he wanted me to tend goats and later get married. But one day, I woke up in July to start off digging my own field of cotton. My maternal uncle from Rigbo who loved me so much came to my rescue. He had loved my mum so much because she was the only one left of six children, the five all died when young. Her maternal uncle took care of her. Their interest was to see me grow so that the same misfortune should not recur. There were many deaths due to sleeping sickness in our home area around 1928-30. We had to move migrate to another place. From my own cotton field, I got 15.50/= . I paid Ush. 3/= school fees, I bought pajama (sukuleke) and flannel with 1/= each, my own expenditure cost 5/= and gave the balance of 10/= to my dad. That was my reward for my hard work. For personal effects such as soap, we used local herbs like, pawpaw leaves, 'mgbangiri' etc. for local soap. Mgbangiri is like maize cob but reddish in colour. When it matures you plucked the red stuff and use it for washing your clothes, and it foams very much like soap. That is my struggle to get education.

In this story, some of the reasons why children started formal education late is clear and Anthony's expression of the African gender roles and sense of responsibility to the family also come to light; boys not girls care for the family's animals. He also highlights child initiated activity, like the decision to cultivate for one's school fees, and support from extended family such as offered by an uncle are crucial, which goes strongly against parental and community's vision for the young at that time – namely a commitment to domestic chores and to get married.

Susan reported that partly her parents 'did value, that's why I got educated'. However, her father had to be convinced as she reported:

...My dad was discouraging me entirely from pursuing education, saying, 'Is it the trade of girls to pursue education and become secretaries?' My saviour was my mother who would respond, 'Cezero indre nya Matia ni kuru ya? (Caesar, haven't you seen Mathia's daughter? - she is a teacher, girls, too, can become teachers or secretaries after their education'. (Interview, SCM semi-rural, 1.8.2012)

In her excerpt, gender preference among parents is evident, and more often favouring boys over girls for various reasons, including sources of money (see section 5.4.1, p.234). Susan's parents did very little formal education (primary 1 or 2 only) during their Catechism instructions. At that time, she revealed that missionaries recruited children to catechism when they were already big – at about the age of 12-15 years. At this age, she noted that parents also needed these children at home for various domestic chores:

...Boys were needed to come home to mind animals; goats, cattle and sheep and the girls were expected to come home to learn cooking, prepare for marriage. (Interview, SCM semi-rural, 1.8.2012)

Again, parental demands on their children for domestic labour and preparing them for marriage is clear for both boys and girls.

For John, parents valued education though his parents never went to school in the 1930s and married in the 1940s. In his view, his parents never had the opportunity because they were both orphans:

... Mum grew with an aunt far from school structures. In the end they gave me the name CHANDIMALE, which means endure suffering: suffering 'Chandi' and endure 'male'. This is because my father was a fishmonger, he also hunted hippopotamus and other animals in the River Nile. When he got the fish, he took it to Yumbe for sale, (50km) by bicycle or on foot. On two occasions, I followed him to collect money for my school fees and I got nothing. I said, 'fine, let me endure this suffering'. ... they always found alternative means to get money like, selling cotton and fish locally. (Interview, 30.8.2012)

Once again, traditional values such as parents demanding and expecting children's labour to support the family's livelihood is apparent. Nevertheless, children's own interest, initiative and determination as demonstrated by both Anthony and John seemed to have transformed their parents' attitude towards education for their children. Unfortunately, despite parents' interest in having their children educated which was evident to a degree two generations ago, poverty then, much as today, tended to mitigate against their efforts and mar their dreams for the future of their children. But as John put it, 'they never gave up... found other alternative ways' (Interview, SCM rural, 30th August 2012) to educate their children. Respondents were

also asked to state whether or not their own education made a difference in their family. Their views are presented below.

#### **6.8.2.4 Question 4: SCMs' Views about how their Education Played a Role in their Own Family**

All three participants acknowledged that their education had contributed significantly not only to their own families but also influenced the community and society in which they lived. This is elaborated in various as follows.

...My own children, I have 10 children. I can say 100% of my children went to "A" level, 70% joined University, six of them are degree holders and two with masters. Within my home, I pulled several children to school, particularly boys. They went through secondary education and some of them to diplomas (2 of them) in teaching. My becoming a teacher also did a lot for some boys who followed me to where I was teaching and later become teachers as well. One of the boys I taught became a clinical officer. My boy George, likes singing. He met a girl and when it came to paying the dowry, the girl's father stood for me recalling what I did for him when still a student – 'he taught me and took care of my own father even though we are from different clans'. (Interview, SCM urban, 2.9.2012)

Similarly, in the semi-rural area, Susan reported how her education made a difference in her family, 'Yes, I prepared my children very well. Daughter is now a doctor, and my son is an accountant'. Her strategy was:

... Right from the beginning, I had great interest in education, something which I felt from within myself. So when they were young [children], I sent them to nursery school - giving them a good foundation... Other women who were not educated as myself appreciated the way I did things and so they too, sent their children to school. So my being educated also inspired other families in my surrounding... I also sent my housemaids to school. (Interview, SCM semi-rural, 1.8.2012)

Susan's success was her personal interest in education, which led her to provide good foundation for education for her children through nursery education. Nursery education as providing a quality foundation for children's education was also expressed by the teacher in the rural area previously. By this, it can be surmised that the educated parents are aware of what to do to enhance the educational success of their children, except that they are more often than not financially constrained coupled with the limited infrastructures available in the community. Like Anthony, Susan reported that also perceived herself as a role model and influential in her surroundings because of her education.

In the rural area, John reported that his education has made 'a great difference' starting with his own family and beyond. He also attributed his educational influence within his family and in the community to his wife who had attained an ordinary level senior certificate of



education. He described her as one who understands the role of education. John summed up his views in two important principles: discipline and influence:

...within my family, my philosophy is, without education you cannot go anywhere in life and you cannot pursue education without discipline. That is whether you are from rich family or not. But when you are disciplined, you get committed. I have also been helping my neighbours, because an uneducated neighbour is your first most dangerous enemy. (Interview, SCM rural, 30.8.2012)

John also revealed that through his education, he is not confined to supporting just his own family, 'I am paying my nephew in technical college. I support them both financially and by giving them advice'.

Unequivocally, the three participants from across the three sites agreed that their own education had played a major role, not only in their nuclear families but also in the extended family, community, and society. In the final question, the senior members were asked for suggestions to support parents and their children so that children's educational achievement is raised in Moyo district. Their views and opinions are provided below.

#### **6.8.2.5 Question 5: SCMs' Views about How Parents could be Supported**

The senior members were varied in their views and opinions as to what parents can do to support their children in school but similarities were reported in several instances. Below are the various views expressed where A=Anthony, S=Susan and J=John) to indicate attribution of a comment or quote, and where no name is specified, all three agreed on the point. The parental support are categorised as *event-linked*, *resource-linked* and *affective-linked*.

**1. Event-linked support:** These are types of support where parents are actually engaged in literacy and academic activities with children.

- *Knowledge:* parents must have knowledge of children's learning needs, 'unfortunately, most of us parents do not know the requirements of their children for school as far as writing and reading is concerned' (A).
- *Assessment:* Parents should be able to test the rate at which children are learning, that is to appraise their learning process (A).

#### **Box 6.6 - Probing Children to Think Logically: Why Houses have Windows?**

*Example:* I asked the children living with me one day on account of their leaving the window constantly open even when darkness comes, 'why a house should have a window or windows? Answer: To bring in air. Okay, what else?. 'To bring in light'. Then I challenged them, why have you not removed the papyrus mat from the window when there was no light to come in at night?' ....

Again, one day it was already dark and I found the window still open, instead of reprimanding, I asked the same question, why should houses have windows? For light to come in, one said. Right, but now there is no light outside to come in, why is it open?...

Yes. Here is a technique I was trying to test their logical reasoning capacity. (A)

- *Close monitoring*: Parents must be close to children in monitoring their work, class work. (J)
- *Problem-solving*: Be able to probe children's thinking process and lead them to think logically (A).

He continues his question about why houses have windows:

... 'if the window is for light; suppose we close it with papyrus mat, why do we do that during the day.... after some time, one girl said, 'to stop thieves from looking into the house'. Yes! This is a new level of reasoning - security issue. Unfortunately, some parents may not know some of these techniques and have not the patience and time to probe children through this kind of learning (A).

- *Role model/exemplary*: Not many parents can pick books to look through; ask children to read (J).
- *Changing values*: With the inception of cell phones, people seem to have stopped letter writing - no letters come to the families so children cannot be asked to read (J).
- *Promote reading culture*: There is a poor reading culture even among teachers (J). It is common to see teachers sit idle, enjoying, passing time with friends rather than engage in reading, even for themselves. Some prefer to do their fieldwork (agriculture) to supplement their low pay. This practice by teachers [and also some educated parents] could account significantly for poor performance of our children at school (J).

**2. Resource-linked support:** These are the kind of supports that indirectly affect children's school performance. For example, provision of scholastic materials, space for study and sleep, food, shelter, and the general health of the child.

- *Provision of needs*: Parents must always be ready to provide the needs of the child in school (S). Parents should ensure that their children have their own separate rooms within the family so that they have time and space to do their homework without disturbance (J). John disagrees with the traditional style where boys/girls in the village sleep in a house by themselves with the children of the neighbours unsupervised. 'You don't know what they are up to in the night'. In his observation, this practice is still common that's why there are discipline problems both in the school and in homes.
- *Exposure*: Expose children to other learning opportunities through newspapers, radio and reading (A and J).

As Anthony reports:

... My room is full of old newspapers. The children in the neighbourhood know I have them and sometimes they come and ask me, 'mzee' [*a respectful address to an elder, equivalent to the term 'Sir'*] give us some old newspapers'. They use it for covering their exercise books. I give them but they discover some inspiring stories in the papers – for example, the great athlete, Kipsiro and Kiprotic who won 3000m race were appealing to the children. (A)

**3. Affective linked support:** These are the type of support related to parental love, attitude, belief and encouragement of the child.

- *Stability:* Stability in the family is important (Susan). In her view, if parents are peaceful in the family, they can plan and provide better for the child.
- *Social factors:* Working parents, especially fathers, prefer to spend leisure time with friends outside rather than with family, including children. In John's view, 'If children see teachers reading, or even their own parents read, they can be encouraged to read as well'.
- *Role model:* For example, John questioned, 'how do you as a parent foster literacy in the family?' He observed that 'unfortunately, the literate have hardly any time to spent with their children.

Both short term and long term impacts are evident from the above data, with shorter term issues relating to increased parental participation, greater motivation, and acting as role models being the major issues reported by the senior community members. Longer term issues include adequate provision for the needs of the child, and family stability. Following up with this data, the participants were asked to suggest other ways, in their opinion, which could facilitate children to perform in school. This is presented in the next section.

#### **6.8.2.6 Question 6: SCMs' Responses on Intervention for Pupils and Parents**

##### ***Interventions for pupils***

The senior community members proposed a number of interventions for pupils. These are presented according to the location of the respondent.

##### ***Anthony (urban)***

Teacher motivation through increased pay, reduce pupil: teacher ratio to enable teachers to manage pupils better, and tackle the hostile environment in Moyo town which is a threat, and described as dangerous to learners when he noted:

...The night dancing halls such as the AGANA Complex, are dangerous in Moyo Town. Even for us who do not go out for dances, we cannot sleep from the noise pollution in the area. Particularly, girls, the men are after the young girls. They lure them with money and buy them good things. As a parent, your daughter leaves you sleeping and goes out to night dances. The tradition that teenage children sleep on their own in another house/hut is dangerous, you do not know what the children are doing. (Interview, SCM urban, 2.9.2012)

On this point, Anthony agrees with John about parents not providing adequate accommodation for their children, which is accessible to their supervision.

*Susan (semi-rural)*

According to Susan, 'sensitisation of parents to encourage their children to attend school should be a priority of all stakeholders in the education of children'. She observed, 'there are many parents who don't care about this. They instead direct their children to go to work in the fields' (Interview, SCM semi-rural, 1.8.2012).

*John (rural)*

Improve community facilities for learning. For example, introduce functional adult literacy classes for parents so that they become co-learners, and all stakeholders in education should be involved. In his view:

...reading material is very rare, no bibles, few educated parents get some past papers for their children. Newspapers are very rare, too. Because when they are brought to the local shops, only 2-3 copies out of 20 are bought so the people selling are withdrawing from bringing newspapers'. (Interview, SCM rural, 30.8.2012)

He also suggested that teachers could organise reading and debating competitions for children in order to improve their language skills in both languages but more in English.

### ***Interventions for parents***

The senior community members emphasised the sensitisation of parents about their role in the education of their children. As headteachers had earlier mentioned (chapter 5) rural parents tend to have misunderstood universal primary education to mean that the government has taken over responsibility for their children's schooling. For instance, parents should be alerted that paying school fees is not the only aspect of a child's education. Parents should be encouraged to contribute not only in monetary terms, but also in any other ways possible for extra coaching (Anthony). He also added that teachers need to visit parents, especially, whose children are under-performing. This can motivate parents to pay more attention to their children's education, and also help teachers to know more about a pupil's home background and be able to plan appropriate learning strategies. Through church organisations, parents need to be helped to build peace and stability in their homes (Susan, John). In Susan's view, 'if parents are peaceful in the family, they can plan and provide better for the child'. Availability of reading materials in the community is essential (John). Through re-introduction of functional adult literacy (FAL) classes, parents could become co-learners with their children and reading culture could be fostered, insisted John. The community centres could be reclaimed from exclusive provision of entertainment services currently, such as discos, videos

shows and drinking clubs, which are not beneficial either to learners or residents and which could be better used to provide education-related activities (John). For him, this should be the responsibility of civil leaders to establish by-laws and ensure they are adhered to, for instance, no night discos for children under 18 years. Above all, he considered that all stakeholders; civil, political and religious need to combine and support parents morally, economically, socially and educationally. He stressed that this should start by government paying reasonable salaries to civil servants including teachers (John).

Over all, the senior community members, like the educators and parents have acknowledged that there is relationship between parents' education and literacy skills and their children's achievement in school. While clearly, they stated that educated parents, including teachers, know what to do for their school children, they acknowledge that they are hampered by a lack of time due to work commitments and required social demands such as spending leisure time in non-academic related activities with friends or in the field.

Respondents raised a number of concerns about less educated parents; the lack of knowledge about school related matters, limitations in exposing children to other learning opportunities, illiteracy and a tendency to commit themselves to domestic chores. Respondents were also critical of children's own contribution to their learning, especially when they drew examples from their own lives, but equally, they were concerned about some emerging cultural traits in the Moyo society that counteract the learning process. This is highlighted in the development of what they refer to as a hostile environment in Moyo town. Similar concerns were also raised in the semi-rural and rural areas when respondents indicated that formally existing community centres were being used for discos rather than educational purposes. Finally, poor teacher motivation resulting from low pay also emerged as a reason for children's poor performance. Generally, parents were seen to be interested in having their children educated, right from their own generation to the present, but poor infrastructure and lack of reasonable financial stability add to the challenges parents face in their efforts to enhance children's achievement in school.

## **6.9. Conclusion**

In conclusion, the data as presented in this chapter demonstrated that there is no one approach to raising pupils' achievement in school. What is clear is that there are a number of contributing factors but that parental education is identified as a major factor which is interlinked with many of the other issues reported. These issues include: time, finance, resources, attitudes, patterns of belief and knowledge about the education system, and the nature of involvement. Notwithstanding that these are different for different households, one of the major determining factors appears to be the level of education which parents have achieved and the extent of their involvement in their children's educational lives. However, it is clear from the data that this alone is insufficient as an indicator of success in school, and the overriding constraint of a lack of time to engage with, monitor and supervise their children's education cuts across the extent of parental education and literacy levels. The necessity to provide for their children's and extended family members' livelihood is uppermost in all parental respondents' minds. Having the added advantage of education bestows some parents with the knowledge of why education is so important and what they need to do to support their children to succeed in school. But that knowledge on its own is reported as being insufficient in a climate where numerous demands are placed on parents, and the greatest area of challenge is that of time and money.

It was also evident that role modelling in educational matters is important for the school going child. Speaking from my own experience of growing up in a rural village in the region where this study was conducted, the data reported in this and the last chapter resonates with my personal life experience in that what helped my siblings and I in our educational careers was the keen interest of our mother, who was a primary school teacher. The issues of practical engagement and participation of parents with their children in their educational endeavours is a key one emerging from this chapter, and will be examined further in the next chapter which discusses some of the major themes arising from this study.

# CHAPTER SEVEN

## DISCUSSION

### 7.1. Introduction

This study investigates the possible factors that affect primary pupils' academic achievement. Findings from a mixed methods design including data from ethnographic fieldwork were presented and analysed in the previous two chapters five and six. This chapter discusses the major themes that emerged out of the findings. They are linked to the three research questions. Since the themes may not fall neatly under each of the research questions, as they tend to overlap, they are condensed into three broad categories, namely; (i) challenges, (ii) effects and (iii) opportunities, for discussion purposes.

### 7.2. Challenges

The study established that there are links between parents' education and literacy skill levels, and their primary children's educational achievement in school. This was evident in the ways educated parents perceived their education, principally as a way to earn money. Although their earnings are low, it enables them to support their children in school in terms of paying school fees on time, buying uniforms and other scholastic materials for their children.

The three children belonging to the educated parents presented uneven abilities in school even though their parents were able to provide literacy related resources for their schooling. While the reasons for their uneven performance were varied, the levels of support provided enabled these children to perform comparatively better (except Nila in semi-rural area) than their peers who received much less support from parents with average and levels of education. The study found that parents with higher levels of education positively influenced their children's education over and above those parents with low or no formal education. Notwithstanding the relative advantages of having educated parents, the study found challenges, which significantly affected all of the parents, albeit to different degrees. Table 7.1 presents those challenges faced by the sample groups.

**Table 7.1 - Challenges Faced by Category of Families**

Participants	Challenges
<b>Educated parents</b>	Time, money, inadequate resources, absence from home, supporting extended family, social group, work place, rural location, poor infrastructure, and limited reading culture
<b>Less and (un)educated parents</b>	Time, money (low and irregular), absence from home (cultivation), basic needs, unemployment, limited external support, illiteracy/language
<b>Children</b>	Language, lack of parental cognitive support, inadequate resources, domestic responsibilities, time, poor test results, repetition of classes, lack of role model, laziness and stubbornness

Parents regardless of their level of education reported a lack of time to spend with their children as a major obstacle to supporting their education. Their children indicated language difficulties, inadequate resources, domestic responsibilities, a lack of parental cognitive support, and a lack of time as the main difficulties, which affected their performance in school.

Overall, there are no straightforward answers to the dilemma of challenges faced by parents and their children but the level of parental education remains important. As shown, the challenges tend to derive from a number of factors and five of these emerged as major issues: (i) language deficiency, (ii) lack of time, (iii) systemic poverty, (iv) illiteracy and (v) enduring cultural traits. These are discussed in the subsequent sections in an attempt to explore their significance and implications in relation to the primary school child.

### **7.2.1. Language Deficiency**

Language studies have emphasised the important role language plays in human social life (Dunbar, 1996; Deacon, 1997). In this study, the role of language for the educational purpose of the child lies in the construction of human interaction precisely between parents and children. This refers to the 1st dimension of parental involvement, ‘the symbolic interaction’ in terms of communication both formally through instruction and informally as it takes place in the everyday life situation in the home environment. Evidence from the literature show that for a meaningful interaction to take place both the home and school should have a shared knowledge and language (Biddulph et al.,2003). The experience in the field showed a different reality.

#### **7.2.1.1 Language Compatibility**

The field research found the home - school languages were entirely unrelated in phonology, grammar and text. Although English is the official language and also the language of instruction in schools and institutions in Uganda, the dominant language spoken at home in



this study was the local Ma'di vernacular, which has little to add to pupils' schooling and academic literacy development at primary six level. This is compounded by the fact that the unskilled parents neither speak nor understand English because they have had no formal education. In Uganda, the main channel for acquiring English the language is through formal education.

However, as the study shows, the local language, Ma'di was the dominant language spoken at home in all of the nine families studied. The mother tongue in Uganda has gained importance in the education system through the introduction of the mother tongue education curriculum (MTE) in 2007 (NAPE, 2007). However, parents reported that they want their children to learn and be taught in English since it is the official language and therefore the language of instruction in schools and institutions. They see it also as an invaluable tool for the job market for the future of their children.

In addition, the MTE mandate becomes problematic when one considers that out of over 40 languages spoken in Uganda, only about six major languages have so far been adopted for the instruction of lower primary (P1-3) (NAPE, 2011). As mentioned earlier, this puts children in a difficult linguistic situation, especially in the urban centres where parents work as civil servants and do not necessarily belong to the district they work in and therefore usually have a different language at home. The policy makers seem not to have considered that there are over 40 different mother tongues spoken in Uganda, and while it may be impractical to use all of them in formal instruction, they unfortunately have not yet reached a satisfactory solution to this issue. In the interim, many children are receiving their education in a language that they are not familiar or conversant in. Similarly, as the study found, by the time primary children reach upper primary (P4-7), when English becomes the medium of instruction and communication within school settings, they are not proficient in that language either, and find themselves potentially at a further disadvantage. This is likely to affect their performance even in subjects other than English, thus their overall academic progress could significantly be affected. For example, the questionnaire designed for the primary six pupils in this study had to be read and explained to the pupils before they could respond. As a result, the questionnaire which was to last about 30-45 minutes took 1 hour 10 minutes on average in the semi-rural and rural areas. This is a point of concern when these children have to sit all of their examinations in English to proceed to secondary education the following year. It is also of concern to pupils who were interviewed and observed across the divides of urban, semi-rural and rural schools, who associated their poor school performance with difficulties in speaking, reading, and

writing in English. When pupils do not understand what they are taught and what they read, it is likely that they will require additional support. This is where the advantage of having educated parents who are reasonably proficient in English played a role in this study; however, the issue of having available time to devote to supporting their children's studies was a separate and quite pronounced challenge for even the educated parents.

However, this is not to deny them their mother tongue but based on the evidence from this study, this language policy calls for some revision. As parents reported, the mother tongue, indeed, their vernacular, from which as a people they draw strength, pride, identity, must be preserved (Kramsh, 1998). However, the parents also were cognisant that the use of vernacular in the home and community, exclusive of English, will not help their children in school. There was evidence to suggest that the provision of additional resources such as books and games in English could help children to practice and thus improve on their English competence.

#### **7.2.1.2 Additional Literacy Resources**

In New Zealand, the study of Bidulph et al. (2003) clearly indicated that a rich language environment in the home, in terms of nurturing as well as providing literacy related items, along with, positive contact and interaction among the extended family members with varied language and literacy experiences, positively associates with higher achievement in school. In the current study, this association stands largely irrelevant as families researched revealed serious monetary constraints. Both educated and less educated were not able to provide adequate literacy related resources for the needs of their children's schooling due to inadequate and low family income. While educated, working parents decried having a low salary, it is arguable that at least they had a steady salary, while the lesser educated parents had low and irregular incomes, and the uneducated parents had neither low nor regular income, and also lacked a knowledge of English to assist them in securing some form of regular employment. The latter subsist heavily on agricultural manual labour and fishing activities to provide for the livelihood of their children. In this situation, the study found that all of the school going children are seriously deprived of additional resources such as story and textbooks in English with which to practice and improve their English knowledge and usage to enhance their achievement in school.

The study also found that there were no community facilities to provide opportunities for L2 language development. Instead, the available community centres (2 out of 9 sub-counties)

were used by social service providers to stage discos and uncensored video shows, which were seen by parents and key education stakeholders as detrimental to the education of primary school children in the area. The children in this case appear to be deprived from three main angles: home, school and community as far as English literacy development is concerned. In this regard, parents claimed that they are not getting value for their efforts by sending children to school. The general view reported was that they are capable of transmitting the vernacular to their children from home, hence their insistence on the teaching and emphasising of English to their children from the early classes at school to compensate for deficits in this regard at home and in the wider community. As Denessen (2007) notes, early exposure to literacy is believed to enhance children's achievement. Based on the evidence from this study, English could be emphasised earlier in the education system in order to increase these children's chances of success. This is important especially when parents in this study could not afford the money to buy books, and other literacy resources that can enhance their children's literacy development in terms of acquiring English competence. Language issues and resources to support this are not isolated challenges, and other factors, such as available time being spent with their children, unfortunately presents as another challenge.

### **7.2.2. Challenges of Time**

All three categories of parents observed reported the challenge of a lack of time to spend with their children. The educated parents especially see this as having a serious impact on their educational development. Each category offered different reasons for their claim.

The educated parents' lack of time was associated with their employment duties which keep them away from home for long periods and they return home late and tired. They noted that they had to spend their leisure time with friends rather than with family and children, which was seen as a necessary feature of the required social interaction associated with their jobs. It is evident from this study that the breadwinner in this study remains the father of the children, apart from one case of a single mother as found in F1 (rural area). Yet culturally, among the Ma'di of Uganda, it is also the father who is expected to closely monitor and supervise children. As the study has shown, the fathers seem to be cut off from the important closeness of family interaction and experience due to their commitment to paid employment.

The prolonged absence of the father from home was found to create inequality between parents leading to behavioural problems, resentment and even conflict in the home as clearly demonstrated especially in the households of parents with average education. Although will relatively small sample, the negative impact on the school going child was noted with all the

three children studied: Fred (F2, in the urban), Martin (F2 in semi-rural) and Helen ( F2, in the rural). The trio lived in the home without their biological mothers.

And their fathers could not afford the time to be with the children as they had to go out looking for casual jobs. Yet, they reported that the money accrued from such menial jobs brings in little income, hardly sufficient to support the basic needs of their families. Similarly, as in the first category, while the man who goes out to look for casual jobs, a responsible and creative wife remains at home to engage in other money generating activities such as brewing local beer and doing petty trade. Unfortunately, as the study found, some women took advantage of their husband's absence from home and engaged in behaviours such as i night dances which, in one case, led to their marital dissolution.

Lastly, the unskilled, illiterate parents reported that they spend long hours in their fields cultivating for the survival of their family, and consequently have a lack of time to interact with and support their children educationally. It is evident that these parents are largely unable to give practical academic support to their children because they do not have adequate knowledge of school matters owing to their illiteracy. It emerged that the reality of the parents' lives in this study reveals an inability of all of the parents to give time to interact, work collaboratively, help children with their homework and discuss school matters with their children. Overall, it can be seen that paid time seems to be visibly valued by the parents in this study for a purpose. It is valued because it has monetary powers, which empowers them to pay the school fees for their school going child. However, it appears that the reality is that such paid time, if not well planned, as is the case in this study, significantly obscures the value of unpaid time spent in helping the school children at home with their studies. A vicious circle is created in that parents do all they can to work to secure money to pay for school fees, but attendance at school alone is not sufficient to provide for the educational needs of their children.

This scenario stands somewhat at odds with the concept of the zone of proximal development (ZPD) suggested by Vygotsky's socio-cultural historical theory (1978) adopted for this study, which among other things emphasises collaboration in learning for children including the learner's intra-interaction (Saville-Strike, 2006). If parents are unable to engage practically in the academic activities of their children, then this theory suggests that school going children either have to struggle alone, rely on school exclusively to support them, or rely on peers or other adults in the home and community. Moreover, as Moll (1992) highlights, the ZPD should be understood as an explanatory principle where the adult explores interactions in

everyday life situations to assist children. This is intended to aid them so that these children can take control of their own learning. If the principles of the ZPD require assisted support from adults (Kozulin, 2003; Rogoff, 1974), then parents' interventions, and that of other competent adults in the immediate and extended family, become indispensable in enhancing the primary child's competence for subsequent performance in school. In this study, there is evidence that parents have not stood up to the above principles in order to impact on the progress of their children in school. Perhaps, intervention from the community and higher civil and educational authority may be required. Otherwise, without additional help to supplement what schools are doing for these children, it is unlikely, as UNICEF (2005) noted, that these children will enjoy and be able to realise their full potential in education.

In summary, it is evident that a lack of time expressed by parents in all categories studied greatly compromised the quality and extent of parent-child interaction, parents seemed not to be aware of. Although studies have shown that when parent-child interactions do not take place, negative results occur in children's development (Fuligni and Brooks-Gunn, 2004; Sayer 2004a, 2004b; Kalil et al., 2012). In this case, a lack of parental time with children was linked to social, economic and personal (illiteracy) phenomena on the part of parents, which are threats to children's academic performance. It emerged from the findings that the reason why parents do not engage with their children is because of poverty, which compels parents towards money generating activities and this tends to be systemic in the study area.

### **7.2.3. Poor Households**

Studies have shown the association between poverty and the amount of resources in a household. In turn, poverty is shown to determine also the level of education in a household. As Dolton et al. (2009:1) put it, 'education provides opportunities for higher wages', meaning that education is a major determinant of wages and income differences. In the current study, this difference between educated parents and semi-literate and illiterate parents in household income was relative and raises concerns for the school child in a similar way.

The general outlook of participants in this study reflected the low level of the socioeconomic status of people in Moyo district in general. This was evident in the type of clothes they wore, the houses they lived in, the type of food they ate, the number and quality of furniture in their houses, and their general demeanour. Susan, one of the senior community members clearly stated, 'poverty is the biggest obstacle to families in Moyo district, otherwise, they are willing to educate their children' (Interview, Semi-rural area, 1st August 2012). Thus, the majority of

parents in Moyo district have good will to send their children to school but the grip of poverty owing to low household income apparent in every home, hinders their good intentions.

### **7.2.3.1 Low Family Income**

The study found that employed parents are poorly paid (see chapter 6, table 6. 19), semi-skilled parents get far less income and unskilled are constantly in their fields cultivating the land to produce food for the family's sustenance. Overall, poverty impinges on available resources in the home. Parents are unable to provide adequately for their children's schooling with regard to such items as books, calendars, bags, uniforms, clocks, and even for the child's physical well-being including other school requirements, for example, lunch school development fees are not paid for on time. With limited facilities, children's confidence in schooling may be compromised when they have to be sent home when school requirements are not met. This is all because the majority of parents interviewed reported they did not have the money. Obviously, low pay is an issue, but it would be of interest to query whether or not the picture would be different if these parents had much higher educational qualifications, and therefore were engaging in high paying jobs such as bankers or doctors? Pampel et al. (2010; see also Dolton et al., 2009) would agree that individuals with more years of education are, among other aspects, also statistically likely to have a high income. This means they would be able to cater for their children in an holistic manner including their schooling. However, in the context of this study, there are other challenges which seem to be beyond the control of individual parents, and these include issues of infrastructure.

### **7.2.3.2 Poor Infrastructure**

The study was conducted in Moyo district, located in the north western part of Uganda referred to as the West Nile Region (see details in chapter 3).

#### ***Remoteness***

Since independence in 1962, the district of Moyo, though it was one of the first districts created, has not seen significant changes. It is not clear whether or not this is due to its extreme location (over 500km from major towns and the capital city Kampala (see map in chapter 3), or if it is a deliberate political strategy. The people of Moyo district have remained a predominately agrarian and fishing community, with little exposure to the outside world as it is cut off by the river Nile in the East and by the Republic of South Sudan in the north.

Employment opportunities are also rare as the town has no single form of industry or large scale agricultural activity.

It is hoped that readers will understand that some of the observations made and data collected in this study have not been recorded before, therefore, literature that supports some of these facts is lacking. As the findings revealed, across the three categories of families (n 9) visited, only two had permanent houses with provision for future electrical connections. These belonged to professional families. One home had a water tap outside the house installed in the backyard. All toilet facilities and bath shelters are located outside the compound. Six homes were one-roomed grass-thatched huts. One hut had three rooms to serve as living room, bedroom for parents and a food store.

This means their school age children have to sleep in separate huts, sometimes with neighbours' children, and its attendant disadvantages as reported previously. The issue of children sneaking out to attend discos by night while their parents were asleep was reported as common practice. Moreover, entry to these social activities is not free. Some individuals in the community, as cited by participants and senior community members, mostly grown up boys and men, attempt to lure girls into these arenas. If they pay the entry fees, it was noted that these men expect something in return. Unfortunately, this takes the forms of unhealthy relationships leading to unexpected pregnancies and eventual falling out of school. As for boys being involved in night dances, it also leads to losing concentration on school matters. As teachers indicated, this is often reflected in the child not completing their homework, sleeping in class from early in the day and sometimes attending school irregularly as Felix discovered with his niece, (Chapter 6, parent report). In addition, sleeping in groups in confined spaces, places additional pressure on the available resources for comfortable sleeping.

As studies have shown, better sleeping places, as well as study spaces available due to parental income is likely to increase the chances of scholastic achievement (Gormley, 1991). This means that if children lack such things as blankets, mosquito nets and mattresses, their health may be compromised which can disrupt their schooling. For example, children sleeping in Moyo district without mosquito nets are more likely to suffer from malaria than those who have them. Additionally, sleeping on the ground on papyrus mats as was evident in this study, exposes children to the dangers of stings from roaming ants, scorpions and snake bites which are not uncommon in the area. Finally, having children sleep with other friends who may not belong to their age group also results in socialisation patterns alien to the family's values and ethos as noted by senior community members interviewed. As Anthony stated, every family

has their own way of raising children but some parents, according to him, seem not to realise the disadvantages attached to their social practices. The practice of children sleeping separate from their parents continue to persist among the Ma'di people. It is not clear whether it is due to the systemic poverty the families experience which makes them unable to provide adequate and appropriate sleeping places for their own children or if it is just one of enduring traditions of the Ma'di people.

### ***Electricity***

The findings showed that the homes studied did not have electricity services, as was the case for the majority in the district. Moyo town receives 4hours of electricity in 24 hours (from 7:00 pm-11:00pm). Four hours should be adequate for schoolchildren at home to wash, eat and study before going to bed. But as none of the children studied had electricity installed in their houses, and parents who are financially constrained, pupils used tin lamps or had nothing at all for night studies. This confirms teachers' reports that some pupils do not complete their homework. Pupils themselves testified to this situation by their appeal for parents to provide paraffin oil for their study, and also to give them time to do their homework. As has already been mentioned, this type of light source is poor and likely to pose health problems for the children. Since the light is dim, the lamp has to be placed close to the book one is reading. This means the black smoke ensuing from the open flame rises directly to the eyes and inevitably be inhaled by the child. This was evident in Zina's report of eye problems, which made her miss two years of school and it cost money to bring her to hospital. At the time of the study, she reported the need for reading glasses but her father did not have the money. The study also noted fungal infection on her left ear, which she reported, had lasted for the whole year due to a lack of proper treatment.

### ***Transport system***

Road networks, mainly non-asphalt roads have remained basic even for the main road and often they are in poor condition especially in the rainy seasons. Feeder-roads are even worse as there are few vehicles to use them and so they lack maintenance.

In addition, public transport is limited and therefore expensive. This means children have to walk to school regardless of weather conditions. As parents are hardly able to afford the minimum amount of scholastic materials, protective gear such as shoes, rain-coat, umbrella, and also school bags, or transport to and from school are likely to be considered less essential. A lack of these basic essentials could result in health issues such as pneumonia, cold and



cough particularly during the wet months. While ill health is clearly not good for school going children, equally, it also costs money to get them treated. For example, the study found that all three schools did not have a cardigan as part of their school uniform, yet the children stated the need for it especially during the rainy season when the polyester material (prescribed for uniforms) is not sufficiently protective. In addition, pupils wearing shoes in school is not mandatory but four of the nine pupils observed stated their desire to have shoes for school. Their reasons were that during the dry season the ground becomes hot and hurtful on bare feet. During the rainy season, it was reported that the children needed shoes to protect them from fungal infection mainly affecting the area between the toes, locally known as 'eyi fa' (water itch) as they walk on wet and dirty puddles of water. These unplanned for health conditions tend to claim the little money saved for feeding and school needs of the children as reported by George (Interview, F3 rural, 30th August 2012). It is therefore clear that if these problems are not resolved, the consequences continues to lay further burden on the already meagre family incomes.

### ***Health Services***

Moyo district's location 3° north of the Equator designates it as having a modified equatorial climate. While the rainy seasons are wet and warm, the dry seasons (three months December-February) are dry, hot, and dusty. In addition, as mentioned earlier, the district is bordered on the east by the river Nile which is thickly overgrown with papyrus reeds and other vegetation. Combined with this warmth, it offers perfect conditions for malarial bearing mosquitoes (anopheles). It is was reported by both teachers and parents, that it is not uncommon for children in the homes described above to fall sick with malaria as well as other tropical diseases, associated with warm and wet conditions, such as sleeping sicknesses and bilharzia parasites. The hospitals and health units in Moyo districts are not well resourced. Often, patients are referred to health clinics, most likely owned by health workers, where treatment has to be paid for. It has been seen on various occasions in this study that the parents studied face serious financial problems relating to unplanned for medical expenses. It was found that not all parents were able to afford treatment for their school children, and thus, the children's health was compromised and this led to a child missing school, and subsequently performing poorly. Zina's case with the eye problem for example, was referred to Lacor hospital in Gulu, a more expensive private hospital, in a totally different district, which obviously required adequate financial support, knowledge of the local language (unrelated to Ma'di) or English for communication. Zina, sadly admits that she has to bear with the fungal infection on her ear

and the lack of reading glasses due to a lack money expressed by her father. In her own words, she noted in a one-to-one interview, ‘I know my parents are not happy because they are not able to support me and my brothers and sisters adequately’. There are nine children in the family. These infrastructural and economic challenges as evidenced in the study are potentially impacting on the educational life chances of the study sample.

#### **7.2.4. Illiteracy**

As the study shows, those with no regular jobs are the illiterate, and are unable therefore to support their children in academic matters a number of ways. As one of the illiterate parents said, their illiteracy tends to complicate the already difficult situation in which they live. Firstly, the illiterate parents studied reported that they were not in any employment, because they have no professional skills for contractual employment. This leaves them with the option of either working hard in their own ‘shambas’ in order to produce food with the surplus sold to earn money. Alternatively, they may have to work as hired casual labourers in other people’s fields where they are paid at the end of the day. It was reported that neither of these activities is likely to earn sufficient money to support the family. It would follow that the school-going child is less likely to be provided for adequately in his/her education. The evidence from study revealed that out of the three children of these families (F3s) two; Zina and Dona performed worse in school than the children of the other two groups. However, Joel performed better than some of the other children from parents with a little or more education. This is an interesting point and worthy of consideration. The study established three possible reasons; firstly, he was repeating primary six while the others, though had previously repeated other classes prior to primary six, were in their first attempt. Secondly, the study also found Joel to be a self-motivated pupil who uniquely set questions and scholastic challenges for himself and provides the answers. Finally, his illiterate father is enthusiastic about education, and trusts Joel and his ability to read, as he brings to home any text material whatsoever which he comes across for Joel to read and interpret for him. Seen from this perspective, Joel is receiving motivation and encouragement for his studies at home, and concrete resources, such as advertisements and any written material his father can lay his hands on for Joel. As he was repeating the year, the primary six syllabus was a revision for him and the test questions were familiar to him. All of this was backed up by the trust his parents put in him, which likely impacted positively on his education. Although he did not have adequate literacy resources, he made good use of the limited available to him, which eventually earned him a good second grade in his primary leaving examinations (see, table 6.12 in chapter 6). This evidence seems

to support Gottfried and colleagues' (1998) observation that when resources are poorly provided for school children, it is negatively associated with academic anxiety, which may affect children's concentration at school leading to possible poor performance than their families would otherwise support. Instead, the warm attitude and positive support of Joel's parents, though illiterate seem to significantly his motivation towards education and subsequent achievement in school. Nevertheless, if Joel's parents were literate it is likely that he could have performed better than he did. As his father George stated, his illiterate status was confining him and his household. George believes that if you have a second or third language, you would be able to get out of your confinement and thereby learn more than from your home and local surroundings. This was an allusion to being exposed to other opportunities that the study found to be a practice associated more with educated parents.

### ***Exposure to educational opportunities***

Studies indicate that exposure to cognitive stimulation either at home, in the community or in the wider world, is likely to increase children's intrinsic academic motivation such as learning-oriented opportunities (Gottfried et al., 1998). This can take the form of parents taking an interest in supporting school trips, attending graduation ceremonies, or enabling field excursions and activities as one headteacher reported. However, when parents are illiterate, as this study found, they are unlikely to possess a reasonable level of curiosity towards academic matters, which would motivate their children to engage constructively with education. This was illustrated in a story, which one of the headteachers reported about his own experience. As a parent, he invited his family to attend his graduation ceremony in Kampala, a journey which required crossing the river Nile twice from Moyo and could take over a day's travelling by car. According to him the event had significant impact on his children on many fronts. The children were exposed to a wider geographic and social context. As a result, he noted that his children were motivated to aspire to excel and go beyond the level of their father's academic achievements. In fact, at the time of the interview, he reported that two of his children were attending the state university and one child was in vocational training. In contrast, the less educated reported no such experiences, not even were they in a position to expose and tell their children about the importance of the river Nile, which is located within their own district. As the study indicated, less educated parents seem to associate the river Nile narrowly with what benefits it provides to meet their immediate needs, such as water, food, the papyrus reeds for making sleeping mats, and other useful weeds such as lotus (which when burnt its ashes are used as a local salt). Beyond this, it is perceived as an obstacle to movement. It would be

of great educational benefit if parents were able to discuss the wide range of information associated with this river: biblical, historical, geographical, social and economic, which could make a difference when these children study its significance in the classroom situation. As the educators reported, even the educated parents are less likely to do this for their children, because of their low income and the associated challenges that places on their available time. The illiterate parents across the three sites reiterated during interviews that a lack of resources, in many ways left them feeling 'restricted and confined', 'lonely' and 'helpless'. They are restricted and confined because travelling requires money, lonely because they can only communicate in their local language and cannot join clubs to meet with other people from different tribes, and helpless because they see no other alternative to their problems. These parents in a way share the language deficit with their children, and for them schooling seems to be the only way out. Yet, if they knew English, they could access other information by reading books and newspapers. For example, the senior community member in the rural area reported that the local news agent stopped bringing newspapers to the area because out of 200 newspapers brought to the town centre, only three, on good days, would get sold out. This finding indicates that both the uneducated and educated parents in the rural area do not read newspapers. However, this is not because they are not interested. As George (illiterate in the rural area) reported that sometimes when he comes across some printed material, he brings it to his primary six class child (Joel) to read and Joel can tell him what it is about. The other two uneducated parents interviewed in the same vein stated that they were interested in reading but because they did not attend formal education (and Agnes stopped in primary 2), literacy activities becomes impossible both for themselves and for their children. Their hope is in their children. That is why parents, including the illiterate, reported their strong desire among other benefits from schooling, that their children will have a good grasp of English right from the start. All parents in this study view this as the language that has future prospects for their children in terms of higher education and job opportunities. Thus, illiteracy compounded with the lack of resources tends to discriminate against their children participating profitably in the education system as well as in the market economy. This financial limitation has implications for the school going child. It has been shown that the lack of resources at home and in the community, coupled with lack of exposure to places or items of educational value and interest, tend to correlate negatively with the academic success of these children by the number of classes they repeat (see table 6.11 in chapter 6).

In practice, the children in this study were disadvantaged in multiple ways. While all the children studied suffer from a lack of linguistic and practical parental academic support, the

children of less educated (the average and uneducated) additionally suffer from a serious lack of educational materials at home. These multiple deprivations, the study found to be seriously limiting and they bear negative implications for the educational success of the children. This multiple deprivation has been most poignantly observed by UNICEF (2005):

...children in poverty experience deprivation of the material, spiritual and emotional resources to survive, develop, and thrive, leaving them unable to enjoy their rights, to achieve their full potential or participate as full and equal members of society. (UNICEF, 2005:10)

The situation of the children, especially those from the two categories: the average and uneducated parents indicate that parental educational levels in terms of ability to provide educational requirements makes a significant difference but all parents need to engage practically with these symbolic artifacts and with their children. Otherwise, it is more surprising that the performance of two children of educated families, reveals that despite relatively adequate educational materials at home, without parental or any other adults' support, monitoring, supervision and guidance at home, children perform poorly was the case with Lily and Nila, who were performing below their academic potential. Other domestic situations and maladjustments, which children encounter, include for example, having to cope with parents' marital separation (as was the case with four of the nine children), and which may have accounted for Lily's weak performance according to her mother and headteacher. In Nila's case, despite her uncle's well-intended efforts, she reported feeling afraid of her uncle during a one-to-one interview. Nila was taken in by her uncle at the age of 6 after her father's death which led to her mother abandoning her for a second marriage. According to Felix, Nila's childhood experience may have had significant impact on her and she may be dealing with deeper psychological issues which he or she have not come to grips with. The study confirmed that where Nila sleeps with her older 'sister' (senior four) and cousin, in a Teacher Training College, is richly resourced with over 50 books, wall science charts, old folders of past test papers, study timetable and a clock. Yet, Nila's performance did not improve. Felix lamented the passing on of his mother whom he felt could have given closer attention to his niece than himself, and the fact that his wife was often busy with money generating projects such as brewing local beer at the trading centre or working in the field). The general progress review of the nine children is available in chapter six (tables 6.4,11 and 12). Whereas, the children of less educated parents show multiple deprivation and two of the children indeed show worse results (urban and semi-rural areas), as noted previously, Joel's (rural area) results are surprisingly good. The study found that although his parents both were illiterate, they provided a steady, and Joel reported engaging in related literacy activities by setting questions

to himself. Joel also has a sister who was in secondary education (she had taken two years out of school as a result of unexpected pregnancy), who was a support to him. This shows the importance of support from educated other adults who could assist primary children in their academic related matters. In addition to academic challenges, the study also noted that this deprivation seems to permeate the community's everyday cultural and historical life style as well.

### **7.2.5. Cultural Traits**

Materials, artefacts and objects out of which the social worlds of the researched are created and meanings are communicated and interpreted are important components in the field study (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007).

The investigation on the ground confirmed the interpersonal communication patterns of participants is essentially based on their oral traditional culture. A reading culture was lacking. Modern conveniences such as cell phones and radios tended to have permeated the oral culture of the people and their use did not go beyond the oral mode. For instance, the use of cell phones, as observed operated on the oral mode and texting was not common.

#### ***Cell phones***

Mobile phones were of great help in this study as it made it easy for the researcher to locate the hidden homes without addresses. Families that did not have mobile phones cautiously directed the researcher to use a neighbour's mobile contact to reach them in case of any need. This revealed the local people's communal style of living even to the extent of sharing information intended for a particular family. This is typical of the culture that these communities are based on, both sharing values and information. In another dimension, it suggests a level of trust among the community, and also their trust in the researcher. Furthermore, good relationships in the setting also means good neighbourliness where children feel safe and protected. For example, during my home visits in the semi-rural area (Angela, the uneducated parents), as the family prepared to work in the field to pick pea-nuts including the researcher, Angela was heard giving instructions to the neighbouring woman. She requested her to mind the foodstuff spread on the compound to dry, in case the rain fell after we were gone. With regards to children feeling safe in the environment, this is what was observed. As we prepared to go to the field, Angela, instructed two of her children aged eleven and eight to bring breakfast for their aunt who was admitted to the local government health clinic with a child suffering from malaria. The Health centre is located 3 km from the home. She further instructed the children that after leaving the breakfast, they should follow us to the field. These

two events indicate the levels of trust between neighbours and the level of responsibility and safety attributed to young children to travel 6 km on their own in the environment. This is not to sanctify this community, as circumstances in any social setting are likely to change any time (Atkinson et al., 2008).

Out of the nine families studied, six households had cell phones. In regards to usage, it was observed that participants used the phones for talking more than sending text messages. One would expect that with their lack of money, they would text more frequently as it costs less than actual talking. Additionally, as noted earlier, with no electricity charging their phones in their local trading centres also costs money. This means they use money to buy talk time and charging instead of making use of the cheaper option of texting. The lack of texting skill is a further disadvantage for illiterate parents.

### ***Radio***

In this study, radios were used for listening to music and news broadcasted, mainly from local radio stations (TBS in Moyo and Radio Pacis in Arua). This has the advantage of airing music and news in the various local languages spoken in the region, and also in English. It was observed that children were not assisted to use the music and news they listen to on the radio as an opportunity to learn other languages in support of the curriculum in the mother tongue. There was no evidence of this occurring. Equally, news in English was not discussed with parents and children who could expand their English vocabulary through discussing these programmes. Instead, field observations showed that radios were often placed in the fields or supported on tree branches as the family members got on with their work but did not provide the basis for conversation. There were no discussions based on the content of the news, even amongst educated parents. It was noted that the music and the news served the purpose of keeping participants awake in hot weather to enable them to do their daily work.

Writing was almost non-existent in all of the family categories studied, except Felix (F1 Semi-rural parents) who demanded his children write down list of their school requirements. It was also noted that two pupils out of nine had their timetable written and displayed on the wall at home. Other than this evidence, there were no displays of work by pupils themselves in the form of drawings or written stories. This stands in contrast to the experience of the researcher whose mother, and grandfather who were primary school teachers, and who valued the importance of education for their children. This was demonstrated in various ways as indicated in chapter one, for example, by encouraging us in reading, telling us stories she herself had

read during her college times and asking us in turn to tell our stories. In retrospect, the researcher also recalls her father and grandfather often reading newspapers or magazines. The fun column about one character known as Mr Ekanya drew us in to these readings. My younger brother especially, enjoyed drawing this cartoon character. From my part, I delighted in copying designs off family table-clothes and dishes or plates to create my folder of designs for embroidery, which was actively commended on and discussed with my parents and grandfather (the other grandparents were illiterate).

In comparison with the nine parents observed, it was noted that if any one of them wanted to send their children either to the shop or to the neighbours with a message, even the literate parents instructed them verbally instead of putting it in writing. Again, this contrasts with my own parents' practices who often wrote notes to bring to the person they wanted to communicate with. For our mother, if she wanted to talk with someone who was illiterate, she would simply request by saying, 'Alice, please, go and tell X that Mum wants to see her/him'. As a teacher, writing was part of her profession but also used in everyday life. For instance, one legacy of our mother's, which the family still practises, is the signing of a visitor's book. In the ordinary life of the community, such practices were often associated with institutions like schools and parishes but not in the village homes. From our experience and observation, our mother always kept a book for visitors to sign in, and a notebook where she noted important events in her life and in the life of the family. The 1980s civil war following the fall of Idi Amin was a good example. The majority of families in Moyo district including my own were forced to flee in to exile (South Sudan) lasting six years. Families lost all their property but if you asked Mum what was the most important thing she stuck with, it was her notebook. This indicated how important text material meant to her and this can be attributed to her education, which she desired to pass on to her children.

Furthermore, there was a lot of talk after listening to news on the radio at home as we as children, with my Mum and my uncles talked about countries that were not known to us then. For example, Egypt, Russia, Japan, and America. Politics was always a heated debate in our house. Two parties dominated the Uganda People's Congress (UPC) and the Democratic Party (DP). It became obvious to us that Dad ascribed to the latter. He did not entertain any colour associated with UPC in the house. He took it even further by telling Mum to discard one of her handbags because it bore the colours that were not of his party. When the argument became tense, they switched code to English. We never understood why. Was it intended to conceal the content of their argument from us or the nature of the topic could only be



discussed in English? Whichever the case, we were intrigued by the strange language. Eventually, some words such as, 'look here', 'listen', 'no way', 'no', 'but', 'that's out', 'a pound', 'transport', and so on got into our vocabulary even before we acquired spoken English at school. Although our school work was not displayed in the house, our past exercise books, Mum's magazines and school textbooks were around the house and some older ones kept safe in a wooden box. Regarding homework, Mum, like the educated parents in this study complained of having no time, but as she settled to correct pupils' books or do her lesson plans, I would sit nearby her and read or do my homework. Whenever I asked her for some explanation, she was able to do so. It is not clear whether she helped by making a deliberate choice between her pupils and me or it was a convenient time for her to assist me. Only in this way was I able to catch her attention, in terms of explaining English vocabulary or issues in History and Geography, which she herself taught. When I left home to join secondary education in a boarding school in Gulu, another district, Mum often wrote me letters which continued the important tradition of written communication in our lives.

As mentioned in Chapter One, and through these examples cited above, I am convinced that what my parents did and said suggests that a higher level of education elicits a different educational experience for their children. Although they themselves were not graduates but in my experience, they put their educational skills into practice. Consequently, we grew up knowing that education is important. Nevertheless, macro-social factors are capable of counteracting parental efforts. This was also evident in my family. Despite all of our positive experiences related to our parents' education levels, and the resources that were at our disposal as a result of their education, not all of us succeeded equally in education. Like the two children (Nila and Lily) of the professional parents in this study, two of my younger sisters dropped out of school, which was totally unrelated to the kind of parental involvement experienced in the family. One dropped out of school after attending year 2 in secondary education, and the other from primary five due to an unplanned pregnancy. The knock-on effect became evident when two daughters of the one who did not complete primary education also became teenage mothers without completing their own primary levels. The situation of these siblings could be seen from the macro-social and political perspective that affected the region. Both children grew up in a refugee camp in the Sudan during the insurgency in northern Uganda in the 1980s. In addition to the family having lost everything, including our property, they were under stress with one child cut-off in the enemy territory; myself as the author of this study. Moreover, the camp community seemed not to have provided the kind of neighbourhoods that any parent would have consciously chosen to bring up his/her children, as

they were less likely to value education in the circumstances. Lastly, like the parents in this study, my parents admitted that they lost a grip on the children in terms of monitoring what they did and who their friends were in the refugee camp as they were more concerned about fending for the survival of the family. They described life in the camp as 'life without dignity, and negatively influencing children over and above parental efforts' (Researcher's Mother's personal notes). The example of my sisters confirms Feinstein and colleagues' (2008) assertion that distal factors are equally powerful, which can significantly influence how well or poorly children can do in school despite parental efforts. Moreover, in terms of encouragement, our mother never stopped asking us what we would like to be when we grew up and finished school. Anything but being a teacher, we would tell her. This is because teaching in our family line started with our grandfather, Piero A'i (surname means Salt), uncles, Michael and Saviour, and aunts Susan and Esther, and Mum herself so we wanted to be different. However, it turned out that of six children, three graduated as teachers and one as a medical doctor. Notwithstanding that there are other factors at play also, this points to the significance of the role that family traditions and experiences can have in the formation and development of young people.

From these personal examples, it is the argument of this study that parents' education makes a difference but other external factors are equally compromising of their efforts. For my siblings and me, as has been presented, although the seed of literacy was sown in the family long before we were born, the two girls' failure to succeed in education has indicated that children's educational attainment calls for more concerted efforts. Returning to the original family home before the civil war, when my brothers and I left behind so many boys and girls in the village, the one question that comes to mind is that of why about 20 children we started school with in the village did not succeed and we did? Consequently, this study argues that parents' education makes a difference at home, as highlighted in this study when Regina used her maternity leave to the advantage of her school children in every way possible, but particularly in relation to literacy and education. She made a deliberate effort to support her daughter who was a weak pupil to attain a high second grade in her primary leaving certificate. A similar concern was displayed by Felix, who despite a lack of time due to paid work outside of the home, was able to appraise the weak performance of his niece by following her up to her school to ascertain her attendance.

Overall, it is evident that when parents are not able to engage practically in their children's education either due to a lack of time or language skills, they are failing in the delivery of

important responsibilities. These include such duties as monitoring, supervising, and drawing on opportunities to explore the multiple literacies of everyday life as evidenced in this study, and without such levels of direct and active engagement, their education is unlikely to make a substantial difference in their children's achievement on its own.

As evidenced in the usage of the cell phones and radios in this study, such practices are unlikely to encourage children towards the development and practice of the literacy skills of reading and writing which can enable them to listen with understanding to both the local language and to English. This means families are less likely to keep records and preserve the history of the family. It does little also to encourage other forms of writing such as letter-writing or taking notes. When children do not see adults engage in reading and writing, they lack role models to demonstrate the importance of literacy in their education. This can diminish children's enthusiasm towards text, and possibly lead to their not being able to do their homework or engage in writing their thoughts or stories. As compared to my own experience in the village, the lack of practical participation of parents in the school activities should not be understood as related exclusively to the tradition of the people. I am, one of these people, but because of the education of my parents and grandparent I can state with conviction that I had a different experience of the same village life. The problem becomes complicated when examinations set by the Uganda National Examinations Board (UNEB) operate via the medium of print in English. If children do not practice reading and writing themselves, and do not have role models in similar activities at home, it may significantly affect their academic performances. For example, Nila, at primary six level was not able to read with confidence a story book meant for primary two. She was not able to read the words, 'once', 'time' etcetera. She could not pronounce other words like 'hare', 'share', 'shield', 'ate' in the story of 'Mr Hare and other Animals'. It was difficult also for her to differentiate the difference between 'go' and 'went' tenses. Although she was a child living with an uncle in the category of professional parents in the semi-rural area, it did not come as a surprise that Nila dropped out of school after the field study when she failed in primary six. Similarly, Lily, of professional parents as well, whose parents had separated dropped out of school in the first term of her final year in primary education. These examples clearly indicate that the education of parents per se cannot help the child unless the Vygotskian theory (1962, 1978) is implemented while other influencing factors are controlled. For example, parents engaging practically in helping their children in homework or explain vocabularies in English they did not understand from school work.

### **7.3. Effects on the Child**

The nine children interviewed and observed in their homes stated that there were difficulties in the home environment, which in their opinion contributed to their poor progress in school (see Chapter 6, sections 6.3.1-2). Pupils experience difficulties ranging from incapability in the second language (L2, English in this context) acquisition (Saville-Troike, 2006), to domestic responsibilities and these are highlighted in the following sub-sections.

#### **7.3.1. Language Deficit**

As the findings show, the primary six pupils involved in this study were unable to express themselves in any of the literacy skills; reading and writing; nor were they able to listen and understand in English. This is not to deny the importance of their respective mother tongue but relates to their smooth progress in formal education, which requires their competence in the language of instruction, namely English. The pupils involved in this study are considered semi-candidates to their final primary leaving examinations. As noted previously, the dominant language used at home is the local Ma'di vernacular, and English becomes the minority language only acquired through schooling. This means, children would require extra support in English. However, the launch of Mother Tongue (MTE) curriculum or Local Language Education (LLE) in 2007 (LBE 2011) for lower primary pupils (1-3) as the medium of instruction while English is taught as a subject does not seem to lay a firm foundation for the primary children. As a result, at primary six, the pupils are not able to comprehend text in English. The Gaelic language policy in Scotland is a good example. As the board of Gaelic in Scotland affirms:

Education is crucial in the acquisition of Gaelic. For children who have acquired Gaelic in the home, instruction through the medium of Gaelic reinforces and expands their command of the language, and it is in this setting that the ability to read and write is most often acquired. For children who have not acquired Gaelic in the home, instruction through the medium of Gaelic is the main means of equipping them in the language. (Board of Gaelic, 2007:20)

This example parallels the situation in Uganda. Although English is the official language, it remains a minority language, as it is not used in homes, especially in the rural district of Moyo. As Fishman (1991) notes, the education system should be at the centre of language planning to ensure intergenerational transmission of a minority language. In the context of this study, it is evident that schools remain the critical loci where English can be reinforced, especially for children in the rural areas who have no opportunity outside of school to practice

and enhance their English proficiency. Unfortunately, the introduction of the MTE as medium of instruction in the lower primary seems unlikely to foster effective equitable bilingualism (local and English) and bi-literacy (local and English) for the children in this study. With little doubt, the implications of this for the primary school children studied was obvious. It meant children being held back from proceeding to the next class, in the interest of keeping with required standards because of poor performance. If children do not progress in their education, it costs their parents money, resources and time to support them in the same class. Most likely, it may also predict negatively for the child being left behind by their peers. Making new friends, facing the same teacher, and sitting in the same class may be stressful to cope with, which may further interfere with his/her performance.

Language wise, this scenario goes contrary to Biddulph et al.'s (2003) findings in New Zealand. For example, they noted that home language not only enhances achievement but also that children tend to attain higher achievement in school where English is the medium of communication at home and instruction in school. However, when the home language is different than English, as with the children in this study, they were at a disadvantage.

Thus, over all, if English is recognised as the official language in Uganda, and therefore likely to have a long-term impact on the future of these children in both their academic career and occupational opportunities, then concerted efforts must be made to ensure its introduction in teaching and learning at an early stage. Alternatively, schools could be made to roll out bilingual programmes at every level of primary education. It may seem already too late for the majority of current primary school going children in the rural areas, even those not included in this study, as the MTE started in 2007.

### **7.3.2. Domestic Responsibilities by Children**

Another challenge facing parents which tends to impinge on children's attainment in school emerged to be domestic responsibilities, and children themselves raised the problem of domestic responsibility on them because of parental absenteeism from home. As has been seen, parents interviewed and observed in this study were often out of home engaged in different activities but always for the same purpose, which is the provision of the livelihood of the family. A number of implications arise out of parental absenteeism from home, and the obvious one the study found was the burden of domestic responsibilities consequently and necessarily placed on children.

Firstly, when parents are absent from home, their school age children are most likely to be the ones to substitute for them in carrying out household chores. Such duties, as reported by pupils themselves, include fetching water (across gender), cooking (girls), looking after family's animals (boys), keeping the home and minding the younger children, also occasionally, trading. This seemingly disproportionate burden on children in disadvantaged communities such as the current study found agrees with the findings of the World Bank (2009) in developing countries that some parents over burden their children and even demand their labour for monetary returns to the family. Unfortunately, this takes place at the expense of the children's education.

Secondly, parental absence from home means they are not in close enough contact to monitor, supervise, and guide their children's activities. Thirdly, when parents are absent, other usual parental duties including the affective support to their children and provision of material resources such as meals for their children are likely compromised. Moreover, as Deforges and Abouchaar (2003) clearly note in their study one of the important forms of parental involvement that has a bearing on pupil achievement is good parenting in the home. Presence of parents at home may mean security in all its forms; warmth, love, including food security for the children. Unfortunately, the study found that the parents were quite often not at home, because they were searching for alternative means for the family's survival. The adverse consequences of food insecurity cannot be over emphasised. Severe hunger among low-income children has been noted to be a significant predictor of chronic illnesses (Weinrech et al., 2005; UNESCO, 2004). As also strongly argued, children who take insufficient food are likely to attain lower arithmetic scores and are likely to repeat classes (Aliamo et al., 2001) and also Balachuw et al.'s (2011) study in Ethiopia. The latter study, for example, confirms how food insecurity positively associates with low school attainment resulting from pupils' irregular attendance in school. These are realities, which were also starkly reflected in this current study across the socioeconomic bands of the families involved. Repeating classes by these children was a significant indicator as they get no time to study at home due to domestic responsibilities place on them.

It is a fact that their parents are out of home to earn money for the needs of the family including their children's school requirements. Without realising some sort of income, by engaging in extra regular paid jobs or taking casual jobs, locally known as "leja-leja" or "kyeyo", which may include physical cultivation in the fields of others for the day, these parents would not be able to provide the basic necessary resources for their children's

education. Cognisant of the fact that in Uganda, social welfare security systems are not in place for disadvantaged families, this means that every household including children must work hard, to provide for their survival or they starve. Consequently, the reality of parents' absenteeism from home, though it may be for understandable reasons, irrevocably deprives them of their primary responsibilities to their school-going children. The baseline is apparent, the child's educational needs are compromised. Although the study found the contribution of grandparents was significant, they were not able to meet children's school academic needs, except in one family, though to a limited degree. And this vicious cycle continues through the study.

### **7.3.3. Deprivation**

As already has been seen in the above discussion, one of the forms of deprivation for children was parental absence from home, which deprives them [children] of the time they require for home study, leisure and adequate sleep. Insufficient levels of all of these tend to negatively affect the children's achievement in school. But even more significantly, from an educational point of view, is the impact of parent-child interaction as a result of parental absence.

#### Parent-child interaction

The sociocultural theory emphasises the opportunity for interpersonal interaction (Kozulin et al., 2003). When parents are missing at home, as evidenced in this study, it means that parent-child interaction is less likely to occur (Kozulin et al., 2003). Vygotsky's sociocultural historical theory (Vygotsky, 1962, 1978) highlights the multifaceted essential capacities that are likely to emerge when parents and children engage in play (Laura, 2001) or joint activities (Delgado-Gaitan, 1990), such as cultivating in the family field together. In Laura's (2001) view, through these activities, children may acquire a wide-range of wisdom: interest in reading, writing, vocabulary and cultural values. Moreover, the nature of everyday life situations indicates that interaction with others is paramount (Berger and Luckman, 1991), and more so for the socialisation of the young, and that may include educational matters. This agrees with the concept of intergenerational transmission of values. For Nietzsche (1982) this would also include moral values (Turner, 1994:4) when he says:

... moral feelings are transmitted in this way: children observe in adults inclinations for and aversions to certain actions and ...imitate these inclinations and aversions. (Nietzsche, in Turner, 1994:4)

This is important for the development of the ZPD. This is likely to be accomplished precisely through the assistance of, in this study, parents and other adults in face-to-face interaction (Berger and Luckman, 1991). For Rasinski and Padak (2000), through parents-child conversation, children and parent enter each other's worlds but this is unlikely to occur when parents are much of the time absent from home as the study has shown.

Parent-child interactions can also be at the level of affective support. Broderick (1993) thinks that among other aspects of parental behaviour, parental emotional warmth tends to have greater influence on the developing children than other forms of support. Joel's parents' attitude towards him in this study is a good example (F3, rural). It is important to note that parents can be warm even when prohibiting certain behaviour in a child or promoting it but firmness is essential as exemplified in this study by participant Regina (F1, urban). This is what Broderick (1993:213) refers to as 'the balance between supportive and non-supportive behaviours'. As Laura (2000) affirms, warmth combined with firm, consistent, rational and appropriate expectations from parents for mature behaviour is likely to promote sound child development, which subsequently can enhance educational achievement. References to *consistency, rationality and appropriate expectations* tend to suggest some level of formal education on the part of parents. When parents are educated and are available at home for on-going interaction as Berger and Luckman (1991) have described, it makes a difference in motivating their children towards academic activities. For example, in matters of literacy, Rasinski and Padak (2000) believe that children will be eager to read and write if they know that what they have to read or write is interesting to other people and will be both listened to and read by others. Similarly, this calls for a reciprocal interaction between parents and children, which presupposes parental presence and deliberate involvement with their children. Parental involvement can be reinforced and extended by adequate resources in the home and in the community but if this is also in short supply, children are further deprived.

### ***Inadequate resources***

Another form of deprivation may take the form of a lack of material possessions (Marshal, 1998). For the purposes of this study, this extends beyond provision of books and scholastic materials to suitability of spaces and facilities in the home: having a room or a hut to sleep in, mosquito net, blanket, bed-sheets, mats/mattresses, tables, chairs, and reasonable light source. As the home observation revealed, these spaces and facilities were lacking in all but one home, which seriously challenged the school going child in improving in his/her education and achieving to their full potential.



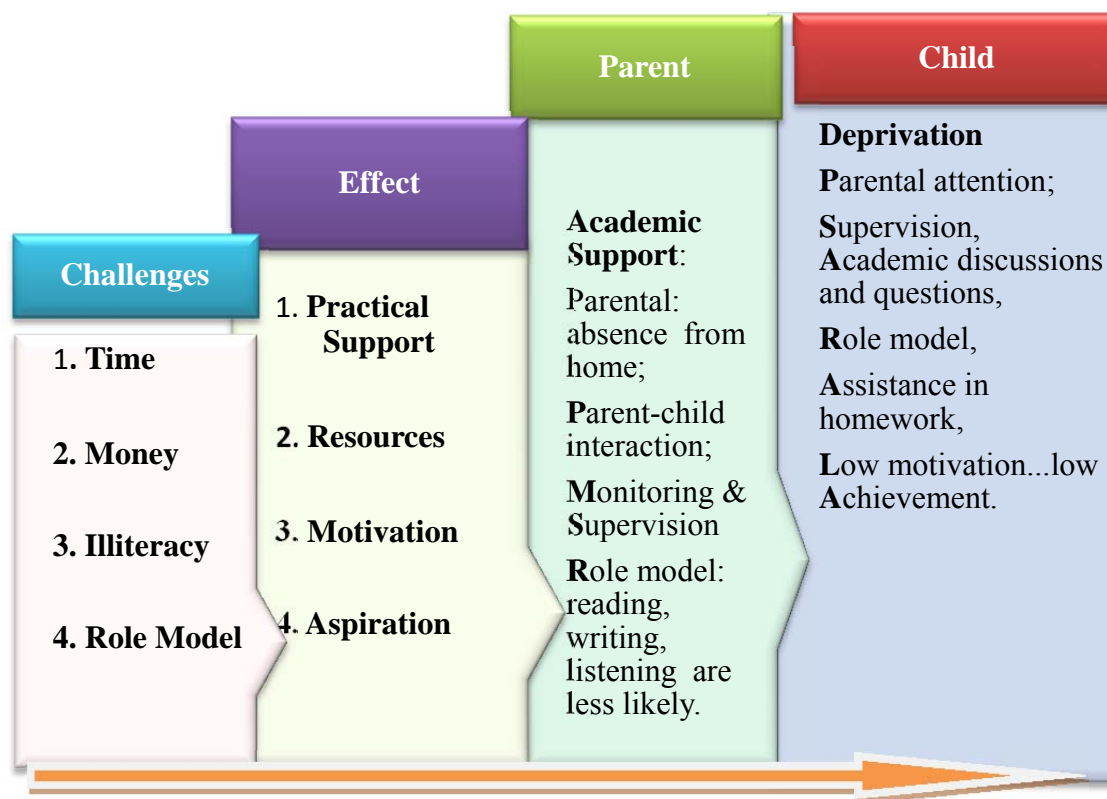
### *Emotional stress*

It is arguable that deprivation of suitable and adequate items for daily life may cause emotional stress (Jensen, 2014). Such deprivation may be linked to the education levels of parents and family income status, which indirectly influence the available resources in the household. For instance, the loss of a family's pit-latrine (toilet) due to heavy rain during the researcher's home visits served as a good example. While the child's father was re-building the pit-latrine, the members of the family including the researcher were asked to use the neighbour's pit-latrine, which was also in a precarious state. It is left to the reader's imagination, for example, to understand the efforts this family made to request their visitor (the researcher) to use their neighbour's toilet, in addition, the humiliation and shame the children themselves put up with in the company of their peers whose property they were compelled to use. For the researcher, it complicated the research plan by getting involved with another family outside of the study project.

This situation clearly caused a significant level of stress for both the family and the researcher. As for the school going child in this household, it may have further implications, such as going to the toilet by night no security lights, and walking barefoot, they could be exposed to dangers from animals and even humans that prowl during the night for various reasons. Such situations cause fear and anxiety in children, leading to poor sleep and rest at night. On a practical note, the children could significantly be delayed in the morning hours when everybody tends to visit the toilet before the day's activities. Arriving late to school means being subjected to punishment for late coming, as was reported in this study. The problem here is the unsuitability of the punishment given during class hours which directly means missing further classes. This subsequently can lead to unnecessary anxiety, stress and likely poor performance in school as a result.

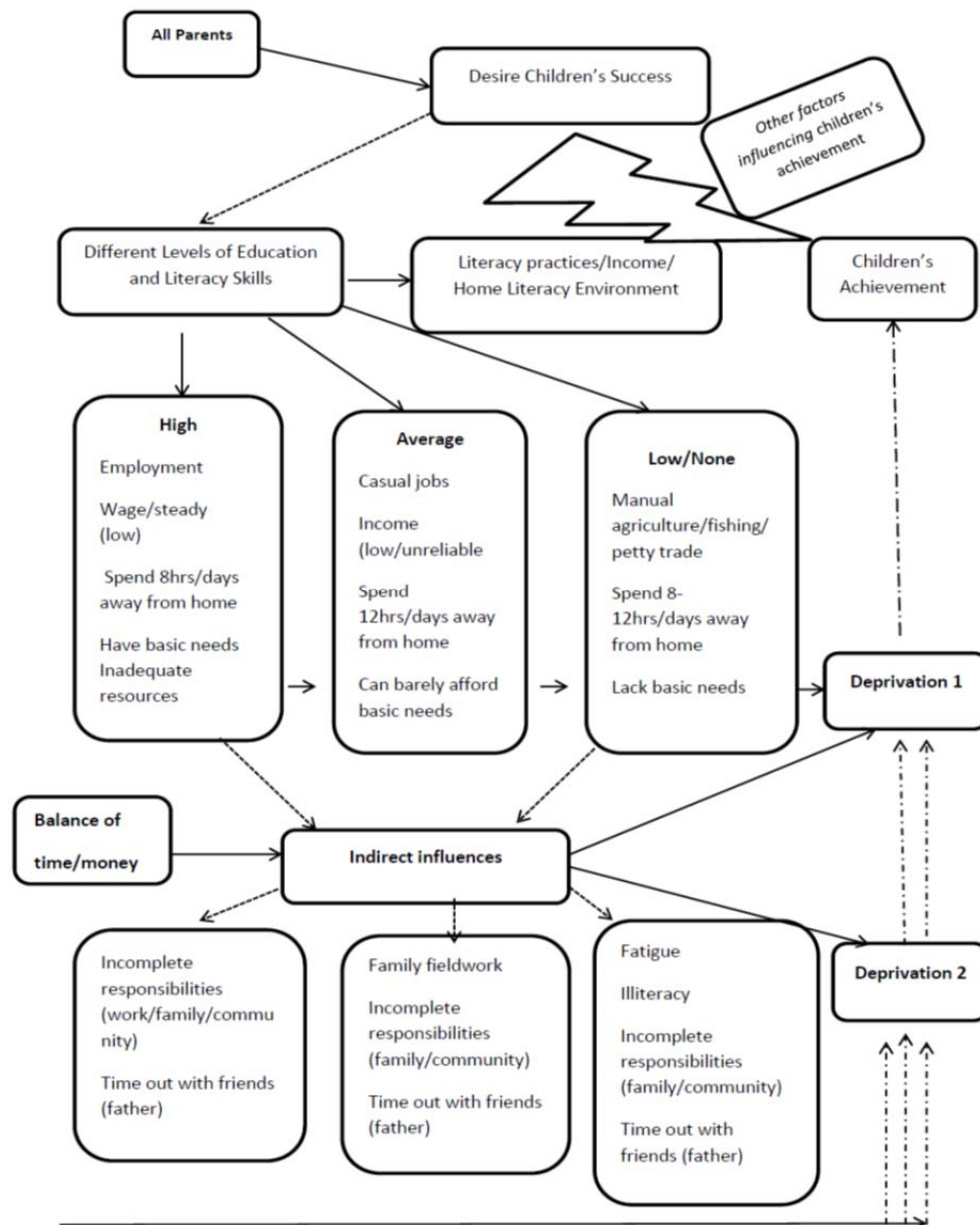
### 7.3.4. Summary

From the discussions above, the challenges parents/families face, appear to bear a number of implications for the school-going children studied. These are summarised in the figure below.



**Figure 7.1 - Summary of Challenges and Effects**

Overall, parents studied were positive in relation to their children's education, but as has been shown, they are equally limited by a number of challenges, many of which are beyond their control. Below is a display of themes shared by the parents involved in the study. It also represents the relationship between parental education, literacy skill levels and their subsequent impact on school going children.



**Figure 7.2 - Display of Relationships: Parental Education, Personal/Basic Household Needs and Achievement of the School Child**

However, not all is bleak, the study also recognised some valuable potential opportunities, which if properly utilised, could make a difference for the school-going child. As studies indicate, qualities in children are also shaped by their whole experience as participants in the ever changing world around them (Broderick, 1993), especially in today's world of advanced technology. It is a fact that the context of this research is still developing and it is not totally devoid of development indicators, though limited and these will be considered as opportunities.

## **7.4. Opportunities**

The study found that opportunities exist, both internal and external, which could be utilised for better parental involvement in the education of their children.

### **7.4.1. Government's Education Policy**

The Ugandan government's decision to eradicate poverty through education led to the introduction of the universal primary education programme (UPE) in 1997 (NAPE, 2012). This can be seen as an opportunity especially for the low income households. Under this programme, the government of Uganda pays primary children's school fees in the form of a capitation fund. This was formerly paid for entirely by parents. This means that at least all school age children, including those from low-income families can also attend formal schooling including girls who previously were left behind in preference of boys (Lauder et al, 2006). The UPE mandated that both the government and parents have roles to play in the provision of the cost of primary education (Uganda Education Guideline, 2008). However, as presented in chapter 6, less/uneducated parents seem to have misunderstood this policy. As the findings showed, there was a 'laid back' sort of attitude on the part of illiterate parents coupled with the belief that the government will do everything for their school children. As a result, these parents mostly illiterate were found to have an 'I don't care' attitude (Interview, urban headteacher, 22nd July 2012). However, this attitude in general is shifting for the better towards concerns about the education of children. Hence, the parents researched, regardless of their different levels of education and economic backgrounds, desired education for their children for various reasons.

### **7.4.2. Parental Education**

The knock-on effect of education was evident in the parents who are of a relatively high educational and socioeconomic background. They appear to have the knowledge of what is expected of them, and they are able to help their children but are limited by conditions beyond their control. Challenges such as long distance to and from work places, taking on extra jobs, loyalty to their clubs and work colleagues, incomplete work at home, all tend to run counter to their efforts. Otherwise, as the findings show, these parents attribute their great appreciation of their jobs, money, the respect accorded to them by the community and the knowledge they enjoy, to their being educated. Thus, formal education and literacy skill acquisition gave these parents access to various opportunities as they stated, which the less/or uneducated parents did not have. As the study indicated (in chapter 6), because of this special status, the less educated

expect their educated counterparts to support them, for example, by approaching them and drawing them into joint activities for the good of their children. This openness and willingness to engage in parent-parent partnership can be considered an opportunity. If parents unite for the same goal of the education of their children, it would seem likely to lead to stronger home-school alliances for all.

### **7.4.3. Shifting Parental Attitudes**

As noted above, the category of parents with minimal education and the uneducated expect their educated counterparts to support them in terms of giving them advice and encouragement. The semi-skilled parents also expect further guidance in vocational education for skill acquisition in order to find contractual jobs and thereby increase family income. Their willingness to be guided and supported by the educated parents can be seen as an area of opportunity if it could be constructively harnessed.

Illiterate parents reported that they have also realised that education tends to be connected with job opportunities, professional skills, money and well-being for not only the individual, but for the family and community at large. As a result, this realisation has partly led to a shifting attitude from that of being complacent, as reported by educators and senior community members, to working hard and desiring to ensure their children become educated. This shift is summarised in their past, present and future orientations as they witness other families and neighbours benefiting from having had educated their children. This is one of the realities of everyday life – sharing in the common sense/knowledge Berger and Luckman (1991) speak of. Thus, these parents have realised education is important and so they work hard to ensure the cycle of illiteracy is discontinued in the family chain. However, what these parents seem not have realised is that their desire alone is not likely to make the difference, unless it is accompanied by actual involvement in their children's school activities as various studies have shown (Young and Paker, 2010; Chung, 2006; Hang and Ho, 2005; Deforges and Abouchaar, 2003). This is also supported by Berger and Luckman's (1991:36) reflection on the sociology of everyday life characterised by what one is 'doing', 'have done' and 'plan to do'. However, parents, in this study seem to have missed this pragmatic aspect in their support for their children in school. Nonetheless, there are external opportunities made available to them, for example, by the school.

#### **7.4.4. School-based Opportunities**

The study established that all three schools included in the study had Parent Teacher Associations (PTA) in place. The aim of the PTA is to engage parents as stakeholders in the education of their children; to enter into partnership with the schools their children attend. In PTA meetings, teachers, headteachers and parents discuss issues related to children's education. However, the study found that the percentage of educated parents (50%-74%) and the less/ or uneducated parents (25%-49%) who attend such meetings, revealed different priorities. While educators and senior members construe the low attendance of less educated as a lack of interest or complacency about school matters, the less educated themselves across the three study sites spoke about the barriers they face. These varied from a lack of general knowledge about school matters to a lack of English which is the official language used in meetings. They also referred to educational documents printed in English. If parents neither understand issues raised during PTA meetings nor follow what is discussed, it is questionable how they can respond as expected to the school requirements of their children. As the study shows, an undirected or unsupported child is unlikely to excel in his/her school achievement (Vygotsky, 1962; Laura, 2000). However, the school administrators studied were all of one accord in their opinion that a continuous sensitisation of such parents should be offered by both school and local authorities. It was seen that this would provide a good opportunity for a concerted effort in the education of these primary children in Moyo district.

#### **7.4.5. Advantages of the Extended Family System**

Finally, the role played by siblings, and grandparents, especially grandmothers in this study cannot be underestimated. As was evident here, siblings can help each other if the family is stable and supportive in providing their basic needs. Also, families need to recognise the contribution which grandparents can provide not only to the families but equally to the community and society at large. As has been found in this study, they are a constant presence in the homes rather than the actual parents of the children studied. Where grandparents are present, their invaluable contribution to the family needs to be acknowledged, for example, by extending to them support for their well-being so that children can benefit from their guidance and wisdom. In addition, the potential for educating grandparents about the importance of engaging in dialogue and questioning about the children's activities in school, in an informal way, could extend their learning and curiosity about education. Having someone show interest in your work and in what you are learning is a powerful motivator and learning tool (Rasinski and Padack, 2000). This is something that could be achieved in the local community if the

culture of learning which is emerging slowly, could be built upon more consistently. It is here that the educated parents, and perhaps the teachers and educators, could play a valuable role in demonstrating to the grandparents how to engage the children in valuable educational discourse.

#### **7.4.6. Children's Own Contribution**

Throughout the study in the field, children showed an unwavering interest (Eccles and Wigfield, 2001) in both the research with them as participants and also in my observations of their own schooling. This aligns with the sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978), which encourages the full and active participation of the learner in the process of their learning. Studies of achievement similarly assert that children's interest may also lead to parental aspiration (Cohen, 1979). As this study has noted, the children's willingness and general interest in schooling could be considered as a valuable opportunity.

### **7.5. Conclusion**

The findings indicate that all parents researched, regardless of the different levels of their education, desire that their children succeed in education but they face serious economic problems. As has been seen, the educated parents are aware of the problems and the advantages of education, but the reality of their lives and the financial challenges they face restrict them in prioritising time for educational activities with their children. Their support remained at the level of paying school fees for their children, and barely providing other school requirements. The semi-literate and uneducated are aware of the broader benefits of education, but are not yet fully aware of the level of interaction that is required to support and encourage their children for school success. This is compounded by the harsh financial realities in the everyday lives of these families. Their low and irregular income appears to be beyond their control and this hinders them from extending adequate support to their children's schooling. There is evidence of an overly heavy burden of responsibilities on parents that are work related. Salaried parents worked way from home and so did the semi-literate and illiterate. This was noticeable across all socio-economic bands in the study, but the culture of meeting one's work colleagues (group obligation) or acquaintances after work for socialisation purpose as reported by those in professional employment, placed further demands on these parents' time and limited financial resources. It is undeniable that when these parents socialised, the little money is stretched to other purposes other than educational for their children. Overall, there was little involvement on the part of the parents under study with

regards to their children's day-to-day academic needs. Fortunately, they all noted the negative impact of this practice, particularly prevalent among the men.

Notwithstanding the 'desire' that their children succeed in education, the implications of the major challenges faced by all parents in this study are various and significant. These tend to undermine the children's chances of success in primary education. For this reason, interventions at a variety of levels, beginning with the family, through the school, community, the local government authorities and national intervention must be sought. Otherwise, if the current trend continues, millions of school going children in rural Uganda will be affected significantly, and not achieve to the best of their abilities. Every child has a right to education and this has been recognised appreciably by the inception of the universal primary education by the government of Uganda.

In conclusion, while the study demonstrates that having educated parents makes a difference to children's education in primary schools, it is not the only factor, and indeed, economic imperatives dominated throughout this study. The challenges associated with providing for the family's basic welfare and needs in this isolated and remote region of Uganda, outweighed all other factors, and impacted upon the professional and educated families in this region, as much as on those with little or no education, albeit to different extents. However, what has emerged strongly from the study is the evidence that education is the single largest determinant of improving people's day to day lives, and more significantly of enhancing their life chances in the future through getting a better job, which reduces their dependency on hard labour and endless toil. While the educated parents in this study still experienced challenges, they were not to the same extent as the other parents experienced, and having good education and literacy skills facilitated them to secure better jobs and to focus much more on the value of education for their own children, than was evident with the other parents.

Finally, parents and key informants included in this study were cognisant that not everything in their culture was good and therefore must be preserved. While they advocated for the preservation of the local language, it was also clear that importance must be given to English, as it is the official language in the country. Moreover, they saw English as a tool for engagement not only in education but also in politics, economic and social life. Therefore, promotion of both languages, at a local and official level, must receive equal attention. From the cultural perspective, both parents and educators noted the disadvantages of having children sleep in separate huts/houses away from parents (adult) supervision. Although parents regard themselves as responsible for failing to provide suitable space for their children, there seems to



be little they can do as their general economic and financial situations seem to subsume in the systemic poverty prevalent in Moyo district. For this reason, parents and caregivers would require external financial support to enable them to get reasonably involved in their children's education.

From this premise, there is a need for a concerted intervention so that children such as these in this current study may be given an opportunity to realise their full potential in education. Some suggestions for intervention are provided in the next chapter before personal remarks leading to the conclusion of the study.



# **CHAPTER EIGHT**

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **8.1. Introduction**

In a study such as this, it seems easier to discuss issues and to draw conclusions about challenges parents face rather than to offer solutions, particularly when the emerging themes consistently tend to point towards macro-social level, political, economic and educational aspects of the participants' lives. Nevertheless, tentative concluding comments and some suggestions directly arising from the evidence of the exploratory inquiry are offered. The reader is once again reminded that, these summary points and recommendations must be treated as tentative as the research was centred almost exclusively on a single district, Moyo and explored the literacy practices of the Ma'di parents, given the diversity of tribes in Uganda. However, it is at least implied that parents in other rural districts in Uganda may have similar views, opinions, aspirations and experiences in relation to their involvement to enhance their children's achievement in school. This chapter presents the conclusions and recommendations derived from the results of the study, and outlines the limitations encountered in carrying out this study. Areas for further research are also presented.

### **8.2. Conclusion**

The goal of this thesis was to examine the impact, if any, of parents' educational levels on their children's success in primary schools in a rural area of northern Uganda. First, it alerted readers to the background that underscores this study: pathways to improving the persistent underperformance of primary school children in the national rural primary schools, focusing on the Moyo district in Uganda. It demonstrated the blame patterns that exist among stakeholders, and the pattern of reforms in the educational system in Uganda with the intention of improving quality of education for its citizens. While efforts to raise pupils' poor performances have focused on school-based factors, little attention has been paid to pupils' home backgrounds. Yet studies have shown that pupils' home backgrounds have considerable influence on how well a child performs in school. However, far less attention is directed to exploring parental involvement in the context of other studies outside of Uganda, hence this study's investigation of the relationship between parents' education and literacy levels and their children's educational achievement.

The thesis also highlighted the main characteristic features of the context of the study which is seen to have a bearing on families and subsequently, on the school going child (see Chapter 1 section 1.3). Pertinent literature about parental education and literacy skills were cited, which indicated the extent to which children benefit from their parents' education in terms of how parents are involved at home with children. This provided the premise for investigation in a particular setting in the Moyo district. Conducting the study in the rural area examines the rationale that enhancing education for the high population of primary school going children living in rural areas could help to improve their lives and emancipate them from poverty.

In order to undertake this study, a mixed methods with an ethnographic element was considered suitable. In order to be able to delve into the functioning life of a family, a sociocultural and historical theory (Vygotsky, 1962, 1978) was deemed suitable as a guiding theoretical framework. This theory emphasises the principle of the zone of proximal development (ZPD) in the learner, which needs to be enabled and expanded through the assistance of adults, in this case parents/caregivers based on their education levels. The Meadian approach of symbolic interactionism (Knapp and Miller, 1994) was employed to inform the study. The idea necessitated the model of an intergenerational transmission of educational success from parent to child, which was elaborated through Bourdieu's (1966) concept of cultural capital. His discourse helped to highlight the content of transmission, that is literacy-related symbols and activities in the social setting. This point necessitated a personal statement about the author who experienced life and went through her primary education in the rural area in the same context where the study was conducted but with a difference. She wondered whether her advances in education derived from her parents' education levels – which were higher at the time compared to the other parents in the same village.

The findings from a cross-case analysis were reported in two phases; chapter 5 and 6, and the synthesis of the major findings are presented below.

### **8.3. Major Findings**

The major findings can be classified under three main categories; 1) person specific 2) systems specific, and 3) cultural specific.

#### **1. Person specific**

- **Parents:** Parents consistently reported a lack of time to supervise, monitor and provide adequately due to low income levels and general poverty.
- **Pupils:** Pupils' motivation in attending school is reported as being low because of their language incompetence in English, which leads to frequent repetition of classes. Pupils are overburdened with domestic chores after school leading to fatigue and stress hindering them from doing their homework at home. Consequently, it leads to poor performance and eventual dropping out of school in many cases (see Appendix 18).
- **Parent-teacher relationship:** There appears to be minimal contact between parents and teachers, and teachers expressed a willingness to visit homes to meet parents and their children. In their experience, it is difficult to get parents at home as they are often away at work, in the fields, or with colleagues for leisure.
- **Parent-parent relationship:** The less educated parents requested that educated parents advise them on school matters. They believe this will enable them to overcome their inferiority, fears, isolation and helplessness. However, the educated parents reported being apprehensive about approaching the less educated for fear of overstepping boundaries and violating privacy.
- **Role of grandparents:** The role of grandparents cannot be underestimated, especially those who are semi-literate as the study found that they are the ones who appear to spend more time with children than actual parents.

## 2. Systems specific

- Resources
  - i. **Human:** A lack of appropriate educational role models in the family and community, vis-à-vis busy parents and extended family members, illiterate parents and grandparents, all of which offer limited academic assistance to school going children.
  - ii. **Physical:** A lack of academic material resources, reasonable space for reading and sleeping, poor sources of light, hinder school going children from continuing with academic work at home.
  - iii. **Inadequate and poor infrastructure:** Poor road networks, health services, and a lack of public libraries for children in the sub-counties tend to diminish school going pupils' enthusiasm for embracing education.

### 3. Culture specific:

- There is a poor reading and writing culture among parents and teachers, little parent-child interaction, and the division of labour tends to separate families and thereby compromise family for interaction necessary for literacy development for school going children.
- The use of modern gadgets, such as cell phones and radio are underutilised for literacy development for the school going children.
- Oral tradition continues to override text modes, yet adults are seldom in conversation with adults.

Notwithstanding the above, the main findings indicated a significant relationship between different levels of parents' education/literacy skills and their children's achievement in primary school. Whereas high parental education levels ensured significant support to their children's education in terms of basic provision for schooling and wellbeing, working away from home significantly affected their actual time spent with their children. Parents with average levels of education fall further down the scale in supporting their school-going children. Being semi-skilled, they have no permanent paid employment, and thus, they face serious financial insecurity at household level. They spent most of their time out looking for casual jobs to earn money for the survival of their family rather than with their children in literacy and academic related activities. Furthermore, the little money accrued from casual and semi-skilled labour is insufficient for providing not only adequate scholastic materials for their children but also to support a rich home learning environment. The tight constraints on finances limit this category of parents from involving their children in activities that could expose them to places and events of educational value, such as libraries, museums, historical and geographical sites. Unable to travel outside of their home environment due to a lack of money meant that children are unlikely to meet people from cultures other than their own to foster curiosity, share information and learn from other cultures.

Finally, parents with low or no levels of formal education share similar concerns as parents with average levels of education. At a social level, this category of parents differed from the semi-skilled parents in that they spent most of their time in the fields manually cultivating for the subsistence of their families. The time spent out of home depended on how far the fields were located from home. On average, they ranged between 4-10km which meant spending on average 8 hours or several days at a time away from home.

Over all, across the three categories of parents, all shared the challenge of a lack of time to spend with their children. The overarching factor that limits parents' time and provision of adequate academic material for all of them was poverty. Poverty compelled all parents to engage in various activities that provide basic requirements for their families' day-to-day life sustenance, other than literacy and academic activities. The study concluded that although the majority of parents, including a great proportion of less educated, desire that their children succeed in education, illiteracy, poverty, lack of time, lack of supporting systems both in the community and state hinder parents' efforts and good will to offer holistic support and engage fully and actively in their children's education. This has important implications for the theoretical framework used in this study [they were all developed in the European context]. That the basic needs of the families (Maslow's (1987) hierarchy of needs have to be satisfied in the unique context of the study before these theories can be fully applied see section 8.9 for more information). These factors appear to be beyond the means of any of the parents to resolve as this was also confirmed by data from observation and other participants: educators and senior community members. It was evident that parents would need an external support such as from the state in such as areas as increasing capitation grant for pupils. The next section provides the overall conclusion of the study.

#### **8.4. Summary**

The results demonstrate that all parents desire success in the education of their children. Participants demonstrated by example that levels of parental education make a significant difference in the education of their children.

The study highlighted that the educated parents were consciously aware of their responsibilities to their primary school going children, but were not able to fulfil these duties due to a lack of time, monetary constraints and traditional extended family obligations. The difference between this group of parents and the others was evident in the ways in which they interacted with their children at home, their understanding of the value of education, their attempts to create a related literacy stimulating environment at home, and their cognitive involvement in their children's education to a limited extent, but more often than not, their well-intentioned comments remained to a large extent theoretical. This group of parents were therefore knowledgeable about the impact of their lack of educational involvement in their children's education.

The average educated parents seemed to be less aware as they tended to be overly preoccupied with searching for casual jobs for the survival of the family. This group believed that once they had paid the children's school fees and provided the basic school requirements, the children should do well. However, the uneducated parents appeared to be consciously anxious, regretful and powerless about their non-literacy status in relation to their children's academic career. They were anxious about how well their children might fare in school without their intellectual/academic input and support, and regretful because their lack of education and literacy skills might transmit a vicious cycle of illiteracy associated with unemployment, lack of money and ultimately, poverty. As they expressed helplessness because of being illiterate, they too shared the same lack of time as the other two groups by spending time cultivating in the fields. It is not clear whether their non-involvement was primarily due to their lack of formal education or unawareness of the responsibilities involved in giving holistic support to their school-going child. What is clear however is, besides facing substantial challenges of time and money resources, the unskilled parents faced many challenges relating to illiteracy.

While these differences are conspicuously real, all of the parents studied shared in excessive family-based (internal/micro) and external (wider social, economic and political) challenges which were beyond their control. The major concerns among these included time pressures, high workloads, low family income, relative poverty, and illiteracy/language competencies for the uneducated. Parents unanimously decried they do not have adequate resources to deal with these challenges.

Consequently, reports from educators, senior community members, and pupils similarly confirmed that parents, regardless of their level of education and literacy skills, in practice are unlikely to afford the time and resources to support their children's education.

Complaints from children particularly belonging to the less educated clearly indicated that their parents do not help them in their homework, neither do they pay school fees on time which often resulted in schools sending them home. This was a major source of anxiety on the part of children, which affected how they performed in school. In relation to money issues, children also unanimously expressed a lack of provision in terms of textbooks, exercise books and study places at home. Understandably, without books children cannot take notes or revise after school. This renders children unprepared for examinations resulting in weak grades as shown in chapter 6.



Furthermore, the study also found the cultural norms where division of labour within families and the community hindered casual interaction in the families. Boys and girls had distinct roles that tended to further widen the gap between parents and their children. This was observed more among families with less education. As a result, interactive relationships between parents and their children were rarely witnessed, and boys were more likely to engage with their fathers and girls with their mothers. This was seen as an additional disadvantage because most of the mothers involved in the study were semi-literate or illiterate, while though their husbands had higher levels of education.

During other occasions when family members are expected to be together such as at meal times (considered communal in Western societies), also took a different direction in this study. It was found that men, women and children ate separately, normally without engaging in conversation. Children particularly are not expected to converse at meal times because they share from the same bowl and plate with siblings. This is because the amount a child picks food from the same dish determines the quantity she/he eats. But if a child engages in talking while eating, he/she is likely to eat less food.

The use of modern technological equipment such as radios and cell phones reflected the traditional cultural practices which were deeply embedded in the community, and these symbols were rarely used for literacy development. Reading, writing and discussing about text or what was heard on the radio were not practiced in the families.

## **8.5. Recommendations Arising from the Findings**

Previous studies which claim that when parents have high level of education and adequate literacy skills, they are better able to support their primary school going children and enhance their performance in school (Feinstein et al., 2008; Ardila et al., 2005; Chevalier, 2004; Kalil, et al., 2012) cannot be generalised here. In this study, it emerged that in trying to balance the dual demands of their work on one hand (a consequence of their education levels), and their natural support to their larger extended families on the other, the data suggested that there was a conflict. This conflict particularly relates to time and financial constraints, which has ripple effects down to the school-going children. As a result, the findings did not neatly tally with what the literature reports about educated parents and those who have little or no formal education. This is because the study found that the larger economic, political and social demands tend to conspire against parents regardless of their education and literacy skill levels,

and as a consequence, pupils' achievements in school did not always reflect their parents' education levels.

This has led the researcher to form the view that parental education and high literacy levels alone are less likely to make a significant difference in their children's educational achievement. Rather, parents getting practically involved with children in their academic activities and providing adequate resources can make an impact. With the socio-economic status controlled, this may take the form of: (i) spending time with children; (ii) talking about their school matters as Regina in the urban area exemplified; (iii) helping children in their homework; (iv) monitoring children's school attendance and progress through parent-teacher communication (as Felix, in the semi-rural area did), and, (v) providing adequate space and time for children to study at home, and providing adequate school requirements. Notwithstanding that the more educated parents had a better understanding of the importance of education, it was evident that all parents needed to place greater emphasis on the importance of developing positive personal and interpersonal relationships through collaboration and sharing responsibilities, first with their own children and with school administrators. These challenges need to be addressed in order to achieve the millennium development goals for the universal primary education.

Based on these findings, the following are ways in which some of the challenges could be addressed and therefor the these recommendations are made:

- **Equal opportunity:** Data suggested that attending to pre-school (private) is an unrecognised priority in Uganda in achieving the MDGs. The study recommends that, first, access to early learning (nursery schooling) should be based on ability rather than on affordability. Secondly, with unavoidable bilingual school system (local vernacular and English), there needs to be an increased focus on teaching of a common language, English being the official and language of instruction in all schools in the country. The UPE programme and the thematic curriculum therefore need to be revised in the primary education sector. Parents in this study stated clearly that they send children to school to learn the language of school, and that they can teach their children the vernacular at home, so it would seem irrelevant to them that their children are delayed in learning English to the detriment of progressing in the primary education due to poor language abilities. It is important that children encounter the language of instruction at the very start rather than at a later time.

- **Further State support to parents:** Additional UPE funding in support of parents by state. For example, the capitation grant to schools per child needs to be reconsidered so that primary schools under UPE could function effectively.
- **Curriculum:** Increased focus on teaching of a common language/language of instruction (English) by curriculum developers, schools and the Ministry of Education and Sports is required.
- **Parent-Parent relationships:** Parents of all three categories stated irrevocably that raising the educational levels of parents has benefits not only for the individuals but also for their families and the wider society. Parents supporting each other was a recommendation stated by all parents and educators in the study (see section 8.9 operation 3). A model were literate adults supporting illiterate adults as mentioned by some participants. This will not only help illiterate parents to acquire the skills of literacy but also promote social mobility and recover the fading community spirit before the civil wars. Although parents in this study expressed support system among parents, they also expressed suspicion existing between educated and less educated parents. Such fears could be reduced and eliminated through community voluntary participation and collaboration for the common good of their children. In addition, assemblies organised by government local leaders may foster healthy relationships among parents, focusing on the need for children attending school so that no family is left behind. Their suggestion tends to nudge the educated parents to take the initiative to encourage and support the less and uneducated parents in matters related to children's education.
- **Traditional communal activity:** (see section 8.9 operation 2) drawing on the tradition of communal life-style of the researched community, a voluntary community led development where literate parents could volunteer to offer early years 'play group' for 4-6 year olds could be beneficial. This attempt will directly address the challenge of lack of money for the majority of rural children who are not able to attend nursery school, an important foundation for schooling, because their parents could not afford. The lack of time could be dealt with in the following recommendation.
- **Sensitisation/Alternative agricultural activities:** Parents could meet for sensitisation (see section 8.9 operation 2). Creating awareness in parents through local leaders and school administration about their important role in getting involved in their children's education is fundamental. During such meetings, questions about whether alternative forms of agriculture, for instance, intensive agriculture by investing more time in growing vegetables as opposed to other crops which requires large space could be

proposed. In this way, even uneducated parents may have more time at home with their children than when they have to travel 6-10 km daily to cultivate in large fields.

- **Home-School relationship:** As the study found that community centres do not exist in all three sites studied, schools to which the children go could extend their roles to serve as community centres where, for example, adult classes mentioned above could be conducted for illiterate parents outside of school hours.
- **Curriculum:** The role for the curriculum for primary school children needs to be relevant to the real life, although learning for facts and for passing exams may not be ruled out. But a curriculum rich in knowledge relevant to the needs of the local people for economic development would be valuable, for example, the inclusion of vegetable growing, raising poultry and other less demanding crops such as cassava and potatoes. These schools could encourage school gardens for the children as these children are raised on subsistence farming. Such a curriculum would foster in the children problem-solving skills in their everyday life experiences rather than rely totally on learning facts for passing examinations.
- **Role model:** This must arise from the family, community and the society. As the study found that a reading culture is lacking, and yet, literacy is key to any educational enterprise, it is suggested that the educated parents should be role models in the family and in the community in which they live and work. As they have responsibilities in government offices, they earn a salary and thus are able to cater for their family. Such parents should be able to inculcate in the children that it is through education that they got this job which supports the family, so that children will be able to appreciate this link and be inspired to continue with their education.
- **Capacity building:** (see section 8.9 operation 2) Parents of all three categories stated irrevocably that raising the educational levels of parents has benefits not only for the individuals but also for their families and the wider society. Uneducated parents requested help from educated parents, but above all, basic adult literacy was their plea. Adult literacy education for parents with low or no level of formal education would enable them to assist their children in primary education better through support for homework for example. Moreover, it is likely that improved adult education will enable parents to know what books to provide for their children. In addition, they will also become acquainted with the school agenda and therefore engage more actively in their children's school related activities, such as attending open days, PTA meetings and extracurricular school activities and being able to ask relevant questions of their

children and of the school administration about how their children are taught and how they should learn.

- **A shift in language policy:** As the findings clearly indicated, the home language, the vernacular is not related to the language of instruction, English. Therefore, a curriculum that places strong emphasis on the learning of English should be initiated at the start than postponing it until primary four. The UPE programme and the Mother tongue education (MTE) within the thematic curriculum for primary sector need to be revised. Parents in this study stated clearly that they send children to school to learn the language of school, and that they can teach them the vernacular at home, so it would seem irrelevant to them that their children are delayed in learning English to the detriment of progressing in their primary education due to poor language abilities. It is important that children encounter the language of instruction at the very start rather than later.

More importantly, the language policy should be rolled out evenly throughout the country in such a way that some children, especially those in the rural areas are not discriminated against. This is in terms of choosing the language for instruction for the primary sector which in the urban areas is English while different vernaculars are used in the rural areas which are not practical due to the multilingualism in the country. If primary schooling in Uganda is meant to be universal, while local inconsistencies continue to jeopardise children's educational progress, then it is arguable that the said universal primary education is not universal.

- **Community empowerment:** The local government through its education agency, the Ministry of Education and Sports should fulfil their responsibilities of providing literacy related facilities in the community for both parents and children. For example, local council leaders need to be empowered to make educational plans such as that every parish or village has a community locus where literacy is promoted in both languages, the vernacular and in English by setting village-based libraries.
  - Another area of community empowerment points to the local leaders. They need to consider the setting of by-laws to ensure that service providers of late night discos and uncensored videos adhere to the by-laws stipulated by the local government.
- **Home-school-local leaders partnerships:** Home-School relationships could be strengthened through frequent meetings, school events, home-visits by school administrators and teachers. As parents in this study expressed interest in teachers

visiting them and their children at home, this could create useful bonding between teacher-parent-pupil so that matters about children could be discussed at ease without instilling fear in the child.

- **Take advantage of available opportunities:** Parents in Uganda need to realise that education is important, and literacy is key to allowing them to avail of grants, funding and other schemes and opportunities which the government make available in each district, but which can be accessed by literate people. If the people of a particular district do not have the skills to access these resources, they lose all of the opportunities that the government makes available to them. If this cycle of literacy deprivation is not halted and addressed, another generation will be affected.

These recommendations are proposed to partially resolve some of the main challenges parents face in their efforts to engage in their children's education to raise their achievement. Parents unanimously decried they do not have capacity to adequately deal with these challenges. As a result, there is no single conclusive recommendation that can be identified to resolve the multifaceted problems parents in the rural district of Moyo face or any single pathways to improve children's performance in school at this stage.

## **8.6. Limitations**

The limitations of this study relate to its focus on some specific areas: firstly, the participants and the area in which the study was conducted, the type of primary schools involved, the rural versus urban divide, and the duration devoted to field research.

1. **Generalisation:** The study focused on one geographical district only and therefore, may not be generalizable to other sites – typical of a qualitative study. Although the district of Moyo lies within the West Nile region of Uganda, the other districts within this region were not included as they are made up of different tribes and speak unrelated languages, for example, Aringa, Lugbara, Kakwa, Alur, Ukebu and Lendu.
2. **Monopoly:** The data applies only to parents of Ma'di origin in Moyo district. The sample in this study did not include parents who were living in Moyo district, working as civil servants and are not originally of the Ma'di tribe. Parents of different ethnic backgrounds may show differences in their approaches to involvement in their children's education.

3. **Duration:** The time spent in the field was only 10 weeks between July-September, which was short for an ethnographic study. Although the overall period of the entire study was 4 academic years, but the researcher was not able to re-visit the field due to the material distance between the field (Uganda) and the University (Ireland). A much longer period of not less than five months could yield richer data.
4. **Bias:** Finally, the researcher is aware that as a native of the Moyo district where the research was conducted, some assumptions about parents' activities with regards to their children in school may have infiltrated into the study. In addition, her status as a religious person and as a professional teacher may also have impacted upon the results. However, these were counteracted by being able to communicate in the same language and immerse in the culture without questioning.

The findings of this study suggests a need for further investigation, which might address not only the above limitations but also other areas of further research as presented below.

### **8.7. Areas for Further Study**

The study recommends that parents require support in ways that can allow them to engage with confidence and meaningfully in their children's education. Suggestions deemed pertinent for further investigation are as follows.

- *Extension of the study:* It would be valuable to investigate early child literacy development skills and parents' roles in this regard, as this study focused on the six class in the primary schools studied. A study into the nursery sector would be important to ascertain how many children who start primary school have a pre-school background as this was acknowledged as providing a good foundation for children's schooling. This could also provide an opportunity to assess the percentage of pupils who proceed to secondary education who have attended nursery education compared to those who did not.
- *Comparison:* The study focused on National Primary School (public) pupils and their parents, referred to as Universal Primary Schools (UPE). Private primary schools were not included. It would be important to compare private primary and UPE school parents and pupils in relation to the research questions in this study.

- *Rural population:* The findings of the study were representative of a rural population, given the distance from Moyo district to major town centres as noted in chapter 3. A comparative study between rural districts and major urban areas such as Kampala, Jinja and Entebbe would be valuable in relation to exploring the extent to which parents' education enables them to support their children's education.
- *Level of parents' education:* The sample of professional parents included in this study were considered not high enough although within the context of a largely rural district, they were regarded so. Thus, further studies need to look into making comparison between urban and rural professional parents which may show a difference.

## **8.8. The Significance of the Study**

This study is useful for educationalists and policy makers as it contributes knowledge about pathways to improving pupils' performance, not only in monetary or structural forms, specifically by involving parents proactively in the education of their children. It highlights parents' positive belief that their support to their school going children matters. However, the dominant socio-economic issues, beyond their means, significantly limits their support and seriously controls them. It is therefore recommended that a more deliberate intervention from higher levels of governance, both political and educational need to extend support to parents in order to increase their assistance to their children for success in school. Otherwise, it is the argument of this study that the universal primary education cannot be universal, if the majority of primary school age children in the rural areas such as those in Moyo district are not able to sustain equitable access, progression, and retention in school in order to realise their full potential.

The study provides an evidence-based possibility of positive cohesion between parents and their school-going children, between parents and school, and between parents themselves (educated and less educated). It provides opportunities for policy-makers to create programmes for both pupils and parents in order to improve children's educational and academic outcomes in the rural schools. The results also call for attention from the national financial allocation section to consider an increase in the allocation of funds to the sub-county as a priority. The findings of this study will also be useful for the Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES) to consider extending educational programmes tailored for parents to all parts of rural Uganda, for example, by launching adult literacy programmes to increase parents' full,



active and meaningful participation in the education of their children. The vision of this study is to invite parents to play an active role in both the traditional oral and textual literacy in the lives of their children. Finally, the findings of this research will be valuable for future researchers given that these areas are contextually and thematically under researched.

### **8.9. Practical Strategies Arising From the Study Findings**

With a background in education in a developing context, the researcher wishes to propose practical plans for urgent action leading to possible changes in relation to the results, which the current study has raised. It emerged strongly that despite parents studied of all educational and income backgrounds having largely awareness of both short and long term benefits of education for their children, the multi-faceted challenges they face decisively prevent any impact of their education being felt in influencing school achievement for their primary school children. Children studied are deprived on many grounds including protracted parental absence from home thereby denying them the important opportunity of parent-child interaction for effective development. The major challenges were: time, language, money and illiteracy (see chapter six for details). Abela and Walker (2014) equivocally suggest in their book (Editors), *Contemporary Issues in Families Studies*, the importance of a nurturing family environment for children. If the biological parents are, for work related commitments, not able to be present for their children, the role played by the community of parents can be an area rife for strategic intervention for the future.

Arising from the above challenges experienced by both parents and their children in the study, and drawing on parents' interest to support one another in the community, a plan of action for change are proposed. These are constructed as operations using Roger's (1995) theory of diffusion of innovation. Rogers (2003:5) defines his theory of innovation as 'the process by which an innovation is communicated through channels over time among members of a social system'. Two concepts are important in adopting this model: adoption and rejection in the five stages: innovators, early adopters, late adopters, rejecters and laggards. For Rogers (2003:177), adoption is a decision of 'full use of innovation as the best course of action available,' while rejection is a decision 'not to adopt an innovation'. Drawing on this model of innovation, strategies are proposed for adoption in order to address some of the problems identified in the study.

**Key words:** Community, Participation, Innovation, Time, Achievement

**Key target group for persuasion:** Local government leaders (the LCs), Parents, and Educators

Areas for operation

### **Operation 1: A Village-based Literacy Project**

Initiate a village-based literacy project for 4-6 years olds. This is in recognition that nursery schooling is a priority for equal access to the universal primary education (UPE) promoted by the government of Uganda. Because, pre-school education is not government supported, the majority of children in the rural areas do not attend pre-school as it is private, and therefore fee paying sector, which parents with low household income, typical of rural population in Uganda, are not able to afford for their children. Consequently, children in the rural areas start primary education when ill prepared with the result of often being left behind to repeat grades and a likelihood of dropping out of school without completing primary cycle. The aim of this project is to provide all children an equal opportunity for access, increased retention and progression rates for a successful completion of primary education.

### **Operation 2: Community Voluntary Participation**

Using family systems theory (Ritzer, 2008), this strategy draws on the already existing, but now seemingly fading tradition of communal life-style of the researched community. Family systems theory emphasises the reality of ‘interdependence’ among the members of a social group (Ritzer, 2008:327). The aim is to encourage a voluntary community led development where literate parents volunteer to offer adult literacy to their illiterate counterpart parents at the village level. In the same strategy, youth (boys and girls), who for one reason or another, discontinued their secondary education will be given skills training to make use of their knowledge and talents to participate in operation 1 above. They will be the mentors to guide, nurture and prepare the 4-6 years old in their respective villages for primary education. A complete curriculum designed by the community with the help of educational experts will guide their activities.

### **Operation 3: Alternatives to Agricultural Activities**

This operation aims at cooperative activities in agriculture. Grouping poor peasant farmers into groups of 5-7 (gender/culture sensitive) members at village level to work/cultivate or engage in small entrepreneurial money generating activities together in order to save energy and time is deemed beneficial. Parents can be encouraged to do piggery, shea butter production (for women), fish farming and selected agricultural food crops such as corn, sesame, sweet potatoes, cassava and beans/peas for sale. Sensitisation can be conducted during operation 2 above by, for example, local leaders such as the government local leader one (LC1) and school administrators) about the important role in getting actively engaged in their children's education. This fundamental role requires parents' time, literate skills and undivided support in every aspect. Other experts in the field of agriculture may also be involved by invitation to talk to parents/community about some specific topics deemed useful or a topic suggested by the community. Thus, this operation has two dimensions: literacy development for adults and skills training to improve raise the standards of living for the families and increase community participation.

This action of plan believes that if parents work/cultivate together in groups, there is likelihood of time saved to spend with children, new ideas shared, and social barriers reduced.

If these problems are not addressed, with time it will have major political and economic implications in Uganda.

### **Operation 4: Write Articles for Publication**

The study has raised a number of issues, which can be expanded. Considering the context of this study is least researched on, writing articles for publication in relation to the concerns raised in the study could bring the life and experiences of the people studied to the world.

***Possible topic for articles:***

1. Achievement gap in rural primary schools: A socio-cultural Family Dilemma in Uganda
2. Teaching English for Academic Purposes: A case of Primary Curriculum in Uganda
3. Parental Absence from Home: Children's Voices in a Cross Cultural Analysis
4. The Family and the State: Who Accounts for Children's Well-being?
5. Broken Families: Children's Educational Potential in a Cross Fire

In the next section, a personal reflection in relation to the focus of this thesis is provided.

### **8.10. Personal Reflection**

Princess Diana's words seem to resonate with the study's quest for children's welfare including how well they do at school. In her visit to South Africa, she embraced a child infected with HIV/AIDS virus and her message was:

As parents, teachers, family and friends, we have an obligation to care for our children. To encourage and guide, nourish and nurture, and to listen with love to their needs in ways which clearly show our children that we value them. They in turn will learn how to value themselves (*Speech at a conference about eating disorders, 1993*, in Holder, 1997:40)

I started this journey in search of an appraisal of parental education and literacy skills in relation to their primary children. The results were unexpected. Instead of finding an intergeneration of educational successes as suggested by Feinstein and colleagues (2008), the findings showed a progressive pattern of both academic and household deprivation to their children. The three categories of parents had different reasons for not engaging practically to improve their children's achievement in school. Their differences not only accounted for parents' educational levels but also individuals' personalities, socio-economic status, and the cultural norms, values and beliefs they exist in. As a result of undertaking this doctoral study, I would argue that if parents are unconsciously not supporting their children in school, then policy-makers and responsible ministries need to ensure parents know their due role in this regard, and the significance of that role in the success of their children in school.

Ultimately, as evidenced from the study, the level of parental education does make a difference in the education of children. But the parents must exploit their education and literacy skills in practical terms to assist their children. Otherwise, being educated and not

educated makes no significant difference in the achievements of the primary school going children. It is the conviction of this study that quality education of parents does lead to the success of their children.

Finally, my field relationship was an enriching experience. To me, the participants in this study have not only become part of the thesis but also part of my life. I carry them in my mind and heart whenever I talk, think and reflect about this study. After all, their information is an integral part of the thesis. They provided human faces to the problem under investigation; underperformance by pupils in primary schools, and the struggles of parents in educating their children in rural Uganda. To recount the stories of their everyday lives and then forget them would be to do an injustice both to them and to the research programme in my university, Trinity College Dublin itself.



## References

- Abela, A. and Walker, J. (2004) *Contemporary Issues in Family Studies: Global Perspective on Partnerships, Parenting and Support in a Changing World*. West Sussex: Wiley and Sons.
- Agaba, J and Naiga, A, (2014) 'Teachers blame poor performance on government.' *New vision Uganda's Daily Newspaper*. 24th July 2014. Available at <http://www.newvision.co.ug/news/657982-teachers-blame-poor-performance-on-government.html> [Accessed on 24.07.14]
- Aguti, J. N. (2002) A paper presented at Pan Commonwealth Forum on opening learning. *Open Learning: Transforming Education for Development*. Durban. 29th July- 2nd August 2002.
- Alaimo, K., Olsom, C. M and Frongilo, E. Jr. (2001) Food Insufficiency and American School-Aged Children's Cognitive, Academic, and Psychosocial Development. *American Academy of Pediatrics*, 108, 1: 44 -53. Illinois.
- Ali, M. (2011) 'Highest Literacy Rate: Most Educated Countries of the World' <http://www.einfopedia.com/highest-literacy-rate-most-educated-countries-of-the-world.php> [Accessed on 10.3.2010]
- Allen, S. M and Daly, K. (2002) The effects of father involvement: A summary of the research evidence. *The FII-ONews*, 1:1-11.
- Allodi, M.W. (2010) Meaning of social climate of learning environment: some reasons why we do not care enough about it. [http://suse.academia.edu/MaraAllodi/Papers/178398/The\\_meaning\\_of\\_social\\_climate\\_of\\_learning\\_environments\\_Some\\_reasons\\_why\\_we\\_do\\_not\\_care\\_enough\\_about\\_it](http://suse.academia.edu/MaraAllodi/Papers/178398/The_meaning_of_social_climate_of_learning_environments_Some_reasons_why_we_do_not_care_enough_about_it) [28th June 2011]
- Alnabhan, M., Al-Zegoul, E., and Harwell, M. (2001) Factors related to achievement levels of education students at Mu'tah University. *Assessment & Evaluation in High Education*, 26, 593–604.

- Altschul, I. (2011) Parental Involvement and the academic Achievement of Mexican Youths: What kinds of involvement in Youths Education Matter Most? *Social Work Research*, 35,3:159-170.
- Anderson, P. (1998) *Fundamentals of Educational Research* (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.) London: Falmer Press.
- Anderson, V. (2001) Assessing executive functions in children: Biological, psychological, and developmental considerations. *Pediatric Rehabilitation*, 4, 119–136.
- Anderson, V. A., Anderson, P., Northam, E., Jacobs, R., and Catroppa, C. (2001) Development of executive functions through late childhood and adolescence in an Australian sample. *Developmental Neuropsychology*, 20, 385–406.
- Anderson, V., Lajoie, G., and Bell, R. (1996) *Neuropsychological assessment of the school-age child*. Melbourne, Australia: University of Melbourne, Department of Psychology.
- Andrews, M., Nord, M., Binkel, G., and Carlson, S. (2001) Household Food Security in the United States. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, Food and Nutrition Research Report, 11-12, Washington DC. Available at [www.ers.usda.gov/publications/fanrr8/fanrr8.pdf](http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/fanrr8/fanrr8.pdf) [Accessed on 7.3.2013].
- Archilvili, A. (2001) Lev Semyonnoovich Vygotsky 1896-1934. In Palmer, J. A. (Ed.) *Fifty Modern Thinkers of Education: From Piaget to the Present*. Oxon: Routledge.
- Ardila, A., Rosselli, M., Matute, E., and Guajardo, S. (2005) The Influence of the Parents' Educational Levels on the Development of Executive Function. *Developmental Neuropsychology*, 28, 1:539-560.
- Aunola, K., Leskinen E., Lerkkanen M.K., and Nurmi, J. E. (2004) Developmental dynamics of math performance from Preschool to Grade 2. *Journal of Educational Psychology* 96:699–713.
- Baker, D. P. and Stevenson, D. L. (1986) Mothers' strategies for children's school achievement: Managing the transition to high school. *Sociology of Education*, 59: (July), 156-166.



- Baker, J., Denessen, E., and Brus-Leaven, M. (2007) Socio-economic background, parental involvement and teacher perceptions of these in relation to pupil achievement. *Educational Studies*, 33: 2, 177-192.
- Balat, J., Brambilla, I. and Porto, G. (2007) *Realising the Gains from Trade Export Crops, Marketing the Costs and Poverty*. Working Paper 13395. National Bureau of Economic Research. Cambridge.
- Balimwikungu, A. and Mukasa, H. (2009) Uganda, Congo relations back to normal. *New Vision, Uganda's Leading Daily*, August 25<sup>th</sup> 2009. [Accessed on 25.01.2013]
- Bank, S. P., and Khan, M. D. (1982b) Intense sibling loyalty. In Lamb, M. E and Sutton-Smith, B (Eds.), *Sibling relationships: Their nature and significance across the life span* (251-266). Hillside, NJ: Lawrence Elbaum.
- Bank, S. P., and Khan, M. D. (1982a) *The sibling bond*. New York: Basic Books.
- Barber, B. K., and Harmon, E. L. (2002). Violating the Self: Parental Psychological control of children and adolescents. In Barber, B. K (Ed.), *Intrusive parenting: How psychological control affects children and adolescents* (15-52). American Psychological Association. Washington, DC.
- Bariyo, N. (2012) Uganda Says Congo Impedes Rebel Hunt. Africa News, 13<sup>th</sup> March 2012. [<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702304537904577278912084895858.html>] Accessed on 25.01.2013].
- Bashaasha, B., Mangheni, N. M., and Mkonya, E. (2011) '*Decentralisation and rural service delivery in Uganda*'. Washington, D. C: International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI). <http://www.ifpri.org/publication/decentralization-and-rural-service-delivery-uganda> [25.01.2013]
- Basse, M. O. (1999) *Western Education and Political domination in Africa: A study in Critical and Dialogical Pedagogy*. Westport: Bergin and Garvey.
- Bateson, G. (1978) *Mind and nature: A necessary Unity*. New York: E.P. Dutton.,
- Baynham, M. (1995) *Literacy Practices: Investigating literacy in social contexts*. New York: Longman.

- Belachew, T., Hdley, C., Lindstron., D., Gebremariam, A., Lachat, C., and Kolsteren,P. (2011) Food insecurity, school absenteeism and educational attainment of adolescents in Jimma Zone, South West Ethiopia: a longitudinal study. *Nutrition Journal*, 1029doi, 10. 1186/1475-2891-10-29. Internet <http://www.nutritionj.com/content/10/1/29> [Accessed on 7.3.2013].
- Bengtson, V., Acook, A., Allen, K. R., Dilworth-Anderson, P and Klein, D . M (Eds.). (2005) *Sourcebook of Family Theory and Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Bergen, D., and Mannuer, D. (2000) ‘Symbolic play, phonological awareness, and literacy skills at three age levels’. In K. A. Roskos & J. F. Christie (Eds.), *Play and literacy in early childhood: Research from multiple perspectives* (pp. 45–62). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Berger, P. L and Luckmann, T. (1991) *The Social construction of Reality: A treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*. London: Penguin Books.
- Berk, L. E. (2001) *Awakening children’s minds: How parents and teachers can make a difference*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Biddulph, F., Biddulph, J., Biddulph, C., and Biddulph, P. (2003) *The complexity of community and family influences on children’s achievement in New Zealand: Best Evidence Synthesis*. Wellington: Ministry of Education.
- Blackburn, C. (1991) *Poverty and health: working with families*. Miton Keynes: Open University Press.
- Blanc, J. (2012) The Weather and Climate in Uganda – East Africa. Internet <http://kabiza.com/kabiza-wilderness-safaris/blog/the-weather-and-climate-in-uganda-east-africa/> [Accesses on 24.3.2013]
- Blumer H. (1969) *Symbolic Interactionism: Perspectives and Method*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Blumer, H. (1998) *Symbolic Interactionism. Perspective and Method*. Berkeley, CA.: University of California Press.

- Board of Gaelic. (2007) National Plan for Gaelic 2007-2012. Available online at: <http://www.bord-na-gaedhig.org.uk/National-Plan/National%20Plan%20for%20Gaelic.pdf> [Accessed on November 2011]
- Boije, H. (2010) *The Logic of Practice*. London: Sage.
- Bourdieu, P. (1990) *The Logic of Practice*. Cambridge: Polity Press. First published in French as *Le sens pratique* by les Editions de Minuti in 1980.
- Bourdieu, P. (1977) *Cultural Reproduction and Social Reproduction*. In Karabel, J., and Halsey, A. H (Eds.) *Power and Ideology in Education*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Bowerman, C.E and Dobash, R. M. (1974) Structural variations in intersibling affect. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 36: 48-54.
- Bracke, D, and Corts, D. (2012) Parental Involvement and the theory of planned Behaviour. *Education*, <http://eds.a.ebscohost.com/eds/detail/detail?sid=e13815d5-5640-4d9f-b4d2-ba3af8578936%40sessionmgr4003&vid=0&hid=4103&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWRzLWxpdmU%3d#db=a9h&AN=79777512> [Accessed on 10.09.2014]
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1986) Ecology of the family as a context for human development. Research Perspectives. *Developmental Psychology*, 22, 6:723-724.
- Brown, L, and Shrinidhi, I. (2008) 'Parenting Styles: The Impact on Student Achievement', *Marriage & Family Review*, 43: 1, 14 — 38.
- Bruyn, S.T. (1966) *The Human Perspective in Sociology: The Methodology of Participant Observation*. Englewood, Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Bryman, A (2008) *Social Research Methods* (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Bryman, A. (1994) *Quantity and Quality in Social Research*. London: Routledge.
- Bryman, A. (2001) *Social Research Methods*. Oxford: OUP.
- Burgess, E. W. (1926) 'The Family as Unity of Interacting Personalities'. *The Family*, 7:3-9.

- Bus, A. G., van Ijzendoorn, M. H and Pellegrini, A. D. (1995) Joint book reading makes for successes in learning to read: a meta-analysis of international transmission of literacy. *Review of Educational Research*, 65: 1-21.
- Butterworth, B. (2005) The development of arithmetical abilities. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry* 46: 3–18.
- Bynner, J., and Joshi, H. (2002) Equality and Opportunity in education: evidence from the 1958 and 1970 birth cohort studies. *Oxford Review of Education*, 28: 4, 405-425.
- Camilli, G., Vargas, S., Ryan, S., and Barnett, W. S. (2010) Meta-analysis of the effects of early education interventions on cognitive and social development. *Teachers college Record*, 112: 579-620.
- Cappela, J. N. (1987) Interpersonal communication: Foundational questions and issues. In Berger, C. R and Chaffee, S. H (Eds.) *Handbook of Communication Science* (184-238). Newbury Park, C A: Sage.
- Checchin, D. (2006) *The Economics of Education*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cherian, V. I. (2001) Relationship between parental education and academic achievement of Xhosa children from monogamous and polygamous families. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 132, 681–683.
- Chevalier, A. (2004) *Parental Education and Child's Education: A Natural Experiment*. IZA DP No. 1153. Bonn: the Institute for the study of Labour (IZA).
- Chevalier, A., Harmon, C., O'Sullivan, V and Walker, I. (2005) 'The Impact of Parental Income and Education on the Schooling of their Children'. IFS Working Paper. WP05/05:1-30.
- Christian, K., Morrison, F. J., and Bryant, F. B. (1998) Predicting Kindergarten academic skills: interactions among child care, maternal education, and family literacy environments *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 13: 501-521.
- CIA. (2004) World Fact Book. <http://climatezone.com/climate/uganda> [Accessed on 25.01.2013]
- Clark, R. M. (1990) Why Disadvantaged Children Succeed. *Public Welfare*, 17-23.

- Coffey, A and Atkinson, P. (1996) *Making Sense of Qualitative Data: Complementary Research Strategies*. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage.
- Cohen, J. (1979) Patterns of Parental Help. *Education Research*, 21, 3:186-193.
- Cooper, H M. (1998) *Synthesising Research: A Guide for Literature Reviews*. London: Sage.
- Corson, D. (2001) *Language Diversity and Education*. Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Association, Inc.
- Cotton, K., and Wiklund, K. R. (2001) *Parent involvement in education. School Improvement Research Series*. Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory. Retrieved July 1, 2010, from <http://www.nwrel.org/scpd/sirs/3/cu6.html>.
- Craft, M., Raynor, J., and Cohen, L. (1980) *Linking Home and School*. (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). London: Longman.
- Dagne, T (2011) Uganda: Current Conditions and the Crisis in North Uganda. Congressional Research Service (CRS). <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL33701.pdf> [15.12.2012].
- Data, Y. (2010) Maslow's Hierarchy of Basic Needs: An Ecological View, Oxford Journal.
- Davis-Kean, P. E. (2005) The influence of parent education and family income on child achievement: The indirect role of parental expectations and the home environment. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 19, 294–304.
- De Mello, A. (1997) *The Heart of the Enlightened*. London: Fount Paperbacks.
- Deacon, T. (1997) *The Symbolic Species*. London: Penguin.
- Delgado-Gaitan, C. (1990) *Literacy for Empowerment: The role of parents in children's education*. East Essex: The Falmer Press.
- Denzin, N. K. (1970) The Research Act in Sociology. *Social Forces*, 50: 166-82.
- Denzin, N. K., and Lincoln, Y. S. (2001) *Handbook for Qualitative Research*. Thousand oaks California: Sage.

- Denzin, N. K., and Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds) (1998) *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Material*. London: SAGE.
- Denzin, N. K., and Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds) (1998) *Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry*. London: SAGE.
- Denzin, N.K, and Lincoln, Y.S. (2005) *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research* (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.). Thousand Oaks. CA: Sage.
- Department for Education and Employment (DFEE). (1998). *The National Literacy Strategy: Framework for Teaching*. London: DFEE.
- Desforges, C. and Abouchaar, A. (2003) *The impact of parental involvement, parental support and family education on pupil achievement and adjustment: A literature review*. London: Department for Education and Skills.
- Djite, P. G. (2008) *The Sociology of Development in Africa: Multilingual Matter*. Clavedon: Channel view Publicans.
- Dolton, P., Asplund, R., and Barth, E. (2009) *Education and Inequality across Europe*. Cheltenham. Massachusetts: MPG Books Ltd, Bodmin, Cornwall.
- Dunbar, R. I. M. (1996) *Grooming Gossip and the Evolution of Language*. London: Faber and Faber
- Duncan, G. J., Dowsett, C. J., Claessens, A., Manguson, K., Huston, A. C., Klebanov, P., Pagani, L. S. (2007) School readiness and later achievement. *Developmental Psychology*, 43:1428-46.
- Easterly, W., and Levine, R. (1997) Africa's Growth Tragedy: Policies and Ethnic Divisions. *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 112, 4:1203-1250.
- Eccles, J. S. (2005) 'Influences of parents' education on their children's' educational attainments: the role of parent and child perceptions. *London Review of Education*, 3,3: 191-204.
- Economy <http://www.iss.org.za/AF/profiles/uganda/Economy.html> [Accessed on 22.12.2012]

- Ejuu, G. (2012) The Status of Implementation of the Education of Sector Early Childhood Development Policy in Uganda. *Uganda National Commission for UNESCO: Kyambogo University.*
- Elias, C. L., and Berk, L. E. (2002) Self-regulation in young children: Is there a role for sociodramatic play? *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 17, 1–17.
- Eliason, C. and Jenkins, L. (2003) *A practical guide to early childhood curriculum* (7<sup>th</sup> Ed.) New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- Ellis, A., Manuel, C., and Blackden, C. M. (2006) *Gender and Economic Growth in Uganda.* Washington: World Bank.
- Encyclopaedia of the Nations. Uganda - Location and size, Population, Coffee, Tourism, Financial services, Dependencies.  
<http://www.nationsencyclopedia.com/economies/Africa/Uganda.html#ixzz1qPBdqSBo> [Accessed on 28.3.2012]
- Epstein, J. L. (1991) Effects on student achievement of teachers' practices and parent involvement. *Advances in reading/language research: Literacy through family, community, and school interaction* (Vol. 5, pp. 261–276). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.
- Espy, K. A., Kaufmann, P.M., and Glisky, M. L. (2001) New procedures to assess executive functions in preschool children. *Clinical Neuropsychology*, 15, 46–58.
- Fan, X., and Chen, M. (2001) Parental Involvement and students' academic achievement: A meta-analysis. *Educational Psychology Review*, 13: 1-22.
- Feinstein, L., and Symons, J. (1999) Attainment in secondary school. *Oxford Economic Papers*, 51: 300-321.
- Feinstein, L., Duckwoth, K., and Sabates, R. (2008) *Education and the Family: Passing success across the generations.* Oxon: Routledge.
- Fisher, C. T. (2005) *Qualitative Research Methods for Psychologists: Introduction through Empirical Studies.* Boston, MA: Academic Press.
- Fishman, J. A. (1991) *Minority Language Shift* (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters).

- Fitzpatrick, M. A and Badzinski, D. M. (1994) All in the Family: Interpersonal Communication in Kin Relationships in Knapp, M. L and Miller, G. R (Eds.) *Handbook of Interpersonal Communication*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Fitzpatrick, M. A and Badziski, D. M. ‘ All in the Family: Interpersonal Communication in Kin Relationship’. In Knapp, M. A., and Miller, G. R. (1994) *Handbook of Interpersonal Communication*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Flick, U., von Kardoff, E., and Steinke, I. (2000) *A Companion to Qualitative Research*. London: Sage.
- Flouri, E and Buchanan, A. (2004) Early fathers’ and mothers’ involvement and child’s later educational outcomes. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 74: 141-153.
- Ford, L. (2005) BST. Article History. Friday 9<sup>th</sup> September 2005, 17. 22. Available at: guardian.co.uk [Internet Accessed 6<sup>th</sup> November 2010]
- Frankfort-Nachmias, C and Nachmias, D. (1996) *Research Methods in the Social Sciences*. (5thEd.). New York: St. Martin’s Press.
- Freankel, J. R and Wallen, N. E. (1993) *How to Design and Evaluate Research in Education* (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Freire, P., and Macedo, D. (1987) *Literacy: Reading the Word and the World*. South Hadley, MA: Bergin and Garvey.
- Frongillo, E. A., Tyoti, D. F., Jonesy, S. J. (2006) Food stamp programme participation is associated with academic learning among children. *Journal of Nutrition*, 136:1077-1080.
- Fuligni, A. S., and Brooks-Gunn, J. (2004) Measuring mother and father shared care giving: An analysis using the Panel Study of Income Dynamics-Child Development Supplement. In Day R. and Lamb M. (Eds.), *Conceptualizing and measuring father involvement*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Gall, M. D., Gall, J. P and Borg, W. R. (2007) *Educational Research: An Introduction*. (8<sup>th</sup> ed.), Boston: Pearson Education, Inc.



- Ganzach, Y. (2000) Parents' education, cognitive ability, educational expectations and educational attainment: Interactive effects. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 70, 419–441.
- Gascoigne, B. 'History of Uganda. History World. <http://www.historyworld.net/wrldhis/plaintexthistories.asp?historyid=ad22#3289> [Accessed on 25/01/2013]
- Geertz, C. (1988) *Works and Lives: The Anthropologist as Author*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. Available at <http://designstudiesdiscourses.files.wordpress.com/2013/09/60423716-geertz-1988-being-there.pdf> [Accessed on 12.08.2014]
- Gergen, K. J. (1994) *Realities and Relationships: Soundings in Social Construction*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Gergen, K. J. (1999) *An Introduction to Social Construction*. London: Sage.
- Germinene, A., Zamitiene, N., and Zaborskis, A. (2006) Family time, Parental behaviour model and the initiation of smoking and alcohol use by ten-year old children: an epidemiological study in Kaunas, Lithuania. *BMC Public Health*, 6: 287. Internet <http://www.biomedcentral.com/1471-2458/287> [Accessed on 27.02.2013].
- Gerson, K and Horowitz, R. (2002) 'Observation and Interviewing: Options and choices in May, T (Ed.) *Qualitative Research in Action*. London: Sage.
- Gest, S. D., Freeman, N. R., Domitrovich, C. E., and Welsh, J. A. (2004) Shared book reading and children's language comprehension skills: the moderating role of parental discipline practices. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 19: 319-336.
- Gieryn, T. (2000) A space fro place in sociology. *Annual review of sociology*, 26: 463-496.
- Ginsberg, H.P., Cannon, J., Eisenband, J., and Pappas, S. (2006) Mathematical thinking and learning. In *Blackwell hand book of early childhood development* (eds.) McCarthy, K and Philips, D. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Gokah, T. K. (2006) *Children on the Boundaries of Time and Space in Sub-Saharan Africa: Aspiration or Achievement of Policy*. New Castle Upon Tyne: Cambridge Schools Publishing.

- Gottfried, A. E., Fleming, J. S and Gottfried, A. W. (1998) Role of Cognitively Stimulating home environment in children's academic intrinsic motivation: a longitudinal study. *Child Development*, 69, 5: 1448-1460.
- Gottfried, A. E., Fleming, J. S., and Gottfried, A. W. (1998) Role of Cognitively stimulating home environment in children's academic intrinsic motivation: a longitudinal study. *Child Development*, 69, 5:1448-1460.
- Gottfried, A. W and Gottfried, A. E. (1984) Home environment and cognitive development in young children of middle-socioeconomic status families. In Gottfried, A. W (Ed.), *Home Environment and Early Cognitive Development: Longitudinal Research*. New York: Academic Press.
- Graff, H. J. (1979) *The Literacy Myth: Literacy and Social Structure in the Nineteenth Century City*. New York: Academic Press.
- Graff, H. J. (1991) *The Legacies of Literacy: Continuities and Contradictions in Western Society and Culture*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.
- Green, C. L., Walker, J. M.T., Hoover-Dempsey, K. V., and Sandier, H. M. (2007). Parents' motivations for involvement in children's education: An empirical test of a theoretical model of parental involvement. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 99 (3), 532-544.
- Gregg, P., and Machin, S. (2000) The relationship between childhood experiences, subsequent educational attainment and adult labour market performance. In Vledinckx, K and Smeeding, T. (eds.), *Child Well Being in Modern Nations: What Do We Know?* Bristol: Policy Press.
- Gregg, P and Machin, S. (2000) The relationship between childhood experiences, subsequent educational attainment and adult labour market performance. In Vleminc, K., and Smeeding, T (Eds.) *Child Well Being in Modern Nations: What do we know?* Bristol: Polity Press.
- Gumbrium, J. F. and Holstein, J. A. (1997) *The New Language of Qualitative Method*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Guo, G., and Hans, K. M. (2000) the mechanisms mediating the effects of poverty on children's intellectual development. *Demography*, 37, 4, 431-437.
- Guryan, J., Hurst, E., and Kearney, M. (2008) Parental education and parental time with children. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 22(3), 23–46.
- Hammersely, M. (1992) *What's Wrong with Ethnography?* London: Routledge.
- Hammersley, M., and Atkinson, P. (2007) *Ethnography: Principles in Practice*. (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.) Wiltshire: The Cromwell Press.
- Hang, S., and Ho, H-Z. (2005) Direct and Indirect Longitudinal Effects of parental Involvement on Students Achievement: Second-Order Latent Growth Modelling Across Ethnic Groups. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 97, 1: 32-42.
- Hanushek, E. A., and Wößman, L. (2007) The Role of Education Quality in Economic Growth. *World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 4122*.
- Haralambos, M., and Heald, R. M. (1985) (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.) *Sociology: Themes and Perspectives*. London: Unwin Hyman Ltd.
- Harris, J. R. (1998) *The nature assumption: Why children turn out the way they do*. New York: Free Press.
- Hartup, W.W. (1978) Perspectives on child and family interaction: Past, Present and Future in Lerner, R. M and Spanier, G. B (Eds.), *Child influences on marital and family interaction: A life-span perspective* (23-46). New York: Academic Press.
- Hatch, J. A. (2002) *Doing Qualitative Research in Education Settings*. Albany, New York: Suny Press.
- Henderson, A., and Berla, N. (Eds.) (1994). A new generation of evidence: The family is critical to student achievement. Washington, DC: Centre for Law and Education.
- Henderson, A., and Mapp, K. (2002). A new wave of evidence: The impact of school, family and community connections on student achievement. Austin, TX: National Centre for Family and Community Connections with Schools, Southwest Educational Development Laboratory. [Accessed on 3. 11. 2010] Available at <http://www.sedl.org/connections/resources/evidence.pdf>

- Hill, M. S., Yung, W., and Duncan, G. J. (2001) Childhood family structure and young adult behaviours. *Journal of Population Economics*, 14, 271-299.
- Hill, N. E., Castellino, D. R., Lansford, J. E., Nowlin, P., Dodge, K. A., Bates, J. E., and Pettit, G. S. (2004) Parental academic involvement as related to school behaviour, achievement, and aspirations: Demographic variations across adolescent. *Child Development*, 75, 1491–1509.
- Hoff, E. (2003a) Causes and consequences of SES-related differences in parent-to-child speech. In Bornstein, M. H. & Bradley, R. H. (Eds.), *Socioeconomic status, parenting, and child development* (147–160). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.
- Hoff, E. (2003b). The specificity of environmental influence: Socioeconomic status affects early development via maternal speech. *Child Development*, 74, 1368–1378.
- Hoff, E., Laursen, B., and Tardif, T. (2002) Socioeconomic status and parenting. In Bornstein M. H. (Ed.), *Handbook of parenting* (2nd ed., pp. 231–252). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.
- Hoff-Ginsberg, E. (1991) Mother-child conversations in different social classes and communicative settings. *Child Development*, 62, 782–796.
- Hogan, J., Dolan, P., and Donnelly, P. (Eds.) (2009) *Approaches to Qualitative Research: Theory and its Practical Application, a Guide for Dissertation Students*. Cork: Oak Tree Press.
- Hogg, M. A and Vaughan, G. M. (2008) *Social Psychology* (5<sup>th</sup> Ed.).Essex: Pearson Educational Ltd.
- Holder, M. (1997) *The Caring Princess*. London: Holder and Stoughton.
- Holme, R. (2004) *Literacy: An Introduction*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Limited.
- Holstein, J. A and Gubrium, J. E (Eds.). (2008) *Handbook of Constructionist Research*. New York: The Guilford Press.
- Hortacsu, N. (1995) Parents' education levels, beliefs, and child outcomes. *Journal of Genetic Psychology*, 156, 373–383.

- Howard, R. (1981) *A social history of American Family Sociology, 1865-1940*. Westport, Ct: Greenwood Press.
- Howard, T. and Reynolds, R. (2008). Examining parent involvement in reversing the underachievement of African American students in middle-class schools. *Educational Foundations*. 22(1-2), 79-98.
- Howarth, C. (2002) ‘”So You’re from Brixton? ”: The Struggle for Recognition and Esteem in a Stigmatised Community’, *Ethnicities*, 2, 2:120-236.
- <http://www.proliteracy.org/page.aspx?pid=370> Accessed on 9.7.2011.
- Insight on Conflict. Uganda Guide to the conflicts and peace building in Uganda. *Department for International Development: Peace Direct*.  
<http://www.insightonconflict.org/contact/> [Accessed on 20.1.2013].
- International Labour Conference (2006), 95th Session. *Report I (B)*, ILO, Geneva.
- International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (2004) *Helping Hands or Shackled Lives? Understanding child domestic labour and responses to it*, ILO, Geneva.
- IOB. (2008) Impact Evaluation: Primary Education in Uganda. *Policy and Operations Evaluation Department*. No. 311.
- IWI. (2012) Indigenous people in Uganda. <http://www.iwgia.org/regions/africa/uganda> [Accessed on 18.12.2012].
- Jackson, A. P. (2003) Mothers’ employment and poor and near-poor African-American children’s development: A longitudinal study. *Social Service Review*, 3, 93–109.
- Jackson, M. I. (2010) A Life Course perspective on Child Health, Cognition and Occupational Skill Qualification in Adulthood: Evidence from a British Cohort. *Social Forces*, 89, 1, Sept 2010, 89-116. University of North Carolina.
- Jeal, T. (2011) *Explores of the NILE: The Triumph and Tragedy of a Great Victorian Adventure*. London: Faber and Faber.
- Jensen, E. (2014) ‘How Poverty Affects behaviour and Academic Performance. A paper prepared for ASCD Conference on Educational leadership’. Orlando, Fla. Lesley

University. Available at  
<http://www.ascd.org/publications/books/109074/chapters/How-Poverty-Affects-Behavior-and-Academic-Performance.aspx> [Accessed 13thSeptember 2014]

- Joe, S., Joe, E., and Rowley, L. L. (2009) Consequences of Physical Health and Mental Illnesses for Academic Achievement in Grade K-12. *Review of Research in Education*, 33: 283-309. University of Michigan.
- Johnson, P. (1998) 'Analytic Induction' in Symon, G and Cassell, C. (Eds.) in *Qualitative Methods and Analysis in organisational Research*. London: Sage.
- Johnson, R. B and Onwuegbuzie, A. (2004) Mixed methods research: a research paradigm whose time has come. *Educational Researcher*, 33, 7: 14-26.
- Jordan, G. S., Snow, C. E. and Porshe, M. V. (2000) Project EASE: The effect of a family literacy project on kindergarten students' early literacy skills. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 35: 524-546.
- Jordan, N.C., Kaplan, D., Locuniak, M.N., and Ramineni, C. (2007) Predicting first-grade math achievement from developmental number sense trajectories. *Disabilities Research and Practice* 22: 36–46.
- Jorgensen, D. L. (1989) *Participant observation*. A methodology for human studies. Newberry Park, CA: Sage.
- Joshi, H., and Verropoulou, G. (2000) *Maternal Empowerment and Child outcomes*, Occasional Paper. London: The Smith Institute.
- Jukes, M., McGuire, J., Method, J. and Sternberg, R. (2002) Nutrition and Education. In *Nutrition: A Foundation for Development*. ACC/SCN. Geneva.
- Jyoti, D. F., Frongillo, E. A., and Jones, S. J. (2005) Food insecurity affects school children's academic performance, weight gain and social skills. *Journal of Nutrition*, 135: 2831-2839.
- Kalil, A., Ryan, R and Corey, M. (2012) Diverging Destinies: Maternal Education and the Developmental Gradient in Time With Children, *Demography*, 49: 1361-1383.

- Kaplan, D. S., X. Liu and H. B. Kaplan. (2001) Influence of parents' self-feelings and expectations on children's academic performance. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 94, 6: 360–369.
- Kasirye, I. (2009) Determinants of learning achievements in Uganda. *Economic Policy Research Centre: Uganda*.
- Katz, J. (1999) *How Emotions Work*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Keith, T. Z., Keith, P., Quirk, K., Sperduto, J., Santillo, S., & Killings, S. (1998) Longitudinal effects of parent involvement on high school grades: Similarities and differences across gender and ethnic groups. *Journal of School Psychology*, 35, 335–363.
- Kellner, D and Share, J. (2005) Towards Critical Media Literacy: Core Concepts, debates, organisations and policy. *Discourse Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 26, 3: 369-386.
- Kelly, C., Huston, T., and Cate, R, M. (1983) Premarital relationships correlates of the erosion of Satisfaction in marriage. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*,....
- Kelly, P. (2007) *Locke's Second Treatise of Government: a Reader's Guide*. London: Continuum.
- Keren, M., Feldman, R., Namdari-Weinbaum, I., Spitzer, S., and Tyano, S. (2005) Relations between parents' interactive style in dyadic and triadic play and toddlers' symbolic capacity. *The American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 75, 599–607.
- Kim, U and Park ,Y-S. (2010) Indigenous psychological analysis of academic achievement in Korea: the influence of self-efficacy, parents, and culture. *International Journal of psychology Press*, 41, 4: 287-292.
- Kirk, T. M. (1997) *The Effectiveness of Cooperative learning; With Particular References to academic Achievement, Self-Esteem, Academic Self-image, Social Interaction and Student Attitudes in primary Mathematics and English Spelling Classes in Ireland*. Vol. 2, PhD Dissertation, Trinity College-Dublin.
- Kisembo, A. (2008) *Thematic Curriculum and Local Languages Policy: Achievement and Challenges*. Kampala: Ministry of Education and Sports.

- Kitwood, T. (1980) *Disclosure to a Stranger: Adolescent values in an Advanced Industrial Society*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Kiwanuka, F. (2011) The rickety canoe can only take seven at a time. *New Vision Newspaper*, Thursday, 27.5.2011. Uganda.
- Knapp, M. A., and Miller, G. R. (1994) *Handbook of Interpersonal Communication*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Kozulin, A ., Gindis, B., Ageyev, V. S and Miller, S. M. (2003) *Vygotsky's Educational Theory in Cultural Context*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Krajewski, K., and Schneider, W. (2009) Exploring the impact of phonological awareness, visual-spatial working memory, and preschool quantity-number competencies on mathematics achievement in elementary school: Findings from a 3-year longitudinal study. *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology*, 103:516-531.
- Kravtsova, E. E. (2009) The Cultural-historical Foundations of the Zone of Proximal Development. *Journal of Russian and East European Psychology*, 47,6: 9-24.
- Kvale, S and Brinkmann, S. (2009) *Interviews: Learning the Craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing*. London: SAGE.
- Kwesiga, P. (2014) 'Universal Primary Education Underfunding: Who is telling the truth? MWALIMU Education. *New Vision, Uganda' Daily Newspaper*, 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2014.
- LABE. (2011a) 'Learning in the Mother tongue Promotes Quality education: Learners learn better, Teachers teach better'. *Mother tongue education Series*, 2: LABE.
- LABE. (2011b) *Demonstrating Holistic Child and Adult Basic Education Linkages*. Annual Report: LABE.
- Lakes and rivers in Uganda:  
[http://www.eoearth.org/article/Major\\_rivers,\\_lakes,\\_mountains,\\_and\\_other\\_terrestrial\\_features\\_of\\_Uganda](http://www.eoearth.org/article/Major_rivers,_lakes,_mountains,_and_other_terrestrial_features_of_Uganda) [Accessed on 18.12.2012].
- Lambert, T. (2012) *A brief History of Uganda*. <http://www.localhitories.org/uganda.html> [Accessed on 25.01.2013].



- Lareau, A. (1987) Social class differences in family-school relationships: The importance of cultural capital. *Sociology of Education* 60: 73–85.
- LaRossa R and Reitzes, D. C (1993) “Symbolic Interactionism and Family Studies”. (135-163) in *Sourcebook of Family Theories and Methods: A Contextual Approach*. Boss, P.G, Doherty, W.J, La Rossa, R, Schumm, W.R and Strinmetz, S. K (Eds.). New York: Plenum.
- Le Compte, M. (2002) The transformation of ethnographic practices. *Qualitative Research*, 2, 3: 2828-299.
- LeFevre, J. A, Polyzoi, E., Skwarchuk, S.L., Fast, L., and Sowiski, C. (2010) Do home numeracy and literacy practices of Greek and Canadian parents predict the numeracy skills of kindergarten children? *International Journal of Early Years of Education*, 18, 1: 55-70.
- LeFevre, J., Clarke, T., and Stringer, A.P. (2002) Influences of language and parental involvement on the development of counting skills: Comparisons of French- and English-speaking Canadian children. *Early Child Development and Care* 172: 283–300.
- LeFevre, J.A., Skwarchuk, S., Smith-Chant, B. L., Fast, L., Kamwa, D., and Bisdnz, J. (2009) Home numeracy experiences and children’s mathematics performance in the early school years. *Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science*, 41:55-66.
- Lerner, R.M and Spanier, G. B. (1978) *Child influences on marital and family interaction: A life-span perspective*. New York: Academic Press.
- Levinger, G and Huston, T. (1990) The Social psychology of marriage . In Fincham, F. D and Bradbury, T. N (Eds.) *The Psychology of marriage* (19-58). New York: Guildford.
- Lewin, K. (1948) The Background of conflict in marriage. In Lewin, G (Ed.), *Resolving social conflicts* (84-102). New York: Harper and Row.
- Lewis, M. P. (2009) (Ed.). *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*, 16th ed. Dallas, Tex.: SIL International. Online version: <http://www.ethnologue.com/>. [Accessed on 12.3.2012].

- Library of Congress and CIA World Factbook. (2004) *Uganda Local Administration*.  
[http://www.photius.com/countries/uganda/government/uganda\\_government\\_local\\_administration.html](http://www.photius.com/countries/uganda/government/uganda_government_local_administration.html) [17.4.2012].
- Lichtman, M. (2010) *Qualitative Research in Education: A User's Guide*, (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, California: Sage.
- Livaditus, M., Zaphiriadis, K., Samakouri, M., Tellidou, C., Tzavaras, N., & Xenitidis, K. (2003) Gender differences, family and psychological factors affecting school performance in Greek secondary school students. *Educational Psychology*, 23: 223–231.
- Location and features of Uganda: <http://www.nationsencyclopedia.com/geography/Slovenia-to-Zimbabwe-Cumulative-Index/Uganda.html>[Accessed on 18.12.2012].
- Locke, J. (2004) On the conduct of the understanding, in *Collected works of John Locke*, Volume 1 (Liberty Fund Edition).
- Lockheed, M.E, Fuller, B. and Nyirogo, R. (1989) Family effects on student's achievement in Thailand and Malawi. *Sociology of Education*, 62 (October), 239-256.
- Lofland, J and Lofland, L. (1995) *Analysing Social Settings: A Guide to Qualitative Observation and Analysis*, (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.). Belmont, Cali: Wadsworth.
- Long, J. and Green, S. (2009). No parent left behind: A two-year student of parental involvement in an urban primary school. Unpublished paper, University of Notre Dame, Office for Undergraduate Studies.
- Loxley, A. (in print). (2008) *A Brief Introduction to Some Methods For Gathering Data*. Webb CT, Session 2.2.
- Ma'di History <http://www.joshuaproject.net/people-profile.php?peo3=13196&rog3=UG> [12.3 2012].
- Macbeth , A and Ravn, B. (1994) (Eds.) *Expectations about Parents in Education: European Perspectives*. Glasgow: Computing Services (University of Glasgow) Ltd.
- Mafabi, D. (2012) Monitor Reports on Bulambi District on the East of Uganda. Monitor News Paper, Monday 27<sup>th</sup> February. Internet

[http://us.mc1610.mail.yahoo.com/mc/welcome?.tm=1330337619#\\_pg=showMessage;\\_ylc=X3oDMTBucmhobGR0BF9TAzM5ODMwMTAyNwRhYwNkZWxNc2dz&mid=1\\_2474615\\_AD7ci2IAAJMST0rCqAaB6hA2i2I&fid=Inbox&sort=date&order=down&startMid=0&filterBy=&.rand=432627043&.jsrand=5509408](http://us.mc1610.mail.yahoo.com/mc/welcome?.tm=1330337619#_pg=showMessage;_ylc=X3oDMTBucmhobGR0BF9TAzM5ODMwMTAyNwRhYwNkZWxNc2dz&mid=1_2474615_AD7ci2IAAJMST0rCqAaB6hA2i2I&fid=Inbox&sort=date&order=down&startMid=0&filterBy=&.rand=432627043&.jsrand=5509408) [Accessed on 26.3.2013]

- Mali, M., Drametu, M., and Maiko-Joago, B. M. (2009) *A Report on the Cause of Low Academic Achievements in Primary Schools in Moyo District*. Moyo: Moyo District Local Government.
- Mandy, F. (2010) *Learning from Home: The Mother of Schools for Your Child*. Kampala: Famecon Ltd.
- Manolitsis, G., Georgiou, G., Stephanson, K and Parrila, R. (2009) Beginning to read across languages varying in orthographic consistency: Comparing the effects of non-cognitive and cognitive predictors. *Learning and Instruction*, 19: 466-480.
- Marshall, C and Rossman, G. B. (2006) *Designing Qualitative Research*. Thousand Islands, CA: Sage Publications.
- Marshall, G. (Ed.) (1998) *Oxford Dictionary of Sociology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Maslow, A. (1987) *Motivation and Personality* (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.) New York: Harper Collins Publishers
- Maslow, A. (1987) *Motivation and Personality*. (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.) New York Harper Collins Publication.
- Mathai, W. (2009) *The Challenge for Africa: A new vision*. London: William Heinman.
- Mazrui, A. A., and Mazrui, A. M. (1998) *The Power of Babel: Language and Governance in the African Experience*. Oxford: Villiers Publications.
- Mbabazi, J. G. (2008) Progress Made in Implementation of Free Primary and Secondary Education in Uganda. A paper Presented at the 5<sup>th</sup> African Convention of Principals' Conference. Kampala: Ministry of Education and Sports.
- McCulloch, A. and Joshi, H. (2000). *Neighbourhood and Family Influences on the Cognitive Ability of Children in the British National Child Development Study*. University of

Essex, Institute for Social and Economic Research, University of Essex, Colchester.  
<<http://www.iser.essex.ac.uk/pubs/workpaps/wp2000-24.php>>.

Melhuish, E., Sylvia, C., Sammons, P., Siraj-Blatchford, I. and Tagart, B. (2001). *Social, behavioural and cognitive development at 3-4 years in relation to family background. The effective provision of pre-school education, EPPE project*. DfEE: London: The Institute of Education.

MFPED. (2003) Uganda's Progress in Attaining the PEAP Targets of the context of the Millennium Development Goals. Background Paper for the consultative Group Meeting. *Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development (MFPED)*. Kampala: Uganda.

Miller, J, M and Tewksbury, R. (2006) *Research Methods: A Qualitative Reader*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc.

Ministry of Education and Sports. (1989) *Education For National Integration and Development*, Report of Education Review Commission. Kampala.

Ministry of Education and Sports. (2008) Act 13. Supplement No 8. *The Uganda Gazette No. 44 Volume C1 dated 29<sup>th</sup> August, 2008*.

Ministry of Education and Sports: Education System in Uganda  
<http://www.sacmeq.org/education-uganda.htm#fact> [Accessed on 9.10. 2012].

Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (MFPED). (1999) *Vision 2015: Prosperous People, Harmonious Nation, Beautiful Country: A Strategic Framework for National Development, Vol. 1*, Main Document (Working Draft). Kamapal: The Republic of Uganda.

Moses, J. W and Knutsen, Y. L. (2012) *Ways of Knowing: Competing Methodologies in social and Political Research*. (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed). Hamisphire: Palgrave Macmillan.

Moulton, J. (2000) *Support to Uganda Primary Education Reform. Final Report: The Basic Education – Policy Support (BEPS) Activity*. Ministry of Education and Sports. USAID, Uganda.

- Mouton, J. (2000) Support to Uganda primary Education Reform: The Basic Education and Policy support (BEPS). *US Agency for international Development (USAID): The Global Bureau Human Capacity Development Centre.*
- Muhwezi, D. K. (2003) 'Gender Sensitive Educational Policy and Practice: Uganda Case Study'. Paper prepared for International Bureau of Education. Makerere University. *Department of Sociology.* Kampala: Uganda.
- Mullis, R. L., Mullis., A. K., Cornille, T. A., Ritchson, A. D and Sullender, M. S. (2004) *Early literacy outcomes and parent involvement.* Tallhassee, FI: Florida State University.
- Mulondo, M. (2014) Speaker flags off West Nile torch Newvision newspaper, April 14<sup>th</sup> 2014. Available at <http://www.newvision.co.ug/news/654541-speaker-flags-off-west-nile-torch.html> [accessed on 14.04.2014].
- Mungai, C and Kimani, M. (2011) 'Report card on East African pupils out ...and Kenya leads Uganda and Tanzania. The East African Newspaper, 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2011. Nairobi: Kenya. Available at <http://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/news/If-you-must-go-to-school-in-East-Africa--do-it-in-Kenya/-/2558/1193498/-/item/0/-/pb7497z/-/index.html> [Accessed on 3.9.2014]
- Nachmias, D and Nachmias, C. (1992) *Research methods in the social sciences.* New York: St. Martin's.
- Nakumbi, C. (2013) 'Parents prefer dowry to education in Nwoya' *Nation Media.* Kampala: Uganda.
- Namakula, E. M, and Bisasso, F. X. (2010) *Responsible Citizenship: A Textbook for Civic Education.* Kampala: Marianum Publishing Company.
- NAPE. (2011) *The Achievement of Primary School Pupils in Uganda in Numeracy, Literacy and Oral Reading.* Kampala: Uganda National Examinations Board.
- National Centre for Education and Statistics (NCS) (2000) Early Reading Activities. *Department of Education.* U. S.
- National Literacy and Numeracy Week. (2006) *Celebrating literacy and Numeracy: Year 7 brochure amend 2.* NLNW: UK.

- National Literacy Week (2004) Training, Brochure. *Department of Education, Science and Skills*. Australian Government. Available at [www.nlnw.nsw.edu.au](http://www.nlnw.nsw.edu.au). [6.7.2011].
- National Parent Teacher Association Legislative Conference. (2006) 'Research Brief: Family Involvement Makes a Difference in School Success'. *Harvard Family Research Project*. Harvard Graduate School of Education. <<http://www.hfrp.org/publications-resources/browse-our-publications/family-involvement-makes-a-difference-in-school-success>> [Accessed on 27.08.2011].
- Naturinda, S. (2011) "Better Results". Uganda's Daily Monitor Newspaper, *Education* [Accessed on 21.01.2011]
- Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1986) *Decolonising the Mind: the Politics of Language in African Literature*. Oxford: James Currey Ltd.
- NICHED, Early Child Care Research Network. (2004) Fathers' and mothers' parenting behaviour and beliefs as predictors of children's social adjustment in the transition to school. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 18: 628-638.
- Noach, P. (2004) The family context of preadolescents' orientations towards education Effects of maternal orientations and behaviour. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 96, 714–722.
- Nyamugasira, W., and Desmond, S. (2008) Strengthening Girl Child Education in Northern Uganda. Paper presented to LABE. Kampala: Uganda.
- Nyamugasira, W., Angura, A. D and Robinson, C. (2005) 'Literacy and Continuing Education in Uganda 2000-2005' and 'Family Basic Education in Uganda' 2003-2005 Programmes. LABE. Available at [http://www.unesco.org/education/efa/global\\_co/working\\_group/Background%20paper.pdf](http://www.unesco.org/education/efa/global_co/working_group/Background%20paper.pdf) [accessed on 2012].
- Nyanzi, P. (2012) News Paper, Independent, Saturday, 17<sup>TH</sup> December 2012. <http://www.independent.co.ug/news/news-analysis/6848-corruption-threatens-shs-950bn-education-projects-> [Accessed on 22/11/2012].
- O'Leary, Z. (2010) *The Essential Guide to Doing your Research Project*. London: Sage.

- O'Sullivan, M, and Nserenko. (2008) Launch of Irish Aid Education Policy – Seminar and Irish Launch of the Education For All Global Monitoring Report 2008. *Education For All 2015: Will we make it?* Thursday, February, 14<sup>th</sup> 2008.]
- OECD. (2002) *Reading for change: Performance and engagement across countries. Results from PISA 2000*. New York: Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development.
- Okabe, J. (2011) Katakwi Pupils Dodge Reading Test. *New Vision Newspaper*. Tuesday, 19<sup>th</sup> April 2011.
- Okech, A. (2005) Uganda Case Study of Literacy in Education For All 2005: *A Review of Policies, Strategies and Practices*. UNESCO.
- Okino, P. (2011). Primary six attending lesson while seated on the floor. *New Vision, Ugandan Daily News Paper*, Thursday, 31st March, 2011. <http://www.newvision.co.ug/detail.php?mainNewsCategoryId=8&newsCategoryId=16&newsId=750783>
- Onwughalu, O. J. (2011) *Parents' Involvement in Education: The Experience of an African Immigrants Community in Chicago*. Bloomington: iUniverse.
- Onzima, B. (2013) 'Public accountability: Explaining Variation across Local Governments in Uganda'. *A Thesis for the Award of Master of Philosophy in Public Administration*. University of Bergen, Norway.
- OPM. (2008) Independent Evaluation of Uganda's Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP) 1997-2007. Volume 1. *Synthesis Report*. The Republic of Uganda. Available at <http://opm.go.ug/manage/pdfs/1304016366.pdf> [accessed on 23rd April 2015]
- Oreopoulos, P. (2007) 'Do dropouts drop out too soon? Wealth, health and happiness from compulsory schooling' *Journal of Public Economics*, 91:2213-2229.
- Orlando, M. (2012) Pride Wealth among the Dinka Anglicans in South Sudan. *Churchman*, 126, 4:347-360.
- Overseas Development Institute. (2006) *Policy Brief*. London: ODI.

- Paige, R. (2002) 'Schools can't improve without the help of parents. *USA Today*, April 7p. A13.
- Palloni, A. (2006) Reproducing Inequalities: Luck, Wallets and enduring effects of childhood health. *Demography*, 43, 4: 587- 615. Baltimore, Maryland.
- Palmer, J. A. (Ed.) (2001) *Fifty Modern Thinkers of Education: From Piaget to the Present*. Oxon: Routledge.
- Park, H., Byun, S., and Kim, K (2011) Parental Involvement and Students' Cognitive Outcomes in Korea: Focusing on Private Tutoring. *Sociology of Education*, 84:2-22.
- Passolunghi, M. C., Vercelloni, B., and Schadee, H. (2007) The precursors of mathematics learning: Working memory, phonological ability and numerical competence. *Cognitive Development*, 22: 165-184.
- Patrinos, H. A, and Psachropulos, G. (2011) Past, PRESENT AND FUTURE Global Challenges: Policy Research Working Paper, 5616. *The World Bank, Human Development Network Education Team*, March, 2011.
- Pepper, S. C. (1970) *World Hypothesis: A Study in Evidence*. Berkeley: University of California Press. (Original work published in 1942).
- Pinderhughes, E. E., Dodge, K. A., Bates, J. E., Pettit, G. S., & Zelli, A. (2000) Discipline responses: Influences of parents' socioeconomic status, ethnicity, and beliefs about parenting, stress, and cognitive emotional processes. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 14, 380–400.
- Popping, R. (2000) *Computer-Assisted Text Analysis*. London: Sage.
- Portes, P. R., Cuentas, T. E., and Zady, M. (2000) Cognitive socialization across ethnocultural contexts: Literacy and cultural differences in intellectual performance and parent-child interaction. *Journal of Genetic Psychology*, 161, 79–98.
- Poston, D. L. and Falbo, T. (1990) Academic performance & personality traits of Chinese children: "On lines" versus Others. *American Journal of Sociology*, 96(2) (September), 433-451.



- Powney J and Watts, M. (1987) *Interviewing in Educational Research*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- ProLiteracy. (2008) Improving lives and communities through literacy. United States of America. Available at
- ProLiteracy. (2010) The impact of literacy: Basic Facts about Literacy. <http://www.proliteracy.org/page.aspx?pid=345> Accessed on 14.08.2011.
- Punch, S. (2009) 'Case Study: Research in childhoods in Bolivia'. In Tisdall, E. K. M.,
- Radio Network. (2014) 'West Nile To Mark Centenary as Part of Uganda'. Available at <http://ugandaradionetwork.com/a/story.php?s=57504> [3.9.2014]
- Reynolds, L. T and Herman-Kinney, N. J (Eds.) (2003) *Handbook of symbolic Interactionism*. Lanham: Altamira Press.
- Ritzer, G. (2008) *Sociological Theory*. (7<sup>th</sup> Ed.) New York, McGraw-Hill Higher Education.
- Robson, C. (2000) *Real World Research: A Resource for Social Scientists and Practitioner-Researchers*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Rodney, W. (1972) *How Europe underdeveloped Africa*. London: Bogle L'Ouverture Publications. Ltd.
- Rogers, E. M. (1995) *Diffusion of Innovation*. (4<sup>th</sup> Ed.). New York: Free Press.
- Rogers, E. M. (2003) *Diffusion of Innovation*. (5<sup>th</sup> Ed.). New York: Free Press.
- Rogier, E. (2002) The Peace Process in the Democratic Republic of Congo: The Labyrinthine Path to Peace in the Democratic Republic of Congo. *Institute for Security Studies* (ISS). <http://www.iss.org.za/AF/profiles/drcongo/cdreader/bin/fulldoc.pdf> [25.01.2013].
- Rogoff, R. (2003) *The cultural nature of human development*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Rosbult, C. E., and Buuk, B. P. (1993) commitment process in close relationships: an independence analysis. *Journal of social and Personal Relationships*, 10:175-204.

- Rowe, K. (1991) The influence of reading activity at home on student's attitudes towards reading, classroom attentiveness and reading achievement: An application of structural equation modelling. *British journal of Educational Psychology*, 61: 19-35.
- Rubin K. H and Chung, O. B. (Eds.). (2006) *Parenting Beliefs, Behaviours, and Parent-Child Relations: A Cross-Cultural Perspective*. New York. Sussex: Taylor and Francis Group. LLC.
- Ruff, H. A., & Capozzoli, M. C. (2003) Development of attention and distractibility in the first 4 years of life. *Developmental Psychology*, 39, 877–890.
- SACMEQ. (2005) *The release of the SACMEQ data archives*. Harare. <<http://www.sacmeq.org/access/announce1.pdf>> [Accessed on 1.7.2011].
- Saito, F. (2000) 'Decentralisation in Uganda: Challenges for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century'. Japan: Ryukoku University, <http://www.world.ryukoku.ac.jp/~fumis96/docs/ics2000.pdf> [accessed on 25.01.2013].
- Salkind, N. J. (2008) (Ed.) *Encyclopaedia of Educational Psychology*. Volume 1. LA: Sage.
- Sammons, P., Sylvia, K., Melhuish, E., Siraj-Blatchford, I., Taggart, B., Grabbe, Y. and Barreau, S. (2007) *Effective Pre-school and Primary Education 3-11 project (EPPE 3-11). Summary Report Influences on Children's Attainment and Progress in Key Stage 2: Cognitive Outcomes in Year 5. Depart for Education and Skills*. London: Institute of Education, University of London.
- Sanjek, R. (2000) 'Keeping Ethnographic Alive in an Urbanising World', *Human Organisation*, 59, 3:280-288.
- Sarantakos, S. (2005) *Social Research*. (3rd Ed.). New York: Palgrave, Macmillan.
- Sarantakos, S. (2013) *Social Research*. (4<sup>th</sup> Ed.). New York: Palgrave, Macmillan.
- Saville-Stroike, M. (2006) *Introducing Second Language Acquisition: Bilingual Learning Strategies*. Cambridge: Cambridge university Press.
- Sayer, L. C., Bianchi, S. M., and Robinson, J. P. (2004a) Are parents investing less in children? Trends in mothers' and fathers' time with children. *The American Journal of Sociology*, 110, 1–43.

- Sayer, L., Gauthier, A., and Fursternberg, F. (2004) Educational differences in parents' time with children: Cross-national variation. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 66, 1152–1169.
- Schlechter, M and Milevsky, A. (2009) Parental level of education; associations with psychological well-being, academic achievement, and reasons for pursuing higher education in adolescence. *Education Psychology*, 30: 1, 1-10.
- Schools in Moyo district* <http://schoolguideuganda.com/homing-dove-international-school-47882.html> [12.32012].**
- Seefeldt, C., Denton, K., Galper, A., and Younoszai, T. (1999) The relation between head Start parents' participation in a transition demonstration, education, efficacy and their children's academic abilities. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*.15-45.
- Sejjaaka, S. (2004) *A Political and Economic History of Uganda, 1962-2002*, 5: 88-109.
- Senechal, M., and LeFevre, J. (2002) Parental involvement in the development of children's reading skill: A five-year longitudinal study. *Child Development*, 73, 445-460.
- Sheldon, S. B. (2007). Improving student attendance with school, family, and community partnerships. *Journal of Educational Research*, 100 (5), 267-275.
- Snow, C., Burns, S., and Griffith, P. (Eds.) (1998). *Preventing reading difficulties in young children*. Washington, DC: Academy Press.
- Soprano, A. M. (2003) Evaluation of executive functions in children. *Review of Neurology*, 37, 44–50.
- Spera, C. (2006) Adolescents' perceptions of parental goals, practices, and styles in relations to their motivation and achievement. *Journal of early Adolescence*, 26:4,456-490.
- Steffensen, J., Tidemand, P and Ssewankambo, E. (2004) A Comparative Analysis of Decentralisation in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda; Country Study-Uganda. Final Report, 1, Main Report, DEGE consult (DEGE) and Nordic Consulting Group (NCG), Denmark.

- Stich, T.G. (2012) Educated Parents, Educated Children: Toward a Multiple Life cycles Education Policy. *Canadian Education Association*. [www.cea-ace.ca/educationcanada](http://www.cea-ace.ca/educationcanada) [Accessed on 2013].
- Svejcer, A. D. (1986) *Contemporary Sociolinguistics: Theory, Problems, Methods*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Tashakkori, A and Creswell, J.W. (2007) The new era of mixed methods. *Journal of Mixed Methods*, 1, 1:2-8.
- Tavani, C. M., and Losh, S. C. (2003) Motivation, self-confidence, and expectations as predictors of the academic performances among our high school students. *Child Study Journal*, 33, 141–151.
- Teachman, J. D. (1987) Family background, educational resources and educational attainment. *American Sociological Review*, 52, 548–557.
- Teddlie, C and Tashakkori, A. (2009) *Foundations of Mixed Methods Research: Integrating Quantitative and Qualitative approaches in the social and Behavioural Sciences*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Tesser, A. (1980) Self –esteem maintenance in family dynamics. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 39:77-91
- The Joshua Project. Introduction / History <http://www.joshuaproject.net/people-profile.php?peo3=13196&rog3=UG> [12.3 2012].
- The World Bank. (2009) *Atlas of Global Development: A visual guide to the world's greatest challenges*. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Washington: Collins, World Bank.
- Thomas, A. and Pattison, H. (2007) *How Children Learn At Home*. London: Continuum.
- Tidy, M, and Leeming, D. (1981) *A History of Africa. Volume Two: 1840-1914*. London: Edward Arnold.
- Turner , R.H. (1962) Role-taking: Process versus conformity (20-40) in Rose, A.M (Ed.) *Human Behaviour and Social Process*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Uganda Bureau of Statistics. (2006) ‘The 2002 Uganda population and Housing Census, Education and Literacy, October 2006. Kampala: Uganda.

<http://www.ubos.org/onlinefiles/uploads/ubos/pdf%20documents/2002%20CensusEducAnalyticalReport.pdf> [2.9.2014]

Uganda Radio Network. (2014) 'West Nile to mark centenary as part of Uganda'. Available at <http://ugandaradionetwork.com/a/story.php?s=57504> [Accessed on 20.08.2014]

Uganda's Literacy Rates: Earth Trends Country Profile. Available at [http://earthtrends.wri.org/pdf\\_library/country\\_profiles/pop\\_cou\\_800.pdf](http://earthtrends.wri.org/pdf_library/country_profiles/pop_cou_800.pdf) [15.4.2012]

UNESCO. (2004) *The Quality Imperative. Education For All: Global Monitoring Report 2005*: Statistical Annex, Table x. Paris: UNESCO.

UNESCO. (2005) Education For All Global Monitoring Report. The Quality Imperative. Paris: UNESCO. Available at [http://unesco.org/education/gmr\\_download/chter1.pdf](http://unesco.org/education/gmr_download/chter1.pdf) [19.11.2010].

UNESCO. (2006) Education For All Global Monitoring Report. *Literacy for Life*. Paris: UNESCO. Available at [http://www.unesco.org/education/GMR2006/full.chapt5\\_eng.pdf](http://www.unesco.org/education/GMR2006/full.chapt5_eng.pdf)

UNESCO. (2008) *The Global Literacy Challenge: A profile of youth and adult literacy at the midpoint of the United Nations' Literacy Decade 2003-2012*. De Fonte, France: UNESCO.

UNESCO. (2008a) *Integrated Intergenerational Literacy Project (IILP)* <http://www.unesco.org/uil/litbase/?menu=4&programme=12> [16.04.2011].

UNESCO. (2008b) *The Global Literacy Challenge: A profile of youth and adult literacy at the Mid-point of the United Nations Literacy Decade 2003-2013*. Education Sector Division for the Coordination of United Nations Priorities in Education. Paris: UNESCO.

UNESCO. (2010a) *Education For All Global Monitoring Report 2010, Reaching the Marginalised*. UNESCO, Oxford: University Publishing.

UNESCO. (2010b) Uganda Country Profile [http://stats.uis.unesco.org/unesco/TableViewer/document.aspx?ReportId=121&IF\\_Language=eng&BR\\_Country=8000&BR\\_Region=40540](http://stats.uis.unesco.org/unesco/TableViewer/document.aspx?ReportId=121&IF_Language=eng&BR_Country=8000&BR_Region=40540) [Accessed on 11/12/2012].

- UNESCO. (2011) *Adult Literacy Rates*  
<http://www.uis.unesco.org/FactSheets/Documents/FS16-2011-Literacy-EN.pdf>  
 [10/12/2012].
- UNFPA. (2010) *Promoting Gender Equality*  
<http://www.unfpa.org/gender/empowerment2.htm> United Nations. [Accessed on 3.8.2011].
- UNHCR. (2009) 'IDP Population Movement from Camps, Transit Sites and Villages of Origin by sub region as of 2009'.  
[http://www.internaldisplacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/httpCountry\\_Maps?ReadForm&country=Uganda&count=10000](http://www.internaldisplacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/httpCountry_Maps?ReadForm&country=Uganda&count=10000) [Accessed on 19.3.2012].
- UNICEF. (2012) *Uganda Fast Facts*  
[http://www.unicef.org/uganda/UNICEF\\_Uganda\\_Keeping\\_Children\\_Alive\\_Safe\\_and\\_Learning\\_2012%281%29.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/uganda/UNICEF_Uganda_Keeping_Children_Alive_Safe_and_Learning_2012%281%29.pdf) [9<sup>th</sup> September 2012]
- USAID and WFP. (2010) 'Ethiopia food insecurity outlook update, Famine Early Warning Systems network' (FEWNET) Internet  
[http://www.few.net/docs/Publications/Ethiopia\\_FSOU\\_05\\_2010final.pdf](http://www.few.net/docs/Publications/Ethiopia_FSOU_05_2010final.pdf) [Accessed on 15.8.2010].
- USAID. (1995) 'Overview of USAID Basic Education Programs in Sub-Saharan Africa II: Human Resources and Democracy Division Office of Sustainable Development Bureau for Africa U.S'. *Agency for International Development*. No 13.
- Van Maanen, J. (1988) *Tales of the Field. On Writing Ethnography*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Vandell, D. L. (2000) Parents, peer groups, and other socialising influences. *Developmental Psychology*. 36, 699-710.
- Vellymalay, S. K. N. (2010) Parental Involvement in Children's Education: Does Parents' Education Level Really Matter? *European Journal of Social Sciences*, 16, 3:430-440.
- Vygotsky, L. (1962) *Thought and Language*. Cambridge. Mass.: MT Press. (original work published in 1934).

- Vygotsky, L.S (1978) *Mind in Society: The Development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Wa Thiong'o, N. (1986) *Decolonising the Mind: the Politics of Language in African Literature*. Oxford: James Currey Ltd.
- Wade, B., and Moore, M. (2000) A sure start with books. *Early Years*, 20: 39-46.
- Walker, J. L. (2001) A qualitative study of parents' experiences of providing sex education for their children: the implications for health education. *Health Education Journal*, 60: 132. Internet <http://sagepub.com/content/60/2/132> [Accessed on 2012].
- Walubiri, M. (2011) Sunrise: *Communication for Development*. 24<sup>th</sup> March 2011, Uganda. <http://www.sunrise.ug/blogs/87-moses-walubiri/2134-are-natural-disasters-an-indicator-of-gods-wrath.html> [9.4.2012].
- Wambolt, F., and Reiss, D. (1989) 'Task performance and social construction of meaning: Juxtaposing normality with contemporary family research. In Offer, D. and Sabshin, M (Eds.), *Normality: Context and theory* (p.2-40). New York: Basic Books.
- Warom-Okello, F. (2014) 'A ferry linking people separated by nature', *New Vision, Uganda's Daily Newspaper*. Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> July 2014.
- Wayne, K and Miskel, C. G. (2005) *Educational Administration: Theory, Research and Practice*. Boston: McGraw Hill.
- Webb, E. J., Campbell, D. T., Schwartz, R. D and Sechrest, L. (1966) *Unobtrusive Measures: Nonreactive Research in the Social Sciences*. Chicago: Ill.: Rand McNally.
- Weinreb, L., Wehler, C., Perloff, J., Scott, R., Hosmer, D., Sagor, L. and Gundersen, C. (2002) Hunger: Its Impact on Children's Health and Mental Health. *Paediatric*, 110, 4:41.
- Wells, G. (2009) *The Meaning Makers. Learning to Talk and Talking to Learn* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- White, K. R. (1982). The relation between socioeconomic status and academic achievement. *Psychological Bulletin*, 91, 461-481.
- Wilkinson, D and Birmingham, P. (2003) *Using Research Instruments: A Guide for Researchers*. London and New York: Routledge Falmer.

- Williams, A and Gregory, E. (2009) 'Siblings Bridging Literacies in Multilingual Contexts'. In Soler, J., Fletcher-Cambell, F., and Reid, G., (85-100) *Understanding Difficulties in Literacy Development: Issues and Concepts*. London: Sage.
- Winkler, D and Sondergaard, L. (2008) The Efficiency of Public Education in Uganda. Available at <http://info.worldbank.org/etools/docs/library/244476/day7Uganda%20Efficiency%20Study.pdf> Accessed on 5.9.2014.
- Wolfe, B, and Haveman, R. (2002) *Social and Non-market Benefit from Education in an Advanced Economy*. Paper presented at Education in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Meeting the Challenges of a Changing World. Federal Reserve Bank of Boston (Conference Series 47). Boston, MA.
- World Bank income group – low income (Global Health Observatory, 2014) [http://www.who.int/countryfocus/cooperation\\_strategy/ccsbrief\\_uga\\_en.pdf](http://www.who.int/countryfocus/cooperation_strategy/ccsbrief_uga_en.pdf) [Accessed on 10.07.2014]
- World Bank. (1993) *Uganda: The Challenge of Growth and Poverty Reduction*. Washington.
- World Bank. (2004) *World Development Report: Making services work for poor people*. Washington D. C. World Bank.
- World Bank. (2013) Government of Uganda: Projects to Support Primary Education through the Global Partnership for Education Project. Uganda.
- World Food Programme . (2010) 'Feed minds, change lives: School feeding, the millennium Development Goals and girls' empowerment'. The Addis Ababa Education For All declaration.
- Yin, R. (2009) (4<sup>th</sup> Ed.) *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. London: SAGE.
- Zhang, Y. (2005) "Rural-Urban Gaps in Grade 6 Reading Literacy Scores in Sub-Saharan Africa: Unequal Opportunities and Unequal results". Paper presented at the 2005 *International Education Policy Research Conference*. Paris.
- Zhou, M and Kim, S. S. (2006) 'Community Forces, Social Capital, and Educational Achievement: The Case of Supplementary Education in the Chinese and Korean Immigrant Communities.' *Harvard Educational Review*, 76:1-29.



# Appendices

## Appendix 1 - Questionnaire for Pupils

**RESPONDENT'S NAME/CODE** \_\_\_\_\_

**FAMILY NAME/CODE** \_\_\_\_\_

**SUB-COUNTY & VILLAGE** \_\_\_\_\_

**DATE** \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions:**

Please, write in the spaces provided or tick in the appropriate box for your responses to the question or statements below.

**PART A: PUPIL'S FAMILY BACKGROUND**

1. What age are you? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What does your father do? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What does your mother do? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Is it your first year in primary six? YES  NO
5. Did you repeat any class before? YES  NO

**If YES, answer question 6 and 7a BUT if NO, please, answer question 7b below.**

6. Which class or classes did you repeat and how many times, show by ticking in the box under the class you have repeated, where  $\surd$ =once,  $\surd\surd$ = twice, and  $\surd\surd\surd$  = three times or  $\surd-\surd$  for more than three times.

Class	P.1	P.2	P.3	P.4	P.5
Repeat (how many times?)					

7. a) Please, rate the following statements closest to the reason(s) for repeating classes by ticking in the boxes under YES or No.

No.		YES	NO
a	I find exams difficult		
b	I am able to read and understand questions in English		
c	I am able to express my ideas in the local language only		
d	I am able to express my ideas in English		
e	I am able to ask the teacher in class about what I do not understand		
f	I am able to express myself in writing in English		
g	My teacher is patient with me to explain what I do not understand		
h	My parents provide all the text books I need for my school work		
i	My elder brothers and sisters assist me in my homework		
j	My parents give me time to revise at home		
k	My siblings (younger sisters and brothers) disturb me at home		

**b) Other reasons for having to repeat a class**

(specify) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7. b) If you never repeated any class, please, tick the statements YES or NO that shows the reason which helped you to pass to the next class from primary one to five.

No.	Reasons	YES	NO
a	I find exams easy		

b	I attend classes regularly		
c	I am able to read and understand questions in English		
d	I am able to express my ideas in English		
e	I always ask my teacher what I do not understand		
f	My teacher is patient with me and explains to me what I do not understand		
g	My parents help me with my homework		
h	My parents provide all the books I need for my school work		
i	My parents give me time to study at home		
j	My parents check my school work every day		
k	My elder brother/sister assists me with my homework		
l	I assist my younger brother/sister with their school work		
m	I have a proper place to study at home		
n	I have less family duties to do after school		
o	There are books for me to read at home		
p	My parents' level of education is good so they support me in my school work		
q	My parents provide for my well-being (food, health, home, money etc.)		

**PART E PUPIL'S EXPERIENCE OF THEIR PARENTS' INVOLVEMENT IN THEIR EDUCATION**

8. On the scale of 1-4, where 1= Always; 2 = Often; 3 = Rarely; 4 = Never, please, rate the following statements regarding your parents' involvement in your school work.

	<b>Parental duties</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
a	ensure that I go to school every day				
b	keep track of my progress at school				
c	pay part of the cost of my education on time				
d	take an active role in monitoring my school work				
e	discuss school progress with me at home				
f	visit me at school				
g	provide place and time for me to study at home				
h	participate in the construction of buildings in my school				
i	know about my friends				
j	discuss my progress with my teacher at the school				
k	allow me to participate in extracurricular activities at school				
l	help me with my homework				
m	take care of my health				

In my experience, my parents:

### **SEMI-STRUCTURED QUESTIONS**

9. List three things your parents are doing for you which you think help you to do well in school. Please, start with the most important.

- i. \_\_\_\_\_
- ii. \_\_\_\_\_
- iii. \_\_\_\_\_

10. In relation to the level of your parents' education, write three things you want your parents to do for you which can help you do well in school. Please, start with the most important.

- i. \_\_\_\_\_
- ii. \_\_\_\_\_
- iii. \_\_\_\_\_

11. Do you think your parents' level of education helps you in your schooling?

YES  NO.  Write how it is helping or not helping.

---

---

12. Do your parents think school is important?

YES  NO  Write the reasons why you think so?

---

---

13. How do you think you have contributed to your own academic progress at school?

Please, write what you have done.

---

---

14. How ready are you about sitting your primary leaving exams next year? Give reasons.

---

---

Thank you.

Sr. Alice Jurugo Drajea. SHS.

University of Dublin, Trinity College, Dublin. Ireland. Tel: +353 85 7157596 E-mail:  
[drajeaa@tcd.ie](mailto:drajeaa@tcd.ie)

## Appendix 2 - Questionnaire for Headteachers

Name (Pseudonym): \_\_\_\_\_

Name of school: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Venue: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### A Biographical and Professional details about the Headteachers

1. What is your qualification? \_\_\_\_\_
2. How many years ha you served as a teacher? \_\_\_\_\_
3. How many years have you taught in this school? \_\_\_\_\_
4. How many years have you served as headteacher? \_\_\_\_\_
5. How many years have you served as headteacher in this school?
6. What reasons would you say made you take teaching profession?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### B Headteacher's knowledge about parents

1. On the scale of 1= Always; 2 = Often; 3 = Rarely; 4 = Never; please rate the following statements regarding parental involvement in their child's school work.

In your experience do parents:

	Parental role	Always	Often	Rarely	Never
1	Ensure that their child goes to school				
2	Keep track of their child's progress at school				
3	Meet part of the cost of education				
4	Take an active role in monitoring their child's school work				
5	Discuss school progress with their child				
6	Visit school administration to discuss their child's progress at school				
7	Provide place and time for their child to study at home				

8	Participate in the construction of buildings at school				
9	Know about their child's friends in and outside of school				
10	Participate in the planning process in the school about how their child should be taught				
11	Provide advice to school administration				
12	Build healthy parent-teacher alliance				
13	Contribute towards health facilities in the school				
14	Participate in maintaining school discipline				

### C Headteacher - Parent Relationship

1. How do you describe your relationship with parents? Please tick one box.

- Very good
- Good
- Fair
- Difficult
- No relationship

2. In what form, if any, do parents communicate with you about their child and their activities at school? Please tick all that apply.

- Personal visit to Headteacher's office
- Written communication
- Telephone
- Verbally through child
- No communication

3. Please tick in the space provided how you communicate with parents:

- Parental Interview
- Written communication
- Telephone
- Verbally through child
- No communication



4. Please tick the relevant statement to indicate how often you conduct PTA meetings in your school?

- Once a year
- Once every term
- Once a month
- Only when there is an emergency

5. Please tick the relevant statement as to how you would describe parents' response to PTA meetings. Do you think parents regard the meetings as:

- Important
- Quite important
- Not important

6. What percentage of parents regularly attend PTA meetings?

%	Please tick:
75-100	
50-74	
25-49	
0-25	

7. What reasons do parents provide for not attending PTA meetings? (e.g. *lack of time, language incompetency, knowledge-based factors, lack of interest, relevance*).

---



---

8. What do you do to motivate/encourage/involve parents to participate in their child's school activities?

---

---

9. Have these efforts been effective? Please comment.

---

---

10. In order of importance, list the issues that are often discussed in relation to a pupil's achievement.

---

**D Headeacher's perception about pupil's background**

Rate the following factors from 1-5 (1=very important; 2= important; 3= not sure; 4=less important; 5=not at all).

11. In your experience, to what extent do the following non-school related factors impact on pupils' performance at school?

Please tick in the box that closely expresses your answer.

No.	Non-school factors	VI	I	NS	LI	NA
1	Health of child					
2	Nutrition of child					
3	Completed homework					
4	Family support					
5	Peer group support in the neighbourhood					
6	Coming from a good neighbourhood					
7	Coming from a bad neighbourhood					
8	Community support in the pupil's life					
9	Parental supervision					
10	Reasonable family income					
11	External support (State, LEA and community)					
12	Parenting style					
13	Pupils personal interest in school work					
14	Parents' education/literacy skills					

12 On a ranking of 1 =*Very likely*; 2= *Not likely*; 3= *Make no difference*, in your opinion and experience, to what extent do you think the following home-based factors hinder the sixth grade pupils from getting prepared for their Primary Leaving Examinations (PLE).

Please tick once in the row of boxes under the number that best expresses your opinion and experience with regards to the statements provided:

	<b>Hindering Home-based factors</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
1	Frequent absenteeism from school			
2	Rebellious behaviour			
3	A lack of parental supervision			
4	I 'don't-care' attitude about school			
5	Peer groups that do not have positive attitude to school work			
6	Burden of domestic responsibilities			
7	A lack of reading materials at home			
8	A lack of proficiency in the English language			
9	Parents being educated with literacy skills			
10	Parents not being educated and without literacy skills			

**E Headteachers' experiences of external support for parents**

13. What efforts, if any, in your experience have been made by the following to support parents in improving pupil educational achievement in the Moyo District?

a) State: \_\_\_\_\_

b) Local Education Authority: \_\_\_\_\_

c) School: \_\_\_\_\_

d) Community: \_\_\_\_\_

15. Which of these efforts have been most successful and why?

---

---

16. In what other ways do you think, State, local education office, school, and community can cooperate with parents in raising pupils' academic performance in the Moyo District?

---

17. Any other comment you would like to make in relation to the relationship between parents' education/literacy skills and their child's school environment in the Moyo District.

COMMENT:

**Thank you for your time and insightful contribution.**

**Sr Alice Drajea**

## Appendix 3 - Questionnaire Schedule for Teachers

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

School Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Venue: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### **A Biographical and Professional Details about the Teachers**

1. What is your qualification? \_\_\_\_\_
2. How many years ha you served as a teacher? \_\_\_\_\_
3. How many years have you taught in this school? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What reasons would you say made you take teaching profession?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### **B Teacher-Pupil Relationship**

1. On a scale of 1 to 4 where 1= always; 2=often; 3= rarely; and 4= Never, please tick

N0.	Questions	1	2	3	4
1	How often do you assign homework to pupils?				
2	Do children complete this work on time as expected?				
3	If they do, are they helped by their parents?				

2. If they don't, what reasons do pupils give for not completing their homework?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. What do you do to motivate/encourage pupils to doing their homework?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### **C Teacher's knowledge about pupils' home background**

1. Rate the following factors from 1-5 where 1=very important; 2= important; 3= not sure; 4=less important; 5=not at all.

In your experience, to what extent do the following non-school related factors impact on pupils' performance at school?

Please tick in the box under the number that closely expresses your answer.

No.	Non-school factors	VI	I	NS	LI	NA
1	Health of child					
2	Nutrition of child					
3	Completed homework					
4	Family support					
5	Peer group support in the neighbourhood					
6	Coming from a good neighbourhood					
7	Coming from a bad neighbourhood					
8	Community support in the pupil's life					
9	Parental supervision					
10	Reasonable family income					
11	External support (State, LEA and community)					
12	Parenting style					
13	Pupils personal interest in school work					
14	Parents' education/literacy skills					

2. On a ranking of 1 =*Very likely*; 2= *Not likely*; 3= *Make no difference*, in your opinion and experience, to what extent do you think the following home-based factors hinder the sixth grade pupils from getting prepared for their Primary Leaving Examinations (PLE).

Please tick once in the row of boxes under the number that best expresses your opinion and experience with regards to the statements provided:

	<b>Hindering home-based factors</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
1	Frequent absenteeism from school			
2	Rebellious behaviour			

3	A lack of parental supervision			
4	I don't-care attitude about school			
5	Peer groups that do not have positive attitude to school work			
6	Burden of too many domestic responsibilities			
7	A lack of reading materials at home			
8	A lack of proficiency in the English language			
9	Parents being educated with literacy skills			
10	Parents not being educated and without literacy skills			

### **D Teacher's knowledge about parents**

1. On the scale of 1 to 4 where 1= Always; 2 = Often; 3 = Rarely; 4 = Never; please rate the following statements regarding parental involvement in their child's school work.

In your experience do parents:

	<b>Parental roles</b>	<b>Always</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Rarely</b>	<b>Never</b>
1	Ensure that their child goes to school				
2	Keep track of their child's progress at school				
3	Meet part of the cost of education				
4	Take an active role in monitoring their child's school work				
5	Discuss school progress with their child				
6	Visit school administration to discuss their child's progress at school				
7	Provide place and time for their child to study at home				

8	Participate in the construction of buildings at school				
9	Know about their child's friends in and outside of school				
10	Participate in the planning process in the school about how their child should be taught				
11	Provide advice to school administration				
12	Build healthy parent-teacher alliance				
13	Contribute towards health facilities in the school				
14	Participate in maintaining school discipline				

### **E Teacher - Parent Relationship**

1. How would you describe your relationship with the parents of your pupils? Please tick one box.

- Very good
- Good
- Fair
- Difficult
- No relationship

2. In what form, if any, do parents communicate with you about their child and their activities at school?

- Personal interview at school
- Written communication
- Telephone
- Verbally through child
- No communication



3. Please tick in the space provided how you communicate with parents:

Personal interview at school ( )

Written communication ( )

Telephone ( )

Verbally through child ( )

No communication ( )

4. Any other comments you would like to make in relation to the relationship between parents' education/literacy skills and their child's school environment in Moyo District.

COMMENT:

Thank you for your time and insightful contribution.

Sr Alice Drajea

## Appendix 4 - Questionnaire for Senior Community Members (SCM)

1. Rate the following as activities parents engage in connection to their children's education, where 1= always; 2=often; 3=rarely; and 4=never.

	<b>Parental role</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
1	Ensure that their child goes to school				
2	Keep track of their child's progress at school				
3	Meet part of the cost of education				
4	Take an active role in monitoring their child's school work				
5	Discuss school progress with their child				
6	Visit school administration to discuss their child's progress at school?				
7	Provide place and time for their child to study at home				
8	Participate in the construction of buildings at school				
9	Know about their child's friends in and outside of school				
10	Participate in the planning process in the school about how their child should be taught				
11	Provide advice to school administration				
12	Build healthy parent-teacher alliance				
13	Contribute towards health facilities in the school				
14	Read their child's work at home				
15	Have their child read to them at home				
16	Encourage their child about education				
17	Are exemplary to their children about education matters				

20	Provide scholastic materials for their children at home				
21	Care about the health of their children				
22	Provide lunch for their child during school term				
23	Listen to their child's needs				

2. Are you involved in PTA meetings, and how often?
3. What percentage of parents regularly attend PTA meetings?
4. What reasons do parents give for not attending PTA meetings?
5. What do you do as a community member to encourage/advise/motivate parents to participate in their children's school activities?
6. What issues are often discussed in the PTA meetings in relation to pupils' achievement?
7. What issues are often discussed at PTA meetings regarding parents' role in their children's education?
8. What provision, if any, do you know have been put in place in the community by state, local education office, school and community towards the improvement of pupils' educational achievement in Moyo district?
9. In what other ways do you think state, local education office, school and community can cooperate with parents in raising pupils' academic performance in Moyo district?
10. What home-based factors do you think hinder primary pupils from getting prepared for their primary leaving examinations?

Senior community members' perception about pupils' home

background: Rate the following factors where 1=very important;

2=important; 3=not sure; 4=less important and 5=not at all.

#### **Non-school factors affecting a pupil's performance in school**

S/N	Non-school factors	1	2	3	4	5
1	Health of child					
2	Nutrition					
3	Family support					
4	Reasonable family economic status					
5	Peer group support in the neighbourhood					
6	Coming from a good neighbourhoods					
7	External support (State, LEA, Community)					

8	Parenting style					
9	Parental supervision					
10	Pupil's personal interest					
11	Domestic responsibilities					
12	Stability in the family					
13	Parents' education and literacy skills					

11. Other comments

**Thank you for participating in this questionnaire**

**Sr. Alice**

## Appendix 5 - Questionnaire for the District Education Officer (DEO)

### Particulars about the district education officer (respondent)

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Location:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Qualifications:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Number of years in the field education:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Number of years in service as DEO in this District:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Reasons for becoming an educator:** \_\_\_\_\_

### **B The District Education Officer's knowledge about parents**

1. Rate the following statements regarding parental involvement in their child's school work, where 1= Always; 2 = Often; 3 = Rarely; 4 = Never; please.

In your experience, do parents:

	<b>Parental duties</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
a	Ensure that their child goes to school				
b	Keep track of their child's progress at school				
c	Meet part of the cost of education				
d	Take an active role in monitoring their child's school work				
e	Discuss school progress with their child				
f	Visit school administration/teachers to discuss their child's progress at school				
g	Provide place and time for their child to study at home				
h	Participate in the construction of buildings at school				
i	Know about their child's friends in and outside of school				
j	Participate in the planning process in the school				

k	tender advice to school administration?				
l	build healthy parent-teacher alliance?				
m	contribute towards health facilities in the school?				
n	participate in maintaining school discipline?				

2. What do you do as a local education officer to encourage/advise parents to participate in their children's school activities?

---



---

3. Have these efforts been effective? If yes, (a) in what ways? \_\_\_\_\_ (b) if not effective, why have they failed?

---

4. In your experience, to what extent do you think the following non-school related factors affect pupil performance at school? Where 1=very important, 2=important, 3=no important, 4=don't know

**Factors affecting a pupil's performance in school**

S/N	Non-school factors	1	2	3	4
a	Health of child				
b	Nutrition of child				
c	Family support				
d	Reasonable family economic status				
e	Peer group support in the neighbourhood				
f	Coming from a good neighbourhoods				
g	External support (State, LEA, Community)				
h	Parenting style				
i	Parental supervision				
j	Pupil's personal interest				
k	Domestic responsibilities				
l	Stability in the family				
m	Parents' education and literacy skills				

5. Rate the following statements regarding the extent to which home-based factors hinder primary pupils from getting prepared for their Primary Leaving Examination (PLE)?

Where 1= Always; 2 = Often; 3 = Rarely; 4 = Never;

In your opinion to what extent do the following statement affect pupils from getting prepared for their Primary Leaving Examination:

S/N	Hindering home-based factors to pupils	1	2	3	4
a	rebellious behaviour by the child				
b	distraction in the community (e.g. night dances, video shows, market).				
c	lack of parental supervision				
d	'don't-care' attitude about school				
e	peer groups that do not have positive attitude to school work				
f	domestic responsibilities				
g	lack of reading materials at home				
h	lack of proficiency in the English language				
i	parents being educated with literacy skills				
j	parents not being educated without literacy skills				
k	frequent absenteeism from school				
l	domestic conflict/problems				

6. What efforts, if any, in your experience have been made by the following to support parents in improving pupil educational achievement in the Moyo District?

State: \_\_\_\_\_

Local Education Authority (LEA): \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

Community: \_\_\_\_\_

7. Which of these efforts have been most successful, and
- a) why? \_\_\_\_\_
- b) which of these efforts have not been successful and why?  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. In what other ways do you think, State, local education office, school, and community could cooperate with parents in raising pupils' academic performance in the Moyo District? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Any other comment you would like to make in relation to the relationship between parents' education/literacy skills and their children's school achievement in Moyo district.

COMMENT
---------

**Thank you for your time and insightful contribution.**  
**Sr Alice Jurugo Drajea**



# Interviews

## Appendix 6a - Semi-structured Interview Schedule with Parents

### Family Environment Schedule: Part A

1. Date of interview \_\_\_\_\_
2. Name/code \_\_\_\_\_
3. Home address or Village \_\_\_\_\_
4. Name of sub-county \_\_\_\_\_
5. Name of the child \_\_\_\_\_
6. Age of child \_\_\_\_\_
7. School attended by child \_\_\_\_\_
8. Length of interview \_\_\_\_\_
9. Who was interviewed? (circle appropriate number):

mother            1

father            2

both parents    3

other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

10. How many children are in the family? Please, circle the number.

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10      11      12

(specify) \_\_\_\_\_

i) How many boys? \_\_\_\_\_

ii) How many girls? \_\_\_\_\_

iii) What are their expected responsibilities at home if the children are still at school?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

11. What formal educational level have you reached?

	<i>Mother</i>	<i>Father</i>
1) Degree and higher qualifications	1	1
2) High certificate and some qualification	2	2
3) High school without qualification	3	3
4) Ordinary level with semi-skills	4	4
5) Primary level, unskilled	5	5

**SPEAKING: ASSESSING THE SKILLS OF SPEAKING FOR PARENTS AND CHILDREN**

12. What language is generally spoken in the home?

The ethnic language (Ma'di) 1, English 2, Swahili 3, other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**12 (a) THE LOCAL LANGUAGE.**

- i. Can you speak in the local language? YES  NO
- ii. What level are you at speaking in the local language?  
1. excellent  2. good  3. moderat  4. poor
- iii. Is it important for you to speak in the local language?  YES  NO Why do you think it is important? \_\_\_\_\_
- iv. Can X speak in the local language? YES  NO
- v. What level is X able to speak in the local language?  
1. excellent  2. goo  3. moderate  4. poor
- vi. Is it important for X to be able to speak in the local language?  
 YES  NO

Why do you think it is important? Please explain \_\_\_\_\_

**13 (b) SPEAKING ENGLISH**

- i. Can you speak in the English language? YES  NO
- ii. What level are you at speaking in the English language?  
1. excellent  2. good  3. moderate  4. poor
- iii. Is it important for you to be able to speak in English language?  YES  NO  
Why do you think it is important? Please, explain \_\_\_\_\_
- iv. Can X speak in the English language? YES  NO
- v. What level is X able to speak in the local language?  
1. excellent  2. Good  3. mo  rate  4. poor

vi. Is it important for X to be able to speak in the English language? Why do you think it is important?

14. When you are speaking with X what language would you use most of the time?

	<i>Father</i>	<i>mother</i>
Ma'di	1	1
English	2	2
Swahili	3	3
Other languages (specify) _____		

15. When X is talking with brothers and sisters or with other children in the home, what language does X generally use?

	<i>Brothers and sisters</i>	<i>other</i>
Ma'di	1	1
English	2	2
Swahili	3	3
Other languages (specify) _____		

16. How important is it to you that X should learn to speak English fluently?

<i>Mother</i>	<i>Father</i>	
1	1	extremely important
2	2	important
3	3	not really important
4	4	don't care

### 17. a) **READING THE LOCAL LANGUAGE**

Reading is an important aspect in literacy. This section will explore parents' and children's reading skills

i. Can you read in the local language? Yes  No.

ii. What level are you at reading the local language?

1. excellent 2.  good 3.  moderate  4. poor

iii. Is it important for you to be able to read in the local language? S No  
Why do you think it is important?

---

---

iv. Can X read in the local language? YES  NO

v. What level is X able to read in the local language?

1. excellent  2. good  3. moderate  4. poor

Is it important for x to be able to read in the local language? YES  NO  Why do you think it is important?

v. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### 17 b) READING IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

i. Can you read in English? YES  NO

ii. What level are you at reading in the English language? 1. excellent  2. good   
3. moderate  4. poor

vi. Is it important for you to be able to read in English language? S NO  
Why do you think it is important?

---

---

iii. Can X read in the English language? YES  NO

iv. What level is X able to read in English language

1. excellent  2. Good  3. moderate  4. poor

v. Is it important for X to be able to read in English language? S NO.  
Why do you think it is important? Please, explain \_\_\_\_\_

a. Do you think there is a connection between your reading ability in (a) local?  
and (b) English language? and X's performance in school? S NO

Please, explain the

connection. \_\_\_\_\_

---

d) Do you think there  a connection between X's reading ability and her/his attitude to his/her education? YES NO How does being able to read assist X in her/his schoolwork? Please explain the connection.

---



---



---

18. How important is it to you that X should learn to read in English fluently?

<i>Mother</i>	<i>Father</i>	
1	1	extremely important
2	2	important
3	3	not important
4	4	don't care

19. Do you have time to read books yourself? YES  NO  If yes, how many books would you generally read in a month? *Mother*

*Father*

1	1 none
2	2 one
3	3 two
4	4 three
5	5 more than 4

21. When X was small, before s/he started school, did you read to her/him?

<i>Mother</i>	<i>Father</i>	
1	1	never
2	2	not very often
3	3	about once
4	4	a couple of times a week

22. a) Do you read any of the following? How often do you read them?

Newspaper  very day

magazines	<input type="checkbox"/>	once a week	<input type="checkbox"/>
Leaflets/brochures	<input type="checkbox"/>	once a month	<input type="checkbox"/>
Religious books	<input type="checkbox"/>	never	<input type="checkbox"/>
Letters	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Notices from school	<input type="checkbox"/>		

23. If you did not read to X, did you tell stories to him/her?  YES  NO

<i>Mother</i>	<i>Father</i>	<i>Grandparents</i>		
1	1	1	no	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	2	2	not very often	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	3	3	once a week	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	4	4	a couple of times a week	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	5	5	everyday	<input type="checkbox"/>

24. In what language does X generally read to you, if s/he does?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Ma'di	English	Swahili	other language (specify) _____

25. Does X bring home books to read, either from local library, school library, or from friends? YES  NO  If yes, how many each month?

- 1) no books brought home, or I don't know
- 2) 1 or 2 books (very rarely)
- 3) 3 to 5 a month
- 4) About two a week
- 5) More than 5 a week

**26. WRITING**

i. Can you write in the local language? YES No

ii. What level is your writing at in the local language?

1 excellent  2 good  3 moderate  4 poor

iii. Is it important for you to be able to write in the local language?  No

Why  you think it is important?

---



---

---

iv. Can X write in the local language? YES  NO

v. What level is X able to write in the local language?

excellent

good

moderate

poor

vi. Is it important for X to be able to write in the local language? YES  NO  Why do you think it is important?

b) English

i. Can you write in the English language? YES  NO

ii. What level is your writing ability in English language?

1 excellent

2 good

3 moderate

4 poor

iii. Is it important for you to be able to write in the English language?

YES  NO  Why do you think it is important?

---

---

iv. Can x write in English language? YES  NO

v. What level is X able to write in English language?

1. excellent  2. good  3. moderate  4. poor

vi. Is it important for x to be able to write in English language? YES  NO

vii. Why do you think it is important?

---

---

---

b. Do you think there is a connection between your ability to write in

(a) local and X's performance in school? YES  NO  and

(b) English language and X's performance in school? YES  NO  Explain the connection.



---

---

---

---

d) Do you think there is a connection between your ability to be able to write in

(a) local language

(b) English and X's attitude to writing in his/her education? YES  NO

Explain the connection. \_\_\_\_\_

c) How important is it to you that x should learn to write in English fluently?

<i>Mother</i>	<i>Father</i>	
1	1	extremely important
2	2	important
3	3	not really important
4	4	don't care

**LISTENING**

27. Do you listen to x read to you at home? If yes, how often?

<i>Mother</i>	<i>Father</i>	
1	1	everyday
2	2	several times a week
3	3	once a week
4	4	rarely
5	5	never

28. Is there anyone else reading to X in the home? YES  NO

i. Who? \_\_\_\_\_

ii. How often? \_\_\_\_\_

1	1 everyday
2	2 several times
3	3 once a week
4	4 not very oft

5 5 Never

29. How important is it to you that X should be able to understand the English language?

<i>Mother</i>	<i>Father</i>	
1	1	extremely important
2	2	important
<i>Mother</i>	<i>Father</i>	
3	3	not really important
4	4	don't know
5	5	don't care

30. What other learning activities, if any, does X engage in at home?

1.very regularly 2.occasionally 3. very seldom 4.never

	1	2	3	4
1. Watch TV	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Listen to radio	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Read newspapers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Play with friends /siblings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. Other activities (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**SECTION C. Parent's knowledge about their child's school**

31. How satisfied would you say you are with the school that X attends?

very satisfied	1	reasonably satisfied	2	not really satisfied	3
very dissatisfied	4	don't know	5	don't care	6
other (specify)	_____				

32. How do you respond to the following statements about X's school: would you agree where 1=strongly agree, 2=agree , 3=don't know, 4=disagree, 5=disagree strongly.

AS   A   DN   D   DS

No.	Statements about child's school	1	2	3	4	5
a	there is enough homework					
b	the home work is marked					
c	there is good discipline					
d	children are friendly					
e	enough time is spent on academic activities					
f	enough time is spent on reading and mathematics					
g	teachers are approachable and willing to talk to parents about their children's progress					
h	teachers treat children with respect and care					
i	the methods of teaching are effective and not overly academic					
j	there is enough teaching time					
k	I receive enough information about X's performance in his/her schoolwork					

33. In what language do you think the children should be taught when they are at the age of 10 and 11? Please tick one of the following, and say why?

- a) Totally in the local language
- b) Mainly in the local language with some English
- c) About half English and half local language
- d) Mainly in English and some local language
- e) Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

34. Since X's school attendance, i. do you think his/her English has improved enough to pass his/her primary leaving examination next year? YES  NO

ii. Would you describe X's English as:

very fluent  quite fluent  moderate ability  very little English

**Literate home environment: Part C**

37. a) How often is English spoken in the home environment?

*Mother    Father    Child*

- |   |   |   |                  |
|---|---|---|------------------|
| 1 | 1 | 1 | all the time     |
| 2 | 2 | 2 | most of the time |
| 3 | 3 | 3 | half the time    |
| 4 | 4 | 4 | rarely           |
| 5 | 5 | 5 | never            |

b) How particular would you say you are about the way X speaks English (good vocabulary, correct grammar and tenses...) [very strict, quite strict, not too particular, don't really care, unable to help, or other answer]

*Mother    Father*

- |   |   |                    |
|---|---|--------------------|
| 1 | 1 | very strict        |
| 2 | 2 | quite strict       |
| 3 | 3 | not too particular |
| 4 | 4 | don't really care  |
| 5 | 5 | unable to help     |

38. How confident are you in your own ability in reading, writing, listening and understanding of English to be able to help X in her/his school work at home?

- |                      |       |                   |   |
|----------------------|-------|-------------------|---|
| very satisfied       | 1     | very dissatisfied | 4 |
| reasonably satisfied | 2     | don't know        | 5 |
| not satisfied        | 3     | don't care        | 6 |
| other (specify)      | _____ |                   |   |

**Parent responsibilities towards child's education**

39. On the scale of 1= Always; 2 = Often; 3 = Rarely; 4 = Never; please rate the following statements regarding your involvement in your child's school work.

S.N	Parent	1	2	3	4
a	I ensure that X goes to school every day.				

b	I keep track of X's progress at school.				
c	I pay part of the cost of X's education on time.				
d	I take an active role in monitoring x's school work.				
e	I discuss school progress with X at home.				
f	I visit X at school.				
g	I provide place and time for x to study at home.				
h	I participate in the construction of buildings in X's school.				
i	I know about X's friends.				
j	I discuss X's progress with the teacher at the school.				
k	I allow X to participate in extracurricular activities at school.				
l	I help x with his/her homework				
m	I take care of X's health?				

40. How often do you discuss X's progress at school with X's teacher?

1. Never discuss progress
2. once a year
3. once a month
4. once a week
5. Every school day

41. When you see that x is having difficulty with something she/he is doing (like reading, doing homework) what would you do?

*Mother*

*Father*

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| 1 | 1 | generally do it for x  |
| 2 | 2 | sit down with x and help   |
| 3 | 3 | offer to help  |
| 4 | 4 | wait for x to ask for help, and then show x how to do it                       |
| 5 | 5 | wait for x to ask for help but insist<br>that x continues to it by him/herself |
| 6 | 6 | would offer to help but I can't  |

**Thank you very much for your time and insightful responses.**

**Sr. Drajea Alice. SHS.**

## Appendix Interview 6.b - Schedule for Parents

**Parents' perception about their own education and literacy skills in relation to their children's educational achievement in school**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Family Code:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Interviewee:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Time** \_\_\_\_\_

1. In your view, do you say there is or there is no difference in having educated parents with good literacy skills in relation to how well their children do in school?
2. What role, do you say, parents with education and literacy skills play in their children's school success as compared to parents with low or no literacy skills?
3. Did your parents value education, and what role did they play?
4. Did your parents influenced your career?
5. Does your education make a difference in your own family, and in what ways?
6. How could parents with low level of education and limited literacy skills be helped, and by whom so that they are able to support their children in school?
7. What could be done for children whose parents' education levels and literacy skills cannot support their academic progress, and by whom?
8. Any other comment you would like to make?

## Appendix 7 - Interview Schedule with Educators

**Deputy Commissioner for Primary Education at the national level, the district Education officer (DEO), Head teachers, Teachers and Senior Community Members (SCM)**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Location:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Position:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Time** \_\_\_\_\_

**Please give as accurate answers to these questions as you possibly can.**

1. Do you say there is, or is no difference in having educated parents in terms of how well a child does in school?
2. Do you say parents' education plays a role in the success of their children's schooling, what roles?
3. Did your parents value education? *Tell me how.*
4. Were your parents as educated as you are (more or less)?
5. Did they influence your choice of career?
6. What role can you say your own parents played in your career as a teacher/headteacher?
7. Does your level of education make a difference in your own family, in what ways?
8. In what ways, in your opinion, could parents use their education and literacy skills to enhance their children's achievement at school?
9. What do you think could be done for children whose parents' education levels and literacy skills cannot support their academic progress, and by whom?
10. Any other comment you would like to make in relation to the relationship between parents' education levels/literacy skills and their child's school achievement in the Moyo district?

**Thank you for your time and insightful contribution.**

**Sr Drajea Alice Jurugo.**

## Appendix 8 - Interview Schedule with Pupils (n 9)

A comprehensive mapping of pupils' capabilities in academic and literacy related activities was used as a criteria for assessing their literacy in everyday life. This was based on six areas:

1. Pupils' completed questionnaires in their respective schools;
2. Oral interviews with pupils in their homes;
3. Pupils' engagement in extra-curricular activities;
4. Pupils' homework or related literacy activities as evidence from home observation;
5. Pupils' test results of previous examinations, and;
6. Pupils final primary leaving results (collected in the following years after the field study).

Sources of information	Children interviewed and observed (n.9)									
	Educated parents			Less educated parents			Uneducated parents			
Rating out of	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	
1	<b>Areas tested</b> Pupils' completed questionnaires in their respective schools									
	<b>Children tested</b>	<b>Celine</b>	<b>Nila</b>	<b>Lily</b>	<b>Fred</b>	<b>Martin</b>	<b>Helen</b>	<b>Zina</b>	<b>Dona</b>	<b>Joel</b>
	Hand writing									
	vocabulary									
	grammar									
	Length of sentence									
2	<b>Individual interviews with pupils in their homes</b>									
	Fluency									
	Confidence									
	Content of information									
	Accuracy of response									
	Repeated questioning									
3	<b>Pupils' personal related literacy activities outside of school</b>									
	Homework									



	Reading									
	Writing									
	Discussion with peers									
<b>4</b>	<b>Not rated:</b>	<b>Engagement of pupils in extracurricular school activities</b>								
	Debate									
	Choir									
	Athletics									
	Games									
	Church activities									

**Thank you for your time and insightful contribution.**  
**Sr Drajea Alice Jurugo.**



# OBSERVATIONS

## Appendix 9 - Observation Checklist

There are factors in the family environment that both enhance and inhibit the child's welfare, which can affect her/his achievement at school. In a typical home of a primary school child in Moyo district, Uganda, this study will assess six areas (there are several others) in detail.

These factors are:

1. General environment
2. Habitation
3. Food security
4. Resources (Human and Physical)
5. Literacy resources
6. Personal effects

### 1. ENVIRONMENT

SIGNS	YES	NO	CONDITIONS	COMMENTS
<b>Social environment</b>				
Are there many people in the neighbourhood?				
What is the distance from other families				
What is the relationship with other families (do they interact with each other?)				
- population of the neighbour hood				
• dense				
• sparse				
Does child interact with other children in the neighbourhood?				
<b>Physical environment</b>				
- water				

What is the water source				
• river				
• underground well, protected				
• underground well, unprotected				
• borehole				
• tap				
how far is the source of water?				
• How is water brought home?				
• by hand or carried on the head				
• by bicycle				
• oxen drawn cart				
• any other ways				
how is the water stored				
• in clay pot				
• jarcans (plastic container)				
• in saucepans				
• any other ways				
Is the water safe for drinking?				
does family boil water for drinking?				
does family have any water purification method i.e. netting to sift the water or any other way?				
does the family share one drinking cup?				
is the water free?				
does family have to pay for water? How much per				
• day				
• week				
• month				
• a year?				
Is the water enough for everybody in the				

family for:				
• washing body				
• washing clothes				
• washing dishes after meals				
• washing hands before and after meals				
• cooking food				
• the animals				
who usually brings water home				
<b>Occupation of the community</b>				
trade				
peasant farmers				
fishing				
is it a mixed community? How many?				
is it a community of single ethnic group?				
is the community urban				
is the community semi-urban				
is the community rural				
<b>Infrastructures</b>				
is the home accessible by road?				
is the home accessible by foot path?				
how far is it from the nearest centre?				
how far is it from the nearest health centre?				
what is the distance to school for X?				
are there community amenities where parents can meet?				

## 2. HABITATION

SIGNS	YES	NO	CONDITIONS	COMMENTS
• does family own the house				
• what is the house made of?				
• brick walled and tin roof				
• grass thatched, cemented floor				
• grass thatched with mud floor and walls				
• secure door and lock				
• safe windows and lock				
• how many houses does the family have?				
• how many rooms				
• separate kitchen				
• Kitchen, living room and cooking in in the same house?				
• enough ventilation				
<b>Space</b>				
• how many people live in this house?				
• do the children share sleeping space?				
• does X have a room to her/himself?				
• are the boys separated from the girls at sleeping time?				
• do the children sleep in the same house with parents?				
• does X sleep with peers outside the family house?				
• what type of bed do the children have?				

• bed with mattress and blanket to cover				
• mat with blanket only to cover				
• skin with sheet or mother's linen to cover				
• rags with child's own dress to cover				
• straw, mat, skin, rags with no blanket				
• Do the children have mosquito nets for the night?				
<b>Sanitary facilities</b>				
• is there toilet				
• type of toilet/ condition				
• pit latrine with mud floor, walls and grass roof				
• pit latrine with cemented floor with grass roof				
• improved toilet with ventilation, cement floor and tin roof				
• use garden or bush				
• any other means				
<b>Hygiene</b>				
• facility for washing hands after toilet				
• Soap available				
• clean dress on				
• body of child clean				
• nails cut				
• hair (trimmed?)				
• bathing facilities and type				



• bath shelter				
• shared toilets				
• separate with brick walls without roof				
• separate with straw				
• separate with woven sticks				
• separate with banana leaves				
• none at all				

### 3. FOOD SECURITY

SIGNS	YES	NO	CONDITIONS	COMMENTS
• kitchen with back yard garden with vegetables in it?				
• larger garden with food crops in it?				
• fruit trees in the compound or in the surrounding (orchard)?				
• food store				
• chickens on the compound				
• does the family have animals (e.g. goats, cattle, pigs or pets)				
• do the children look undernourished				
• do the children look well fed				

### 4. RESOURCES: HUMAN AND PHYSICAL

(a) Human Resource				
• does the child have both parents				
• father only				
• mother only				
• single parent				

• grandparents				
• brothers (how many)				
• sisters (how many)				
Other adults in the home				
uncles				
aunties				
cousins				
other relatives (how many)				
<b>SIGNS</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>CONDITION</b>	<b>COMMEND</b>
<b>(b) Physical resources</b>				
<b>Furniture</b>				
• chairs				
• tables				
• Cupboards				
• book shelves				
• Cases (boxes) for keeping clothes				
<b>Household items</b>				
• utensils				
• enough plates				
• enough Cups				
• enough dishes				
<b>Sources of light</b>				
• electricity (how many hours a day)				
• solar bulbs (how many)				
• solar lamps				
• paraffin lamps				
• candles				
• torches				
• open fire				

## 5. LITERARY ENVIRONMENT

SIGNS	YES	NO	CONDITION	COMMENT
<b>Scholastic materials</b>				
• text books for school				
• exercise books for note-taking				
• mathematical set				
• pens				
• pencils				
• rubber				
• sharpener				
<b>Other books for reading;</b>				
• story books (novels)				
• magazines				
• newspapers				
<b>Other literary items</b>				
• posters				
• dictionary				
• bible				
• hymnal books				
• calendar				
• Clock				
<b>Communication</b>				
• television				
• Radio				
• telephone				
• mobile phone				

## 6. PERSONAL EFFECTS

SIGN	YES	NO	CONDITION	COMMENT
<b>Body care</b>				
• soap				
• oil or lotion for the body				
• does the child have uniform				
• other clothes				
• other dresses enough to change in the week (how many)				
• dress for special occasions, e.g. going to church or parties				
• cardigan for cold season				
• raincoat for rain season				
• case				
• school bag				

Student Sr. Drajea Alice Jurugo

University of Dublin

Trinity College

School of Education

# **RESEARCH FIELD SCHEDULE**

## Appendix 10 - Field Study Schedule

### JULY – SEPTEMBER 2012

Date	Mon	Tue	Wed 4/7/12	Thu 5/7/12	Fri 6/7/12	Sat 7/7/12	Sun 8/7/12
<b>Activities</b>			Leave Dublin	Arrive Uganda	Do photocopying	Travel to Moyo (500km)	Visit family
<b>Comment</b>							
Date	Mon 9/7/12	Tue 10/7/12	Wed 11/7/12	Thu 12/7/12	Fri 13/7/12	Sat 14/7/12	Sun 15/7/12
<b>Activities</b>	Visit DEO, present letter of request, obtain letters of permission and arrange for interview	Visit two schools, in urban and semi-rural area to meet H/t present letter of request, deliver letters of parents to be carried by children, arrange to interview	Visit rural (3 <sup>rd</sup> school) carry out the same activities as on 10th July. Contact L	2 <sup>nd</sup> Visit to DEO to interview. Contact SCM in Moyo and Metu sub-counties for interview. Find out how to contact LC3 of rural area.	FREE	FREE	REST

		pupils, H/t and teacher. Contact LC3 Moyo and Metu sub-counties.					
<b>Comment</b>							
<b>Date</b>	<b>Mon 16/7/12</b>	<b>Tue 17/7/12</b>	<b>Wed 18/7/12</b>	<b>Thu 19/7/12</b>	<b>Fri 20/7/12</b>	<b>Sat 21/7/12</b>	<b>Sun 22/7/12</b>
<b>Activities</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> visit.  <b>Morning:</b> Conduct interviews with pupils in urban school .	2 <sup>nd</sup> visit.  <b>Morning:</b> Conduct interviews with pupils in rural schools .	FREE Transcribe interviews and write up reflections of the two days' observations.	2 <sup>nd</sup> visit.  <b>Morning</b> Travel to rural: conduct interview with pupils, morning.	FREE Continue to transcribe and write reflections	Transcribe the interviews.	REST

	<b>Afternoon:</b> conduct interviews with Headteacher and teacher. Establish families for observation.	<b>Afternoon:</b> conduct interviews with Headteacher and teacher. Establish families for observation schools.		<b>Afternoon,</b> conduct interviews with headteacher and teacher. Establish families for observation.			
<b>Comment</b>	Write reflection	Write reflection	Write reflection				
<b>Date</b>	<b>Mon 23/7/12</b>	<b>Tue 24/7/12</b>	<b>Wed 25/7/12</b>	<b>Thu 26/7/12</b>	<b>Fri 27/7/12</b>	<b>Sat 28/7/12</b>	<b>Sun 29/7/12</b>
<b>Activities</b>	Conduct interview with SCM in RB and YB communities.		B	R	E	A	K
<b>Comment</b>	<i>Transcribe interviews with SCM.</i>	<i>Days to catch up on schedules that did not work</i>	<i>catch up day</i>	<i>catch up day</i>	<i>catch up day</i>	<i>catch up day</i>	REST



<b>Date</b>	<b>Mon 30/7/12</b>	<b>Tue 31/7/12</b>	<b>Wed 1/8/12</b>	<b>Thu 2/8/12</b>	<b>Fri 3/8/12</b>	<b>Sat 28/7/12</b>	<b>Sun 29/7/12</b>
<b>Activities</b>	RB-F1: observation,	RB-F1: Observation and interviews with parents and child.	Free	F2-RB Observation	F2-RB Observation and interview with parents and child	Free	Rest
<b>Comment</b>			<i>Transcribe and write up reflections of the two days' observation.</i>				
<b>Date</b>	<b>Mon 6/8/12</b>	<b>Tue 7/8/12</b>	<b>Wed 8/8/12</b>	<b>Thu 9/8/12</b>	<b>Fri 10/8/12</b>	<b>Sat 28/7/12</b>	<b>Sun 29/7/12</b>
<b>Activities</b>	RBh-F3: observation	RBh-F3: observation and interviews with parents and child.	Free	YBh-F1: observation	YBh-F1: observation and interview with parents and child		

<b>Comment</b>							
<b>Date</b>	<b>Mon 13/8/12</b>	<b>Tue 14/8/12</b>	<b>Wed 15/8/12</b>	<b>Thu 16/8/12</b>	<b>Fri 17/8/12</b>	<b>Sat 28/7/12</b>	<b>Sun 29/7/12</b>
<b>Activities</b>	YB-F2: observation	YB-F2: observation and interviews with parents and child.	Free	YBh-F3: observation and interview with SCM in YB.	YB-F3: observation and interviews with parents and child.		
<b>Comment</b>			<i>Transcribe</i>			<i>Transcribe</i>	
<b>Date</b>	<b>Mon 20/8/12</b>	<b>Tue 21/8/12</b>	<b>Wed 22/8/12</b>	<b>Thu 23/8/12</b>	<b>Fri 24/8/12</b>	<b>Sat 25/7/12</b>	<b>Sun 26/8/12</b>
<b>Activities</b>	BB-F1: observation	BB-F1: observation and interviews with parents and child.	Free	BB-F2 observation. Interview with SCM in YBc.	BB-F2: Observation and interview with parents and child.	Free	Rest

<b>Comment</b>							
<b>Date</b>	<b>Mon 27/8/12</b>	<b>Tue 28/8/12</b>	<b>Wed 29/8/12</b>	<b>Thu 30/8/12</b>	<b>Fri 31/9/12</b>	<b>Sat 1/9/12</b>	<b>Sun 2/9/12</b>
<b>Activities</b>	Review transcription	Review transcription	Prepare to travel to BB	BB-F3 Observation.	BB-F3 Observation and interview with parents and child.	Interview with SCM in BB.	
<b>Comment</b>	<i>Transcribe and write up observations. Prepare for a second run of 24hrs' observations in each of the sites preferably F2 families during school term.</i>						
<b>Date</b>	<b>Mon 3/9/12</b>	<b>Tue 4/9/12</b>	<b>Wed 5/9/12</b>	<b>Thu 6/9/12</b>	<b>Fri 7/9/12</b>	<b>Sat 8/9/12</b>	<b>Sun 9/7/12</b>
<b>Activities</b>	F2-BB Observation during school term.		F2-RB observation during school term		F2-YB observation during school term.		
<b>Comment</b>							

Date	Mon10/9/12	Tue 11/9/12	Wed 12/9/12	Thu 13/9/12	Fri 14/9/12	Sat 15/9/12	Sun 16/7/12
Activities	CONTINGENCY WEEK (write thank you letters to participants).					Leave Moyo for Kampala	
Comment	<i>To catch up on what did not work in the week and prepare to leave the field.</i>						
Date	Mon 17/9/12	Tue18/9/12	Wed 19/9/12	Thu 20/9/12	Fri 21/9/12	Sat 22/9/12	Sun 23/7/12
Activities	Visit Ministry of Education and Sports and make appointment for an interview with the Deputy Commissioner for Primary Education.	Visit Makerere University and search for national documents on sociolinguistics.	Visit National Curriculum Development Centre. Updates on language skills acquisition in primary education in Uganda.	Visit Uganda National Examination Board (UNEB) record of English competence and performance in Primary education.			
Comment					<i>Catch up</i>	<i>REST</i>	<i>REST</i>
Date	Mon 24/9/12	Tue25/9/12	Wed 26/9/12	Thu 27/9/12	Fri 28/9/12	Sat 29/9/12	Sun 30/7/12
Activities		Field activities	Rest	Leave Uganda at	Arrive back	settle	Rest

	FREE	ends.		Entebbe airport.	in Dublin at Dublin airport.		
<b>Comment</b>	<i>Catch up</i>						

**Student:** Sr. Alice Drajea Jurugo.

School

of

Education,

Trinity

College

Dublin.

## Appendix 11 0 - Consent Forms and Letters of Permission

*Submitted 1*

Ethics Form

UNIVERSITY OF DUBLIN, TRINITY COLLEGE  
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Ethics Review Checklist

This checklist should be completed by the researcher (with the advice of the research supervisor if relevant), for every research project which involves human participants.

Project title: *THE IMPACT OF PARENTS' EDUCATION LEVELS AND LITERACY SKILLS ON THEIR CHILDREN'S EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT AT PRIMARY LEVEL*

Researcher(s)/student: *S.K. DRATEA ALICE JURUGTO*

Supervisor (where relevant): *DR. CARMEL O'SULLIVAN*

Programme of study (where relevant): *PHD RESEARCH PROGRAMME*

Part One

	Yes	No
1. Does the study involve participants who are particularly vulnerable or unable to give informed consent (for example, children with special difficulties)?		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2. Will the study require the co-operation of an advocate for initial access to the groups or individuals (for example, children with disabilities; adults with a dementia)?		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3. Could the research induce psychological stress or anxiety, cause harm or have negative consequences for the participants (beyond the risks encountered in their normal lifestyles)?		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

4. Will deception of participants be necessary during the study (for example, covert observation of people)?		✓
5. Will the study involve discussion of topics which the participants would find sensitive (for example, sexual activity, drug use)?		✓
6. Will the study involve prolonged or repetitive testing or physical testing (for example, the use of sports equipment such as a treadmill), and will a health questionnaire be needed?		✓
7. Will the research involve medical procedures (for example, are drugs, placebos or other substances such as foods, vitamins to be administered to the participants or will the study involve invasive, intrusive or potentially harmful procedures of any kind)?		✓
8. Will financial inducements (other than reasonable expenses or compensation for time) be offered to participants?		✓
9. Will you be able to obtain permission from the school and parents to involve children under sixteen in the study? Please also seek children's permission.	✓	
10. Are there problems with participants' right to remain anonymous or to have the information they give not identifiable as theirs?	no	✓
11. Is the right to freely withdraw from the study at any time made explicit?	✓	

If you have answered NO to all of the above questions, please forward this completed form to the Chair of the Ethics Committee, Dr. Aidan Seery (seerya@tcd.ie).

If you have answered YES to any of the questions, please complete Part Two of this form below, and send the form to Dr. Seery.

Part Two

For each item answered YES, please give a summary of the issue and action to be taken to address it.

ITEM 9. Yes, the researcher is able to obtain permission from the school and parents involved to seek access to the pupils who will participate in the interview. Teachers and any other participant in this pilot exercise will be asked for consent before the interview.

ITEM 11. Yes, the right to freely withdraw from the interviews, either at the beginning or during the exercise will be made clear to participants before the interview. Participants will have the right freely withdraw should they feel so at any stage of the exercise.

Signed:



(Researcher/Student)

Date: 9<sup>th</sup> Dec. 2011



To be completed by the supervisor (in the case of a student application)

(PLEASE TICK ONE)

Appropriate action taken to maintain ethical standards – no further action necessary.

The issues require the guidance of the School of Education's Ethics Committee.

Comments:

Signed (supervisor):

*Carmel O' Sullivan*

Date:

*9/12/11*

## **Appendix 12 - Letter to the District Education Officer**

Dear Sir/Madam,

### **Re: Seeking Permission**

I am a doctoral research student in the School of Education, University of Dublin, Trinity College, Ireland. I am expected to conduct a field research that investigates the impact of parents' education and literacy skill levels on children's primary educational achievement in Moyo district. The purpose of this research is to find ways of improving children's educational achievement. This is anticipated to be conducted during July – September 2012.

The exercise, in form of questionnaires, interviews and observation will be conducted among the following respondents: district education officer, the headteachers, teachers and pupils (in selected schools), parents, and senior community members (in their respective homes).

This is, therefore, to seek your permission to allow me obtain the study information in your district. The information provided will be solely for study purposes, and will be confidential.

I thank you in advance for your assistance.

I remain, yours sincerely,

Sr. Alice Drajea Jurugo

PhD Student

University of Dublin, Trinity College

School of Education,

Tel: +256 754 483012

Tel: +353 85 1661991

## Appendix 13 - Response from the District Education Officer

E-mail: [mikemali2006@yahoo.com](mailto:mikemali2006@yahoo.com)  
[waigoparadise@gmail.com](mailto:waigoparadise@gmail.com)

*Alternative Communication Route:*  
District Education Officer.....0772 370392

In any correspondence on this  
Subject, please quote No. **Edu/223/20**



THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

### MOYO DISTRICT LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Office of the District Education Officer  
P.O BOX 1

**MOYO**

9<sup>th</sup> July, 2012

Dear Rev/ Dr/Sir/Madam,

#### **RE: INTRODUCTION OF RESEARCH STUDENT FROM HOLY TRINITY UNIVERSITY DUBLIN**

This is to introduce Sr. Dragea Alice, a nun of the Sacred Heart Sisters of Moyo and PhD fellow of Holy Trinity University Dublin, Ireland. As a part of her study programme, she is required to undertake a research on the approved area of study. She has chosen to carry her research in West Nile region, and Moyo District in particular.

The purpose of this letter is to earnestly request you to help her in collecting the necessary data/information from your office, school or area of operation.

This office will be very grateful for any assistance rendered to her.

Yours faithfully,

MALI MICHAEL  
DISTRICT EDUCATION OFFICER/MOYO



## Appendix 14 - Participant consent form

### PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (your name) agree to participate in a study of the impact of parents' education and literacy skills on their primary school children conducted by Sr. Alice Drajea Jurugo, School of Education, Trinity College, Dublin. This study will last from July-September 2012. The project is entitled: Parents' Education /Literacy Skills and their Primary Children's Achievement: Moyo District in Uganda.

Please Circle

I have been informed of the nature of this project.	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
I understand that my name/my school's name/my family's name will not be used in the reporting of information collected over the course of this study.	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
I understand that my participation is voluntary.	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
I understand that I can withdraw at any time without personal consequence.	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
I understand that information obtained from this project may be used for a PhD dissertation, academic articles and conference presentations.	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
I understand that I will be given opportunities to participate in activities such as one-on-one interviews, participant observations in the home, and documents analysis relevant to this study that are additional and will require further permission.	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>

**OVERALL CONSENT:**

I have read the information provided as well as the statements above and give my consent to participate in this project.	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
--	---	-----------------------------

MADRINA GEORGE  
Printed Name

Signature



16/7/2012  
Date

## Appendix 15 - Request for Parents' Permission

Sacred Heart sisters

P.O Box 30

Moyo

17<sup>th</sup> July 2012

Dear Parents,

**Re: LETTER OF CONSENT**

I am a student in the University of Dublin, Trinity College in Ireland. As part of a research project for my doctoral degree, I will be conducting a research into the impact of parents' levels of education and literacy skills on their primary children's educational achievement during the months of July – September 2012.

This exercise will involve talking to you - parents, your children in the primary six (P.6) level as these pupils are nearing the transition year to the Primary Leaving Examinations (PLE), their headteachers, teachers and the district education officials and some members in the community with educational background. The purpose of this survey is to find ways of improving children's educational achievement. Parents are the primary stakeholders in the education of children so your participation is considered of great value.

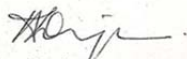
Through this letter therefore, I am seeking your consent to participate in this exercise, and asking your permission to allow me to interview your children about their expectations of your support in achieving the goals of their education.

I would be happy to visit you in your home at a convenient time to conduct this interview. The information you will provide will be solely for the purpose of this study and any personal information will be kept confidential.

Please, do not hesitate if you have any questions, to contact me at the above address or through Tel: \_\_\_\_\_ (while in Uganda: use Tel: +256 754 483012).

I thank you in advance for your cooperation.

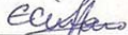
I remain, yours sincerely,



Sr. Alice Drajea Jurugo

PhD Student, University of Dublin, Trinity College, School of Education, Dublin 2

Republic of Ireland.

Tel: +353 85 1661991 Participant's signature \_\_\_\_\_ 

## Appendix 16 - Request for Teachers' Permission from

### TO THE P.6 TEACHER

Dear Sir/Madam,

### Re: REQUEST FOR CONSENT

I am in the process of conducting a research project for my doctoral degree with the University of Dublin, Trinity College, Ireland. During the months of July–September 2012, I will be investigating the impact of parents' levels of education and literacy skills on their primary children's educational achievement.

The focus of this research will be the primary six (P.6) level and their parents as these pupils are nearing the transition year to the Primary Leaving Examinations (PLE). This exercise will involve interviewing you as the class teacher. Other participants in this research will include the headteacher, the district education officials, and some members with educational background within the community where these children come from will also be consulted. The purpose of this research is to find the extent to which parents as partners in the education of their children are involved to enhance pupils' achievement at school. Therefore, it is aimed at finding ways of improving the children's educational achievement from concerted efforts from all stakeholders.

Through this letter therefore, I am seeking your consent to participate in this exercise, and permission to allow me to interview your pupils.

The information provided will be solely for the purpose of this study and personal information will be kept confidential.

Please, do not hesitate if you have any questions or suggestions, contact me at the address below or through Tel: \_\_\_\_\_ (while in Uganda: use Tel: +256 754 483012).

I thank you in advance for your cooperation.

I remain, yours sincerely,

Sr. Alice Drajea Jurugo

PhD Student

University of Dublin, Trinity College

School of Education,

Dublin 2

Republic of Ireland.

Tel: +353 85 1661991.

Participant's signature



## **Appendix 17 - Request for Headteachers' Permission**

University of Dublin, Trinity College  
School of Education,  
Dublin 2  
Republic of Ireland

Dear Sir/Madam,

**Re: LETTER OF PERMISSION**

I am a student in the University of Dublin, Trinity College, Ireland. As part of my doctoral degree, I am in the process of conducting a research project during the months of July – September 2012. I will be investigating on the impact of parents' levels of education and literacy skills on their primary children's educational achievement. The purpose of this research is to find ways of improving the children's educational achievement.

The focus of this research will be the primary six (P.6) level and their parents. This exercise is expected to involve conducting interviews with the headteacher, teachers of P.6, pupils, and their parents, education officials. Senior community members where these children come from will also be consulted.

Through this letter therefore, I am seeking your consent to participate in this exercise, and to permit me to interview teachers and pupils in your school.

I would be happy to visit you in your school at an agreed time to conduct this interview. The information provided will be solely for study purposes and the information obtained will be kept confidential.

I thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

Sr. Alice Drajea Jurugo

PhD Student

## Appendix 18 a - A Sample of Family's Ordinary Day

Time Sheet

Date 23/8/2012 Family Code YBFI

### Family's Ordinary Day

TIME	ACTIVITIES
5:00am	wake up for dawn preps.
6:00am	
7:00am	sweeping the compound.
8:00am	washing utensils
9:00am	preparing breakfast.
10:00am	eating breakfast
11:00am	after eating breakfast wash the utensils.
12:00 noon	preparing <del>breakfast</del> lunch
01:00pm	eating lunch
02:00pm	after eating lunch wash the utensils
03:00pm	Bathing
04:00pm	going for preps.
05:00pm	preparing supper
06:00pm	eating supper
07:00pm	Resting
08:00pm	after resting go for evening preps up to 10:00pm
09:00pm	
10:00pm	
11:00pm	sleeping
12:00midnight	sleeping

Student: Sr. Alice Drajea Jurugo SHS.

Trinity College Dublin.



## Appendix 18 b - A Sample of Family's Ordinary Day

Time Sheet

Date 3/8/2022 Family Code R04F2

### Family's Ordinary Day

TIME	ACTIVITIES
5:00am	We wake up.
6:00am	We sweep our Compound.
7:00am	We Sweep our room / house.
8:00am	We wash utensils. (Saturday) and some time in busy day
9:00am	We take breakfast. (Saturday)
10:00am	We <del>graze</del> let her out our goats for grass. (holiday)
11:00am	At the time when we in the Saturday we wash our clothes
12:00 noon	We fetch water.
01:00pm	We eat food at lunch time.
02:00pm	Again we wash utensils.
03:00pm	We change the position of the goat to update with plenty grass.
04:00pm	We bath.
05:00pm	We are just resting.
06:00pm	We bring the goats home.
07:00pm	We are bathing children.
08:00pm	We are take supper.
09:00pm	We prepare our bed.
10:00pm	We then sleep.
11:00pm	
12:00midnight	

Student: Sr. Alice Drajea Jurugo SHS.

Trinity College Dublin.

We are not taking breakfast when at the time of school period.

## Appendix 18 c - A Sample of Family's Ordinary Day

Time Sheet

Date 14/8/2012 Family Code 7BF2 ~~7BF2~~

### Family's Ordinary Day

TIME	ACTIVITIES
5:00am	prayer
6:00am	Continuation of prayer
7:00am	Brushing of teeth
8:00am	sweeping of compound & rooms
9:00am	washing of utensils
10:00am	break fast
11:00am	field work
12:00 noon	preparation of lunch
01:00pm	lunch hour
02:00pm	Resting
03:00pm	fetching of water
04:00pm	bathting
05:00pm	prayer
06:00pm	preparation of supper
07:00pm	preparation for sleeps
08:00pm	prayer for sleeps
09:00pm	Sleeping
10:00pm	Continuation of sleeps
11:00pm	preparation for prayer of mid night
12:00midnight	prayer

Student: Sr. Alice Drajea Jurugo SHS.

Trinity College Dublin.

## Appendix 18 d - A Sample of Family's Ordinary Day

Time Sheet

Date 23/8/2012 Family Code BBh F2.

### Family's Ordinary Day

TIME	ACTIVITIES
5:00am	
6:00am	I wake up. and I organize the bed.
7:00am	I brush my teeth.
8:00am	I sweep the compound. and I go to dig.
9:00am	I start my preparation for break fast.
10:00am	I prepare porridge.
11:00am	I go to fetch water.
12:00 noon	I start my preparation for lunch.
01:00pm	we eat our lunch.
02:00pm	I wash the utensils which we used for eating.
03:00pm	I bath and get time to read.
04:00pm	I start my preparation for supper.
05:00pm	I cook food for the supper.
06:00pm	we eat food and I bath.
07:00pm	I go to study and sometimes I rest.
08:00pm	we do exercise e.g. jogging.
09:00pm	we collect the utensils inside.
10:00pm	we go to sleep.
11:00pm	
12:00midnight	

Student: Sr. Alice Drajea Jurugo SHS.

Trinity College Dublin.

## Appendix 19 - A Sample of Primary Teachers' Payroll for Moyo District

Employee Number	Name	Surname	District	Payment Type	Base Salary	Subsidy	Overtime	Gross Pay	Tax	Net Pay
<b>539-MOYO DISTRICT</b>										
<b>53906--DIRECTORATE OF EDUCATION</b>										
<b>5390601-EDUCATION DEPARTMENT</b>										
<b>539060102--*PRIMARY SCHOOL EDUCATION (DIVISION)</b>										
<b>PSCH5390001 - BELAMELING PRI. SCH.</b>										
681247	BOSCO	KOI	General Staff Salaries	Direct Deposit	313950.00	0.00	0.00	313950.00	7895.00	306055.00
155887	RICHARD	MUREFU	General Staff Salaries	Direct Deposit	313950.00	0.00	0.00	313950.00	122535.00	191415.00
155990	JANET	ABIO	General Staff Salaries	Direct Deposit	313950.00	0.00	0.00	313950.00	122535.00	191415.00
155835	MOSES	APILIGA	General Staff Salaries	Direct Deposit	313950.00	0.00	0.00	313950.00	11035.00	302915.00
155751	BRIAN	JURUGA	General Staff Salaries	Direct Deposit	313950.00	0.00	0.00	313950.00	11035.00	302915.00
157129	CAESAR	DRALU	General Staff Salaries	Direct Deposit	359757.00	0.00	0.00	359757.00	141449.00	218308.00

Source: District Education office (2012)

## Appendix 20 - Location of Uganda in Africa



Source: <http://lnsthgnew.wordpress.com/> [12/05/2012].

**Key:**

→ Arrow indicates Uganda