The implementation of an educational re-entry policy for girls after teenage pregnancy: A case study of public secondary schools in the Kuria District, Kenya

By

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A thesis submitted to the Victoria University of Wellington in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Education

Victoria University of Wellington

2012

# ABSTRACT

A new policy was introduced in Kenya in 1994 that enabled teenage mothers to continue schooling after delivery. The re-entry policy for girls who drop out of school after becoming pregnant while still at school is of international concern. The Kenyan government has already signed numerous international and regional declarations guaranteeing all children the right to education. However, it is not well known to what extent girls are taking advantage of the policy, how aware school mangers are of the policy, and what challenges they meet in its implementation. Little is known in the international literature about the girls' experiences in attempting or succeeding in being able to re-enter school. This study investigated the implementation of the re-entry policy for girls after school pregnancy. This study used critical theory in identifying the importance of the study which also aimed to sensitise stakeholders to the issues involved in teenage pregnancy by raising them for discussion. A qualitative method using a case study approach was chosen. Standard open-ended interviews were used to obtain in-depth information from the Ministry of Education (MOE) officials, head teachers, current students, teenage mothers and parents. Data were analysed thematically, using a social constructivist lens. Particular attention was given to the young girls' experiences by presenting them as narratives. The study revealed that there are conflicting views as to the value, nature and implementation of the policy. There was a concerning lack of awareness and understanding of both the policy and the guidelines. The findings further showed that many socio-cultural factors were important in preventing young mothers from returning to school. Hence there was a strong desire from the participants to be involved in any discussions about the policy. Findings from this study will help in creating awareness of the policy among all Kenyan stakeholders. The findings provide insights into inclusive policies, valuing and listening to voices not typically heard with an objective to enhancing the education of young mothers in Kenyan schools. They will also help in understanding the challenges in policy implementation in the context of limited resources, diverse viewpoints and expectations, and in studying the problems of pregnancy policy implementation in specific cultural settings. They will also contribute to the literature that calls for more understanding of the experiences of the young mothers.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

# DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my late mother Ruth Nyamoita Omwancha and my children Gavin, Dion, Ruth and Megan, whose humility and sincerity I very much adore.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

# LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

| | |
|---|---|
| AEO | Area Education Officer |
| AL | Advanced Level |
| APHRC | African Population Health Research Centre |
| CEDAW | Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women |
| CMS | Christian Missionary Society |
| CPE | Certificate of Primary Education |
| CRC | Convention on the Rights of the Child |
| CREAW | Centre for Rights Education and Awareness |
| CSA | Centre for Study of Adolescence |
| DC | District Commissioner |
| DEO | District Education Officer |
| DO | District Officer |
| DQASO | District Quality Assurance and Standards Officer |
| EFA | Education For All |
| EQUIP | Educational Quality Improvement Program |
| FAWE | Forum for African Women Educationalists |
| FGM | Female Genital Mutilation |
| HIV/AIDS | Human Immunodeficiency Virus/ Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome |
| JAB | Joint Admissions Board |
| KAACR | Kenya Alliance for Advancement of Children |
| KACE | Kenya Advanced Certificate of Education |
| KANU | Kenya African National Union |
| KCE | Kenya Certificate of Education |
| KCPE | Kenya Certificate of Primary Education |

| | |
|---|---|
| KCSE | Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education |
| KDHS | Kenya Demographic Health Survey |
| KESSP | Kenya Educational Sector Support Programme |
| KIE | Kenya Institute of Education |
| MDGs | Millennium Development Goals |
| MOE | Ministry of Education |
| MOEST | Ministry of Education Science and Technology |
| NACECE | National Centre for Early Childhood Education |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organisations |
| OAU | Organisation of African Union |
| OL | Ordinary Level |
| STDs | Sexually Transmitted Diseases |
| STIs | Sexually Transmitted Infections |
| TSC | Teachers Service Commission |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNESCO | United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation |
| UNGEI | United Nations Girls Education Initiative |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children's Education Fund |
| UPE | Universal Primary Education |

# CHAPTER ONE

# INTRODUCTION

## Personal Perspective

During my schooling at primary and secondary levels, some of my classmates who were girls dropped out of school due to pregnancy. At that time I could not understand the sensitivity and importance of the matter. I remember how my classmates would laugh at the young mothers, and even draw cartoons to illustrate their condition on the blackboard just to ridicule them. Some of the girls who dropped out of school were very capable, but their learning was cut short by becoming young mothers. I am a Kenyan, and a father of three daughters, and the issue of the young mothers has become very sensitive to me.

In my 14 years teaching experience as a high school teacher, I never once came across the 1994 re-entry policy that enabled young mothers to continue schooling after delivery, though it was in existence. As a teacher, I witnessed some girls who dropped out of school due to teenage pregnancy, and never continued with their studies after delivery.

Later I worked in the MOE as a District Quality Assurance and Standards Officer (DQASO). One of my duties then was carrying out standard assessments of academic institutions and specifically curriculum implementation and delivery. The instruments used for institutional standard assessments do not provide for following up on the students who drop out, and especially those who drop out of school due to teenage pregnancy. My lack of awareness of the policy as a teacher and as a MOE official has led to the focus on this study which could help provide greater understanding about the implementation of the re-entry policy.

My experiences and various roles that I have been involved in as a student, teacher and MOE official have also greatly motivated my focus for this study. These experiences have been dynamic and varied. At first, as a student, I was ignorant and innocent of some of the aspects of this study. Later on, as a teacher, I became sympathetic and curious. When I became a MOE official I had a burning desire to understand the re-entry policy for girls after school pregnancy. Much of my experience of the re-entry policy for girls touches on some aspects of social justice. This led to looking at the re-entry policy for girls in light of social justice. This awareness led to my belief that the girls who drop out of school due to teenage pregnancy are unfairly excluded from the education system. While the re-entry policy may have been

introduced in Kenyan schools to enhance inclusive education and increase the enrolment of girls in schools, nevertheless if the policy is ignored and invisible, then it is failing in its social justice intent. Therefore, my understanding of the implementation of the re-entry policy for girls is important since it sought to eliminate this social injustice or exclusion of girls from the education system in Kenya.

## Educational Re-entry Policy for Girls after Teenage Pregnancy

The purpose of this study was to explore the implementation of the educational re-entry policy for girls who drop out of school after teenage pregnancy in public secondary schools in the Kuria district of Kenya, and how it might be improved. The focus was to investigate the perspectives of the policy by the MOE officials, the head teachers, current students, young mothers and their parents. The study also aimed to present the voices of the young mothers and their families, and hear their experiences of dealing with teenage pregnancy and eventual drop out from schools. Another aim was to consider what factors might improve girls' participation in school. Lastly, this study reflected on the implications for the process of inclusive policy making. In Chapter Four, I outline the specific research objectives. In this chapter I begin by describing the context in which the re-entry policy takes place.

## Background Information to the Republic of Kenya

Kenya, a republic in East Africa, is a member of the Commonwealth of Nations. Kenya became independent in December, 1963, after nearly 80 years of colonial rule under Britain. Exactly a year later it became a republic. It is bounded on the north by Sudan and Ethiopia, on the east by Somalia and the Indian Ocean, on the south by Tanzania, and on the west by Lake Victoria and Uganda. Nairobi is the country's capital and largest city. Kenya has a total area of 582,646 sq. km (224,961sq mi). The equator passes through the middle of the country in an east west direction. Kenya's maximum length from east to west is about 890km (about 550 mi); from north to south it is about 1,030km (about 640 mi).

The country is divided into eight provinces including the Nairobi area, Central, Coast, Eastern, Nyanza, Western, Rift Valley and North Eastern. They are divided into administrative areas known as districts (Sifuna, 1990).

Some 70% of Kenya's people live in rural areas, and about the same percentage of the population is concentrated in the fertile southern half of the country. The country's largest cities are Nairobi, the capital city and chief manufacturing centre, Mombasa, the nation's principal seaport; and Kisumu, the chief port in Lake Victoria. Smaller cities include Nakuru,

a commercial and manufacturing centre in the Eastern Rift valley, and Eldoret, an industrial centre in the western Kenya.

Kenya's black population is divided into more than 40 ethnic groups belonging to three linguistic families: the Bantu, the Cushitic, and the Nilotic. Language has traditionally been the primary characteristic of ethnic identity in Kenya. Kenya's official languages are English and Swahili; both are widely used for communication between members of different ethnic groups. Nearly all the African ethnic groups in Kenya also have their own languages, making for considerable linguistic diversity within the country. Many Kenyans speak three languages: the language of their particular ethnic group, Swahili, and English.

The Kenya Census 2009 put the population at 38,610,097. Nearly 60% of this population is under 20 years of age. This highlights the problem of dependence and shows the great burden the country has to carry in providing education (Kenya National Bureau of Standards, 2010).

## The Kuria People

Kuria district is located in south western Kenya along the Kenya Tanzania border, and is home to the Kuria community. The Kuria people, also known as the Kulya or Tende, claim to have originated in the Elgon region of Eastern Uganda and migrated to Kenya and Tanzania between 1500 and 1900. They belong to one of the Kenya's linguistic group known as Bantu. Most Kurias are farmers who specialise in the production of millet, maize, bananas and tobacco. They also raise cattle. It is still customary for Kuria people to practice polygamy. The Kuria are a small community (estimated to be 215,000) that is highly marginalised. The Kuria district comprises four divisions namely: Kehancha, Mabera, Ntimaru and Kegonga. Recently the district has been sub-divided into two districts (Kuria East and Kuria West). The district has a total area of 580 square kilometres, and borders Tanzania to the south, Migori to the north and Trans Mara district to the east. The district has an inland modified tropical type of climate.

**Figure 1: Showing a map of Kenya and its provincial boundaries**



## A Historical Overview of Education System in Kenya

Kenya's history of formal education dates back to the arrival of missionaries, who were among the earliest founders of educational institutions. The historical records from the travels of Johann Ludwig and Johannes Rebmann reveal that Kenyans had access to formal education as far back as 1728. The Christian Missionaries Society (CMS) set up the earliest mission schools at Rabai upon interaction with the local people.

Eshiwani (1990) records that the provision and administration of formal education to the people of Kenya was managed and controlled by the missionaries as a scheme for converting Kenyans into Christianity. Some of the large academic institutions today are among the national schools that were opened by the missionaries as their pioneer centres. The type of colonial education offered to Kenyans was determined by the principle of self-reliance, racial composition, and the idea that colonies were supposed to develop their resources so as not to be reliant on the royal coffers.

Education in Kenya was organised along racial lines owing to the perception that different races in the country, that is Africans, Asians, Arabs and Europeans, had achieved different levels of development. Though non-Africans represented a small percentage (3%) of the total population at the time, more resources and facilities were channelled to the provision of their education. This resulted in severe neglect of African education.

Sifuna (1990) noted that developing an education system to replace the one inherited from the colonial government was one of the enormous tasks that Kenya encountered after achieving its independence. He further noted that such a challenge continues to trouble the country today. Although Kenya has made progress in the growth of its education system, it has to deal with some of the pre-independence and post-independence problems in executing its educational programs. Oketch and Rolleston (2007) agree that access to education had been challenging during the colonial administration particularly because there were many Africans who were simply denied admission to the education system for both practical and political reasons. Hence, they assert that putting an end to the racial school system that had existed during the colonial period, and incorporating it into one national system was an immediate policy initiative in three countries (Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania), with the aim of increasing access to education for Africans.  They further showed that, although ever since the three countries gained independence from British colonial rule in the early part of 1960s, they have been determined to increase access to education. Nevertheless, there are still those with no access, those who are excluded after first entry, those at risk of drop out, and a majority excluded from any form of secondary education altogether. Some of those who drop out too early are young girls who have become pregnant while at school.

Kenya began its campaign for free primary education immediately after it attained independence in 1963. The three countries Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania adopted a single system of education of 7-4-2-3 (consisted of seven years of primary education, four years of

secondary education, two years of high school and three to five years of university education), after the formation of the East African Community in 1967. Kenya continued with the same system of education when the East African Community collapsed in 1977, though it changed the examinations names from their regional identities to national identity. Bogonko (1992) suggests that as a means of gaining full legitimacy, and reassuring the people that political independence was not bogus, Jomo Kenyatta's Kenya African National Union (KANU) government declared education as one of its priorities for the national development of secondary and tertiary education immediately after independence.

In 1985 president Daniel arap Moi, introduced the 8-4-4 system of education, which adopted eight years of primary education, four years of secondary education and four years of university education. With the introduction of the 8-4-4 system of education the Certificate of Primary Education (CPE) became Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE), while the Kenya Certificate of Education (KCE) became the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE).

**Primary education.**

Primary education in Kenya begins at the age of 6 or 7 after completion of a year of kindergarten commonly known as Nursery school or Pre-unit. Most primary schools are day schools with pupils living at home. Fewer schools at primary level are boarding schools compared to secondary schools. The first class or year of primary is known as standard one, the final year as standard eight, and primary school children are known as pupils. The school year at primary and secondary levels begins in January and ends in November. Students get three school vacations, taken in April, August and December. At the end of the school year students advance to the next grade. Students who completely fail their end of the year examinations usually repeat the class the following year instead of advancing to a higher grade. Although recently the MOE has made repetition of classes illegal, many pupils in many schools in the country are forced to repeat classes. This repetition of classes by pupils has been attributed to the emphasis of teachers on passing of examinations.

All public primary schools have an examination at the end of the standard eight for the KCPE.

For Kenya, the road towards universalising access to primary education has been long and bumpy. Since independence three initiatives aimed at achieving free universal primary education have been launched; the first one was in 1974, the second in 1979 and the third

2003, which is still in progress. However, according to Professor Daniel Sifuna (a professor of education at Kenyatta University) those initiatives have been mere political gimmicks as very little planning was done and their implementation exacerbated the problem of teaching and learning facilities. The three initiatives hinged on politics of national aspirations, and, of late, on international pressure to widen access to education in order to achieve universal primary education by 2015 (The Standard, September 28th 2011).

### Secondary education.

In 2008, the Government introduced plans to offer free secondary education to all Kenyans. Secondary schools in Kenya fall into three categories: government funded, Harambee and private. Government funded schools are divided into national, provincial and district levels. Harambee schools do not receive full funding from the government, and private schools are run by private organisations or individuals. After taking the primary school leaving exam and successfully passing, government funded schools select students in order of scores. Students with the highest scores gain admission into national schools, while those with average scores are selected into provincial and district schools.

Under the current system, students attend secondary schools for 4 years before sitting the school leaving exam at the end of the 4th year. The first class or year of secondary school is known as Form 1 and the final year is termed as Form 4. At the end of the 4th form, from October to November, students sit for Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education Examination.

Private secondary schools in Kenya are generally high-cost schools offering students an alternative system of education with better or more luxurious facilities compared to public schools. They are often favoured for prestige. Most private schools in Kenya offer the British system of education which includes "O-Levels" (Ordinary Level) and "A-Levels" (Advanced Level). Very few offer the American system of education, and a good number of them offer the Kenyan system.

Interestingly, the number of students admitted to public universities through the Joint Admissions Board (JAB) depends on the total number of beds available in all public universities. Nonetheless those who miss out, but attain the minimum university entry mark of C+ or C with a relevant diploma certificate, are admitted through the parallel degree programmes (Module 11) if they can afford the full fees for the course.

**Education Policy in Kenya**

The decades of the 1960s and 1970s witnessed dramatic quantitative growth in African education systems. Beyond expanding educational places, many African countries pronounced intentions to "reform" their educational system, by adjusting the length of education cycles, altering the terms of access to educational opportunity, changing the curriculum content, or otherwise attempting to link the provision of education and training more closely to perceived requirements for national socio-economic development.

Educational policies that Kenya has pursued during the past two decades have resulted in greater access to schooling, especially at the primary school level, for its youth. However statistics on education show that regional disparities still exist despite the excellent national record. The semi-arid areas, the parastatic areas, and areas where Muslim religion is predominant, have lagged behind other areas in education.

According to Sessional Paper 1 of 2005 of the Republic of Kenya, the provision of education and training to all Kenyans is fundamental to the success of the government's overall development strategy. The long term objectives of the government, among others, are to provide every Kenyan with basic quality education and training. This includes 2 years of pre-primary, 8 years of primary and 4 years of secondary/technical education, to enhance the ability of Kenyans to preserve and utilize the environment for productive gain, and sustainable livelihoods.

Since independence, the government has addressed challenges facing the education sector through commissions, committees and taskforces. The Kenyan Education Commission (The Ominde Report, 1964), the report of the National Committee on Education Objectives and Policies (The Gachati Report, 1976), the Report of the Presidential Working Party on the Second University in Kenya (The Mackay Report, 1981), the Report of the Presidential Working Party on Education Manpower and Training for the next Decade and Beyond (The Kamunge Report, 1988) and the Commission of Inquiry into the Education System of Kenya (The Koech report, 2000), all sought to reform the education system inherited from the colonial government and make it more responsive to the needs of independent Kenya

Recent policy initiatives have focussed on the attainment of Education For All (EFA) and in particular, Universal Primary Education (UPE). The key concerns are access, retention, equity, quality and relevance and internal and external efficiencies within the education system.

**Thesis Organization**

The 1st chapter has presented the purpose of the thesis and my personal perspective. It has given background information about Kenya and the Kuria people and an overview of the education system in Kenya.

Chapter 2 contextualises the research focus by outlining international imperatives impacting on the policy and the actual situation in Kenya.

Chapter 3 reviews the relevant literature related to the educational re-entry policy for girls after teenage pregnancy.

Chapter 4 provides the theoretical framework, discussing the critical theory and narrative approaches that are to be used in thinking about the research project. It also describes the research design, justifying the methodology and explaining the methods of data collection and data analysis, and addresses research credibility, trustworthiness and ethical issues.

Chapters 5 to 7 present the findings from the interviews with participants.

Chapter 8 focuses on the girls' stories.

The discussion in chapter 9 draws out some important themes that result from engaging with the findings.

Chapter 10 concludes the thesis. It outlines research limitations, implications for education and practice, and offers some specific recommendations and implications for further research.

# CHAPTER TWO

# CONTEXTUALISING THE RESEARCH

## International Imperatives

Policies that support on-going access to education for girls who drop out of school after teenage pregnancy are not only important to the Kenyan government but have been of a major global concern. Many international conventions and treaties reinforce the rights of teenage mothers to on-going education. The 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights (1976), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW, 1979), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC, 1989), all recognize education as a human right and point out that each child has a right to education and proper measures should be taken to encourage regular attendance at schools and reduce drop-out rates.

According to a United Nations Children's Fund report (UNICEF, 1999), tens of millions of girls are not getting basic education across the developing world and especially in the rural and poor areas of Sub Saharan Africa, the Middle East and South Asia. This situation has attracted public attention and more than 180 nations have committed to addressing this challenge by pledging that every boy and girl will receive a quality basic education by 2015. Although the above target has been established and endorsed as one of the eight United Nations Millennium Development Goals, the attainment of this goal is still challenging. Subsequently policy makers will need to make effort to address the economic, social and cultural barriers that keep large number of girls in poor countries out of school so as to reach the goal of universal education for children.

It is clear that girls are disadvantaged in education and therefore deserve special attention as they drop out more easily than boys for various reasons, including early marriage, teenage pregnancy, tradition and violence and sexual harassment in the school setting. In order to prevent girls dropping out of school because of pregnancy, the CRC committee recommends measures to ensure that pregnant teenagers are given the chance to complete their education by not excluding them and by developing special programmes (Mieke, 2006).

The CRC committee has put much emphasis on the right to education and on the elimination of the interpretation of pregnancy as a disciplinary offence (Bank, 2007a). Correspondingly the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child Organisation of African Union (OAU, 1990) Article 3 outlaws discrimination in education on the basis of gender, race, ethnic group, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national and social origin, fortune, birth or other status. It further indicates that State parties should take measures to encourage regular attendance at schools and reduction of dropout rates; take special measures in respect of female, gifted and disadvantaged children, to ensure equal access to education for all sections of the community. Consequently, the State parties shall also take all appropriate measures to ensure that girls who become pregnant before completing their education shall have an opportunity to continue with their education on the basis of their individual ability.

The EFA (EFA) World Education Conference, Dakar 2000, and the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), have brought gender education to the forefront of attention. The Dakar 2000 declaration reaffirms that education is a fundamental right for all people, women and men, of all ages and primary education must be universal (United Nations, 2000b). The focus of the Dakar 2000 conference was on delivery of the Jomtien Vision and six specific goals were identified. Of the six goals, three explicitly mentioned girls and women and addressed certainty of access to education, improving literacy levels for women, and the elimination of gender disparities, that is, the gender gap between girls and boys (UNESCO, 2000a). The millennium summit of the United Nations in New York in 2000 expressed a number of founding values which included freedom, equality, solidarity, and tolerance. Eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), all of which affirmed the specific equal rights of women and men were set out. Each MDG had specific targets and indicators that were intended to set a time by which there would be evidence that the target and the goal might be met. Gender and schooling were explicitly mentioned in two targets and formed part of five indicators (United Nations, 2000a).

Notwithstanding the efforts to reach gender parity in enrolment, UNESCO (2000b) showed that, between 1990 and 1998, the gender gap reflected by gross enrolment ratio had increased in Sub Saharan African countries. Then it maintained that as students move up the educational ladder the gender gap between the participation rates of girls and boys increases. Moreover the Global monitoring report (UNESCO, 2003) established that of the 104 million children ages 6-11 who are not in school each year, 60 million are girls and 40% of them live

in Sub Saharan Africa, while 35% live in South Asia. The same report noted that the gender gap in primary school completion is greater than 10%, and this wide gender gap means that millions of more girls than boys are dropping out each year.

The African Population and Health Research Centre (APHRC, 2007) maintains that while much current effort in many countries in Sub Saharan Africa is geared towards realizing universal primary education (UPE), not much is being done to expand access to secondary education, especially by the poor who form the majority in this region. As such, secondary education remains a dream to many children in Sub Saharan Africa.

The Human Rights Watch (2004) report also showed that, despite governments' reaffirmed ambitious commitments at the Millennium Summit in 2000 to ensure that every child around the world is able to attend and complete primary school by 2015, and although school attendance has increased in many parts of the world, education remains beyond the reach of many millions of the worlds' children, especially girls. It further established that in more than thirty investigations carried around the world, there were significant and systematic barriers that undermined children's ability to learn, causing them to drop out. This ultimately violated their rights to education.

## The situation in Kenya

In its efforts to achieve education for all, Kenya has enacted various educational policies in pursuit of this important international convention. One such policy is the educational re-entry policy for girls after teenage pregnancy. This policy was meant to promote the education of girls and help the country towards the attainment of education for all Kenyans. This policy was introduced in Kenya in 1994 and supported young mothers to continue schooling after delivery (Republic of Kenya, 1994). Through this policy the government hoped to increase the number of young mothers who continued schooling after delivery **(Appendix A).**

Despite the introduction of the re-entry policy there has not been a major increase in enrolment of girls in schools. This scenario is confirmed by the research carried out by the Forum for African Women Educationalists which indicates the persistently low levels of girls' participation in education as compared to boys (FAWE, 2001).

The re-entry policy has been reviewed in an attempt to make the policy and its guidelines more relevant and attract more young mothers back to school. For example, a gender and education policy developed in 2003 revisited the 1994 policy making provision for the re-

admission of girls who become pregnant while still in school, and even enabling them to seek a place at a different institution to the one they were originally attended to avoid being stigmatised. However, an earlier study carried out by FAWE (2001) Kenya found that though the readmission strategy has been pronounced, it has been left to the discretion of the head teachers and school boards to decide whether to readmit the girls or not. The Forum then concluded that in the event that the head teachers or school boards do not value girls' education, then the girls seeking re-admission suffer.

The policy is not working effectively according to several other reviews. Consequently the Gender Policy in Education, MOE, (Republic of Kenya, 2007) followed up on the 2003 policy, stating that re-admission of girls who become pregnant while in school is one of the on-going initiatives to address gender disparities in education in Kenya. It explains that one of the objectives of the policy is to increase participation of disadvantaged girls and women in education, and ensure gender equity in education. It further recommends that to realize the above objective the following strategies should be employed, among others:

1.    Lobbying parents and communities to support education of girls
2.    Implementing girl child empowerment programs
3.    Working with communities to encourage girls' participation and retention
4.    Advocating for girls' education among parents and communities, sensitizing them against negative socio-cultural practices
5.    Facilitating the re-entry of girls who drop out due to pregnancy and early marriage in secondary schools.

Again, this does not appear to have had much effect in practice.

The Centre for Study of Adolescence (2008), a non-governmental organisation that works on reproductive health, gender and social policy for teenagers, found that 13,000 girls leave school every year in Kenya due to pregnancy. The CSA (2008) showed that while only 35% of girls between the ages of 16 and 20 are in school, 50% of boys the same age attend. Yet enrolment of boys and girls in lower primary is almost equal.

> Many schools prefer to expel pregnant girls as they are seen as a bad influence on other girls in the school. The lack of legal backing or any official communication on how this guideline is to be implemented makes the policy weak and inconsistent. Many parents are either unaware of its existence or just ignore it (CSA, 2008.p 2).

13

The CSA report goes on to say that many school principals, parents, teachers and students are unaware of the existence of the guidelines, commenting that when you add stigma, both from oneself and from school and community, the policy becomes hard to implement. A head teacher quoted in the report agrees and said that when a parent came asking to have the daughter re-admitted and said that she had been told that there is a policy allowing that, he was quite stunned. He had to ask for a copy of the policy just to be sure. Therefore, although the re-entry policy is in place, ignorance of its existence, even among the head teachers who are supposed to implement it, frustrates its success.  This study will hopefully play a useful role in creating awareness of the policy and ensure that it is better known and made use of.

The above scenario with regard to the practice of re-entry policy is not good enough because Kenya has made several commitments towards attainment of education for all Kenyans. The Government of Kenya has a duty to provide basic education to all its citizens, being a signatory to the CRC and other relevant and obligatory treaties relating to education and human rights of women and girls.

The Kenya Children Act (Republic of Kenya, 2001) unequivocally stipulates every child's entitlement to education, thus ensuring full inclusion of girls in basic education. The Centre for Rights Education and Awareness (CREAW, 2007) points to  Kenya's responsibilities  as a signatory to the Jomtien conference in 1990, the Dakar Framework Action in 2000 and the MDGs Conference in 2000.

Despite the introduction of re-entry policy and several reviews, there has been no major increase in the enrolment of girls in schools. Furthermore, there is some indication that there are regional differences in the enrolment of girls, and that girls are more likely to drop out of education in certain districts hence this study focuses on implementation of re-entry policy in Kuria district.

Research carried out by UNICEF (2005a) indicated that although in Kenya countrywide enrolments increased with free primary school, in some districts conditions at the schools were not good and some parents continued to keep their daughters away. For example in the harsh conditions of Turkana district in Rift Valley in 2004, 60% of children did not go to school. There were 28,000 boys in primary schools, but only 18,000 girls. Of the 3000 children who proceeded to secondary school from this district in 2004 only 1,000 were girls. Other regional differences reported by the  Kenya Alliance for Advancement of Children (KAACR) and the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE, 2001) indicate that

the national enrolment rate has been on the decline, standing at 76% in 1999. They maintain the high dropout rate of girls when compared to boys is of concern to advocates of equal education for all. They report that the national completion rate of girls in primary school is only 35% against 55% for boys and this is even as low as 24% in districts like Kwale, Kuria, Migori, Homabay, Kilifi, Turkana, and Kajiado. The focus on this study has been influenced by the low enrolments of girls in education as evidenced from the above report.

The Kenya Demographic and Health Survey carried out by the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS, 2004) reported that up to 13,000 Kenyan girls drop out of school every year as a result of pregnancy and around 17% of girls have had sex before they turn 15. It argues that better educated girls were less likely to marry early, more likely to practise family planning, and that their children were more likely to have had a higher survival rate. The low enrolment of girls is a matter of concern to all as it amounts to denying children their rights to education. This study addresses a critical and sensitive area in the lives of the young mothers and their families.

The CREAW (2007) notes that Kenya's legal system includes many laws concerning women. However, many of these laws, including the constitution, are discriminatory with the result that many women in Kenya have had their rights dishonoured, leaving them with little or no place for remedy. These discriminatory laws do not align with some of the liberal statements made in the re-entry policy, and may contribute to lack of understanding about the re-entry policy and some confusion about its standing. Therefore, there seems to be tension between the re-entry policies and other policies that are biased to women. The re-entry policy addresses issues of social justice and equity for women. Although the re-entry policy talks about taking legal action against the fathers if they are older, there is a possibility that this provision could have led to the silencing of the policy since it is direct conflict with some of the discriminatory policies.

In an effort to achieve EFA, the Kenyan government set out policies in the Sessional Paper No. 1 of 2005 an educational Policy and Framework. This also led to the Kenya Educational Sector Support Programme (KESSP) 2005-2010, which has seen much improvement in the provision of education to girl children and women. The Sessional Paper 1 of Republic of Kenya (Republic of Kenya, 2005) Chapter 1 indicates that recent policy initiatives have focussed on the attainment of EFA and, in particular, Universal Primary Education (UPE) in light of the decline in enrolment and retention particularly at primary and secondary levels in

the last decade. The Sessional paper also reports that the Government is committed to the provision of quality education and training as a human right for all Kenyans in accordance with the Kenyan law and the international conventions, such as the EFA goal, and is developing strategies for moving the country towards the attainment of this goal. It further notes that the Government of Kenya is already implementing measures to improve access and quality in secondary education. However, despite these initiatives, the secondary school sub sector continues to face challenges, particularly the low participation rates, low transition rates from primary to secondary and from secondary to tertiary (particularly to universities) as well as gender and regional disparities. In order to address these challenges, the Government is committed to employ the following strategies among others:

1.  Ensure the re-entry of girls who drop out of school due to pregnancy and early/ forced marriage

2.  Sensitise stakeholders and communities to discard socio-cultural practices that prohibit effective participation of girls and boys in secondary school education, and

3.  Enforce legislation against the vocation of children's rights (Republic of Kenya, 20 05).

Teenage pregnancy in many African countries has been associated with a legacy of violence, forced sex, and Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS). Within relationships the boyfriends claim control through forced sex both to begin with and subsequent common beatings (Jewkes, Vundule, Maforah & Jordaan 2001). Other indicators are that some pregnancies may be the result of violence and that although the re-entry policy is equipped to deal with this, a wider context of other discriminatory laws has the effect of silencing its effect. This adds to the urgency for an investigation into why the policy is unsuccessful and what can be done to improve it.

Evidence indicates that various national, regional and international documents and conventions have outlined clearly the importance of education. This study therefore investigates the implementation of the re-entry policy and suggests ways to make it more effective to realise an increase in the number of young girls continuing school after teenage pregnancy. It also aims to sensitise stakeholders to the equity issues involved and inform policy on public education with the ultimate objective being to enhance the education of young mothers in Kenyan schools.

# CHAPTER THREE

# LITERATURE REVIEW

In conducting my literature resource I used available data bases and consulted librarians in sourcing relevant materials. The literature review in this study draws on the following bodies of literature: gendered education, barriers to schooling, inclusion and problems in implementing inclusive policies.

In the literature on gendered education, equal access to schooling for girls is argued on the following grounds: equity is an important part of social justice, the education of girls is associated with improved economic or social development, and educated girls produce educated families.

Barriers to schooling are varied, depending on the culture and region of a people, and broadly speaking these barriers range from socio-cultural, socio-economic, to institutional barriers. Independently, or in some cases jointly, these barriers promote the exclusion of girls from schooling hence widening the gap between boys and girls in provision and access to education.

In order to realise equity and inclusion in education, most countries, especially in the developing world, have attempted to put some measures in place in their schooling system. Interventions have focussed on policy initiatives, community initiatives, the training of more women teachers and more education in general, such as building more schools and in particular the elimination of stereotypes and more sex education. However, as noted in chapter 2, not all these interventions have been successfully implemented and attained the intended objectives.

This chapter will begin by defining education and pointing to its status in traditional African and western cultural contexts. An analysis of the benefits of girls' education will then be provided and a critical review of recent studies on the exclusion of girls from education, as well as barriers to girls' education in Africa. Policies on pregnancy in education, implementing inclusive policies, pregnancy policies in Africa, and inclusive policies in Kenya are then presented. Finally, I conclude that more research is needed to understand the challenges in policy implementation in the context of different cultural settings, limited resources, diverse viewpoints and expectations.

**Traditional African Education and Modern Education Perspectives**

Some African scholars (e.g. Adeyemi & Adeyinka, 2003) have pointed to different cultural views of education and its purpose. They explain that many philosophers, scholars and students have defined education in different ways. For example, some scholars have defined education as the transmission of life by the living to the living, while some define it as the acquisition of the art of the utilisation of knowledge. In a recent work, Adeyinka (2000) has defined education as the process by which the adult members of a society bring up the young ones, hence passing on their culture from one generation to another. He further explains that from its Latin origin, education can be inferred to be the process of bringing up children by adult members of the family and society. Since all the adult members are involved with these tasks of bringing up, rearing, guiding, directing, and educating children, this approach means that education is more than schooling. Therefore these tasks carried out by the adult members in any society complement the efforts of the school. Sifuna (1990) defines education as a process by which people prepare effectively and efficiently to live in their environment.

Boating (1983) maintains that the education of the Africans before the coming of Europeans was informal, and prepared Africans in their responsibilities as adults in their communities. This is what has come to be referred to as traditional African education. Unlike the formal systems of education introduced by the colonialists, it was inseparable from other segments of life. It was not only there to be acquired, but it was actually there to be lived. Children acquired education through the maintenance of and participation in socio-political and religious institutions that ensured effective means of communication between the different generations. Similarly, Sifuna (1990) noted that Africans did not have one single indigenous form of education since they never lived as one nation. He indicates that different African societies had different systems of education to transmit their particular knowledge and skills. However, he concludes that though the indigenous education was different from one community to another, its goals were similar.

It is thus possible to argue that as much as the purpose of education could be common, education system differs from one community to another and from one nation to another. Adeyemi and Adeyinka (2003) pointed out that different traditions value education differently. The community played a key role in providing the necessary environment for learning and education was a lifelong process. In modern times, the preparation of youth for their distinctive roles in society is by acquisition of appropriate skills through schooling.

They contrast traditional African education with modern education maintaining that in recent times institutionalised education seems to, among others, aim at promoting national unity and international understanding especially in developing countries such as Nigeria, Ghana, Tanzania and Malawi. However in developed countries, such as those in Western Europe and North America, education now focuses on the acquisition and marketization of new knowledge in science and technology. Hence, this type of knowledge prepares them for the utilisation and preservation of existing products of science and technology.

My interpretation then is that in the traditional context, the objectives of education are preparation of the youth for different roles in adulthood while in modern times the purpose of schooling is to acquire skills for better future life. Traditionally the purpose of education was to pass on cultural traditions as well as skills. There seems to be a gap between the cultural position of education and the modern position of schooling. In the developing world, and especially in Sub Saharan Africa, schooling has been perceived to be different from traditional education and is deemed to undermine it since both have different objectives. What happens at school is more likely to change the perception of life in terms of traditional education and conformity to traditional cultural values. To some extent, it can be argued that traditional education is threatened by the modern type of schooling. Those who still value traditional education believe that schooling is likely to erode the traditional values which are part of their life. These kinds of attitudes and perceptions of schooling are likely to contribute to making it difficult for many girls to access schooling in the developing world.

Some of the traditions, values, and customs that promoted traditional education have gradually become irrelevant in the modern time, which has led to a move toward schooling. According to Mungwini (2011) modernity has brought with it a new value system, a new way of conceptualizing the individual and the community. The indigenous peoples' outlook on what counted as knowledge has, of necessity, changed, as Africans adapted to, and developed a whole new world-view consistent with Christianity, science and technology. For example, cattle and land were traditionally regarded as symbols of wealth, but due to population explosion, land has become scarce and what was once grazing land is now being cultivated to feed the ever growing number of mouths. Because of this shift, salaried work is being regarded as source of wealth in modern times that can be obtained through schooling. Sifuna (1990) pointed out that, while indigenous education is suitable for traditional Kenyans, its weaknesses, such as neglect of the individual, non-contact with the outside world, and limitations of career choices, do not adequately fit the requirements of todays' globalised

world. The issue my study highlights is that re-entry policy is located at the intersection of traditional African and western forms of education. The re-entry policy is helping girls to have a different life and is part of an international movement that is working to address the rights of girls to access schooling.

The section below outlines the benefits associated with the education for girls, the purpose of this study.

**Benefits of Girls' Education**

The World Declaration on EFA at the Jomtien Conference in 1990 noted the high incidence of girls amongst the children out of school and outlined some of the first signals that the education of girls was important for a global social justice project. It highlighted that girls and women comprised 2/3rds of the large numbers of children without access to primary school and large number of adults without literacy. The exclusion of girls and women from education was thus part of the problem EFA sought to solve. The inclusion of girls and women was seen as part of the solution which was to be supported by policies for universal access and a focus on learning rather than just enrolment. There was also a concern to utilize a range of different forms of delivery, and strengthen the international solidarity that would underpin a common and universal human responsibility (UNESCO, 1990). In undertaking this commitment it is likely to assist other states in recognising Kenya as a responsible member of the international community.

Because of its importance for all, and specifically for girls, education has attracted much attention and interest globally as a result of an increasing interest in human rights. It can be argued that education has been viewed as an instrument for success and development both at individual and societal levels. Education has also been associated with the realisation of democracy and self-emancipation among individuals, and it is for this reason that deprivation of education, especially to girls, is regarded as social injustice and infringement of a fundamental human right. There are many benefits that could be realized by educating girls at various levels. The section that follows outlines these benefits at personal, family and national levels.

The Centre for Rights Education and Awareness (CREAW, 2007) indicates that education is an important pillar that determines one's health and legal status. Education helps people to become aware of their rights and have adequate knowledge of basic health care skills that include; improving child health and reducing infant mortality, complying with medical

prescriptions, observing basic hygienic standards and seeking medical services such as antenatal and postnatal. In addition, the report argues that education enables rationalised thinking and reasoning, providing opportunities for girls and women to learn and understand their rights, making it easier to recognize laws and social attitudes that hinder the enjoyment of their rights. Another aspect outlined by the report is that education is an important tool in liberating girls and women from historical discrimination and disadvantage thus enabling them also to teach the next generation about the benefits of education.

Maluwa-Banda (2004) argues that girls' education is an investment that serves as a way to achieve education for all children. He adds that it has been broadly accepted as being a powerful tool for self-advancement and fulfilment of development outcomes for present and future generations of children. Chege and Sifuna (2006) noted that getting and keeping young people in school, especially girls, dramatically lowers their vulnerability to Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), leads to them having greater independence, equips them to make decisions pertaining to their lives and provides them with higher income earning potential.

Bhana, Morrel, Shefer and Sisa (2010) concur that allowing pregnant teenagers to remain in school and return after giving birth is considered to be significant in delaying a second birth and also in offering young women increased opportunities to get an education and increase their economic standing.

A UNICEF (1999) report confirmed that investing in girls' education leads not only to realisation of female educational attainment, but also benefits such as good mothers' and children's health, sustainable families, women's empowerment, democracy, income growth, and productivity.

CREAW (2007) also reported that women who attain higher levels of education tend to marry later and prefer fewer children. Early marriage in Kenya is higher in rural areas and those areas are reported having lower levels of education. Moreover, harmful practices such as female genital mutilation could be brought to an end by increasing girls' access to education since educated women are less likely to allow their daughters to undergo 'the cut' and are able to make their own choices.

Lawrence Summers, Chief Economist at the World Bank in 1993 emphasised the national benefits of girls' education referring to research that shows that educating females produces

far reaching profits for girls and women themselves, their families, and the societies in which they live. He further remarked that, indeed, during his tenure as chief economist of the World Bank, he became persuaded that once all the benefits are acknowledged, investment in the education of girls may well be the highest profit venture obtainable in the developing world.

Similarly, a key World Bank policy document published in 1995 argued for increasing access to education for women and girls in terms of the benefits that would flow to their existing and future children's health and to the gross domestic product of their countries:

> Mothers with more education provide better nutrition to their children, have healthier children, are less fertile, and are more concerned that their children be educated. The report further states that education in particular female education is key to reducing poverty and must be considered as much part of a country's health strategy as, say, programs of immunisation and access to health clinics (World Bank, 1995, p. 110).

This perspective is supported by United Nations Secretary General, Kofi Annan, who underscored this in a UNICEF (2003) report saying that:

> To educate girls is to educate a whole family. And what is true of families is also true of communities and, ultimately, whole countries. No tool for development more effective than the education of girls. No other policy is likely to raise economic productivity, lower infant and maternal mortality, improve nutrition and promote health including preventing the spread of Human Immunodeficiency Virus/ Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS). No other policy will be as powerful in increasing the changes of education for the next generation. Two of the Millennium Development Goals that are focussed on education for girls and boys alike, pointing out that they are not only goals in their own right, but how we fare in reaching them will be crucial to our ability to reach all other goals. Only by translating them into reality can our international family grow stronger, healthier, more equitable and more prosperous.

Bank (2007a) notes that women's education has been mentioned in a number of international conferences and agreements that have been held since 1990 as being important in bringing about national development and the emergence of a more democratic world. Further

examples of this are given by King and Hill (1993) and Unterhalter (2005) who explain that valued aspects of global policy such as economic growth or social development may be realised through gender equality in education. Zajda, Biraimah and Gaudell (2008) also noted that over the last three decades, and especially since the 1990 World Conference on EFA in Jomtien, Thailand, issues of gender inequality in schools within developing countries have gained increased attention globally.

A study carried out by the African Population and Health Research Centre (2007) noted that secondary education is seen today as being critical for economic development and poverty reduction in Sub Saharan Africa. It further found that the most important strategy for creating economic opportunities and social development for individuals and nations alike was increasing access to quality secondary education. Moreover the foundation for development and prosperity in Sub Saharan Africa would be laid through several benefits associated with secondary education.

In support of this, the CREAW (2007) report argues that education is power and its access should be equal in all regions without discrimination. Therefore, the government should set a target for the minimum level that women should attain, and ensure that all educational institutions are safe havens for the girls.

As indicated above there is strong agreement that education for girls is important for social and economic development and that discrimination against women is not acceptable. This is reinforced by several research articles which show that globally girls' education has always been associated with multiple benefits ranging from individual, communal to national development. The low enrolments for girls in many developing countries indicate aspects of social injustice and gender inequity in education. Increasing access to education through the re-entry policy for girls after school pregnancy could be seen in terms of bringing about social justice and equity in education especially in developing countries and enabling them to realize its benefits.

It would be seen that education is not only important to girls as individuals, but also to families, societies and nations. This strong international and philosophical commitment to the idea that the education of girls is crucial to national wellbeing is different from the traditional view of education as preparation for life roles. Therefore, implementing it in African context might be expected to raise several problems, possibly resulting in a lack of commitment on the ground.

**Exclusion of Girls from Education**

Although a considerable amount of international literature has been published on exclusion, similar African studies are lacking. However, for the purposes of this study, the international findings can have some implications for understanding the issue. A study was undertaken by Osler and Starkey (2005) across six localities in England of 81 girls aged 13 to 15 years in order to understand girls' experiences of schooling and exclusion. Findings in this research suggest that definitions of school exclusion need to be extended to include the experiences of girls. In particular, they maintained that it is important to understand exclusion from school as a wider problem than disciplinary exclusion and to extend it to include truancy, self-exclusion and other absence as a result of pregnancy and caring responsibilities. Their study further suggested that although exclusion from school can sometimes take the form of voluntary self-exclusion, girls often exclude themselves when their schools fail to adapt to their needs, or when the processes of learning are inaccessible. In such situations, they are unable to claim their right to education or access rights through education. They concluded that, in England, the term 'exclusion from school' is generally understood to mean disciplinary exclusion, either on a fixed-term or permanent basis. Other forms of exclusion, particularly exclusion as a result of factors such as bullying, caring responsibilities, truancy and pregnancy are consequently obscured. As the young people who experience these forms of exclusion do not tend to put direct pressure on teachers, their needs are often overlooked.

Gillborn and Gipps (1996) noted that exclusion is being used by schools in Britain more frequently than before on a fixed period or permanent basis. Also they confirmed that two out of every three pupils who are permanently excluded never return to another secondary school. They further explain that preventing some groups from gaining access to the provision of education can be viewed as exclusion. They add that what is important to note at this point is that greater social divisions and levels of exclusion could be encouraged by particular forms of schooling. Although there is not much literature in Africa on exclusion, there is evidence of it in most countries of the continent.

Aikman and Unterhalter (2007) contend that although Africa has some of the most innovative and dynamic examples of what works, neither boys nor girls are doing well in many of these Sub Saharan countries. For example, through the Forum for African Women and Education (FAWE), Africa has a dynamic and active network for working change in girls' education. They further argue that how girls progress through school and complete their education can be problematic even where there are favourable enrolments. In Africa, girls attend school for

an average of only 2.82 years before they reach the age of 16. This is less than anywhere else in the world. Only 46% of girls enrolling in Sub Saharan Africa complete primary school.

Lewis and Lockheed (2007) found that countries in which women have historically been marginalised, trail in educating all children and lag behind on girls' education. They note that issues surrounding excluded girls and schooling have been recognized but not addressed since according to recent global assessments of education rural children, low income children and children from ethnic minorities are still at risk. These issues also expose the girls to the risk of not accessing education or being excluded from education. It was emphasized that girls in excluded groups suffer not only as members of the excluded group but also as girls, and sources of exclusion include: impoverished families, girls from ethnic, or linguistic "minority" communities, girls living in remote settings and girls from lower caste. They further added that these girls are less likely to participate in education and more likely to stay in school only briefly, if they enrol at all, and girls who are pregnant are at the bottom of the barrel.

From the above research, it could be concluded that exclusion is a wider problem and takes various forms and it is different for boys and girls. While it is easy to recognise and understand some forms of exclusion, it is difficult to recognise others. This has led to the low enrolments especially for girls in schools hence they are lagging behind in education. Even though some countries have enacted policies on how to deal with exclusion, many of these policies have not been successful. This study therefore attempts to provide information on how to make these policies effective in addressing exclusion of girls from schools. It also seeks to understand the experiences of the young girls who have been excluded through teenage pregnancy as suggested by Osler and Starkey (2005).

It is worth noting what constrains girls and women from accessing education and the section below highlights the barriers to education for girls in Africa.

## Barriers to Education for Girls in Africa

There are numerous challenges and barriers preventing many girls from accessing education worldwide. This has blocked them from having opportunities to better their lives and hence denied them the enjoyment of individual freedoms. This form of marginalization could be viewed as subjecting the girls to social injustices hence making them unable to enjoy several of their human rights. It is for these reasons that provision of education is regarded as emancipation from those barriers that are confining the girls into marginalised and excluded

25

groups. It is only by understanding the impact of these barriers that significant and meaningful increase in the numbers of girls accessing education can be achieved. Moreover, as I argued in a previous section, there are also communal and national benefits that could be realized by overcoming these barriers.

Maluwa-Banda's (2004) study indicated that there are a variety of reasons that prevent girls from completing education and these include socio-economic, socio-cultural and school related factors. In support of this Bunyi (2008) explains that this combination of factors interacts in complex ways to impact negatively on the participation of girls and women in education. Maluwa-Banda (2004) further noted that in Malawi, teenage pregnancy, disciplinary matters and lack of school fees are the major reasons why students drop out of secondary schools. Further statistics from the Ministry of Education Science and Technology Malawi (MOEST, 2000) show that 3.1% of the female students and 0.1% of the male students dropped out because of schoolgirl pregnancy; 0.8% of the boys and 0.3% of the girls dropped out because of disciplinary matters; and 2.8% of the boys and 2.6% of the girls dropped out because of other reasons, which include lack of support, taking care of sick parents or relatives, lack of school fees and sickness.

In the section that follows each group of barriers currently classified as socio-cultural barriers, socio-economic barriers, and violence as a barrier to inclusion are discussed briefly.

### Social cultural barriers in Africa.

The CREAW (2007) report noted that in a country like Kenya, girls in many communities are still seen as homemakers, not deserving to go to school. Hence, equality and equity in education has not yet been achieved as disparities exist regionally in urban and rural areas and among various communities due to social and cultural factors. The report further points out that despite the introduction of free primary education, massive poverty has crippled many families' efforts to educate their children. Many families with limited resources prefer to send their sons to school to acquire skills, since it is believed that they are more likely to be future sources of income to their parents than girls, as the sons will go on to be the breadwinners. This is supported by the Human Rights Watch (2005) and Bunyi (2008) who indicate that parents in many cultures in developing countries give priority to their sons over their daughters for schooling because of their traditional biases against educating girls. Traditionally sons were seen as being more permanent in their parents' homes since they are expected to inherit the family land and other resources and take care of their parents in their

old age. Parents therefore consider a girl's education to be more beneficial to her husband and his family than to themselves. In a household where resources are scarce and sending all children to schools is difficult, boys are given preference.

Bunyi (2008) furthermore states that socio-cultural practices such as FGM and other rites of passage as well as early marriages and teen pregnancies cause girls to drop out of school prematurely. A global monitoring report carried out by UNICEF (2004) noted that in many societies it is traditional for girls to marry young and in some countries as young as 14. As a consequence, the report establishes that such early marriages mean that these girls must stop their schooling.

Mwanzia and Strathdee (2010) suggest that as a result, in order to increase access to services and participation of disadvantaged groups such as women, the aged, youth, children, physically and mentally challenged, and the poor, affirmative action policies are necessary. Notwithstanding this, in their study they found that the cultural belief that women are less intelligent than men limited the effectiveness of affirmative action policies aimed at addressing gender inequalities. They further claimed that due to such entrenched cultural paternalism, women have arguably become 'unconscious' of cultural and gender inequalities and have come to accept a denial of rights to own property and have leadership and decision making authority as the norm. For this reason, they argued women seemed to prefer male leadership and believe that their voices should be heard through male representatives. This has helped to promote the idea that women are less knowledgeable compared to men, enhancing the cultural view that women are good as housewives, their role is in the kitchen, and suggests that women are the weaker sex and thereby require male 'shields', all of which have led women to devalue their own humanity and potential.

Mwanzia and Strathdee (2010) identified a key determinant to the empowerment of women is addressing the cultural barriers which lead them to be treated as lesser beings and which as a consequence, make them feel insecure. Consequently they propose that to reduce gender inequalities both in schools and educational development, men need to unlearn the cultural beliefs and practices that make them devalue education for girls and not listen to women's ideas. In addition they suggest that unless structural disadvantages such as poverty, lack of information, time, materials and low awareness levels among disadvantaged groups and communities are addressed, emancipation and sustainable development are unlikely. Hart (1992) also suggests that in designing programmes for girls there is need to recognize the

different ways girls are treated in different cultures and discover how to address the barriers to their effective participation in the family, school, and community. For example, he maintains that in many societies it is still assumed that boys will be decision-makers and girls will not. Finally he concludes that to have some special value for girls, the single best strategy or technique is to diversify and integrate all programmes where girls and boys at different stages in the process participate equally. He further adds that during his visits to programmes in the developing world, he observed many examples of innovative projects for street and working boys who are actively involved in evaluating and improving their own lives in a collective manner, but relatively few for girls. Also, whereas working boys are commonly in the streets, the girls are invisible - hidden in kitchens and backyards, involved in endless domestic chores. He thus recommends the creation of more special programmes of participation for these isolated, forgotten children.

The Elimu Yetu Coalition (2005) drew attention to out of school factors that influence girls' participation in education. Their report mentions that these factors could be classified as social and cultural factors which include, among others, early marriage, female circumcision, student pregnancies, the low status of girls and women, poverty and girls' and boys' unequal labour burdens. For example, it states that in communities where traditional practices such as female circumcision are widespread, both girls and boys interviewed felt that girls' education was not valued as highly as boys' education.

The CREAW study (2007) suggested that while boys attend school, girls are less likely to attend and complete school since some of them stay at home to be groomed for marriage and matrimonial responsibility. It further indicates that even where educational opportunities are afforded to girls, equality is not achieved automatically, because girls are many times overburdened with domestic chores, impeding upon their ability to fully concentrate or participate in their studies. Therefore, pregnancy often ensures that they drop out of school permanently, or miss out on attendance to raise the child.

Similarly, the report by CSA (2008) found out that loss of bride price due to pregnancy or the lowering of such prices have forced parents to marry off girls who get pregnant to older men to at least get the anticipated benefits from such marriages. The report indicates that taking such a girl to school is viewed as increasing the risk of the girl getting pregnant again which will erode the bride price further in the event that the girl will be married.

The socio-cultural barriers facing girls in Africa therefore appear related to traditional attitudes to the different roles of boys and girls. To overcome these barriers some writers suggest unlearning of some cultural traditions and values. However to date there is no information on the best way to overcome these barriers or, indeed, how to unlearn a tradition. My study is located in Kuria, an area noted for its strong traditional cultural beliefs and practices. The study will therefore contribute to the understanding of these barriers to education of girls and how educational re-entry policy could be effectively implemented and ultimately improve inclusive education for girls.

### Socio-economic barriers.

The Kuria district is one of the communities that are politically, economically and socially marginalised in the republic of Kenya. It is classified as one of the poorest districts in the republic. As much as issues such as compulsory education, child labour and re-entry into school have been guaranteed in many international and national conventions, education is not free and compulsory in principle and practice. Bunyi (2008) explains that the high direct and indirect costs of schooling act as a barrier to the education of girls. She further mentions that while many countries in Sub Saharan Africa have recently instituted free primary education policies, secondary education is still not free in the great majority of the countries.

Bank (2007b) maintains that until recently exclusion was more commonly reported by writers who focus on the position of young girls who become pregnant while at school. In most countries where enrolment rates are low in primary and secondary schools, exclusion of pregnant and mothering girls opens up scarce spaces for boys who tend to be more valued in economic terms. He further argues that parenting teens often find themselves isolated and are unable to participate in classes or activities within regular school settings though in many countries they are legally entitled to formal inclusion.

A further example is of the Human Rights Watch (2005) report which showed that for many children, particularly those from poor families, school fees and related costs of schooling such as electricity, water, heat, teachers bonuses, books, cost of maintenance, transportation among others put education beyond their reach. Accordingly, in more than a dozen countries, Human Rights Watch found out that these combined costs often cause children to drop out of school, start late, or never attend at all.

Colclough (2004) and Kane (2004) remarked that forms of exclusion vary for boys and girls since the boys are regarded to be carrying more economic value. They indicated that the

financial and social costs of schooling, the low quality of learning and availability of schools are some causes of exclusion from schools for girls.

The EFA monitoring report of 2003/2004 reported that many children may not attend school because they have to work and since most of the work takes place within the household, it is not paid. The report also indicated the regional variations in the incidence of child labour and of the total number of children in the world engaged in child labour: Africa takes the top place of 41% followed by Asia, 21% and Latin America, 17%. It further noted that in Africa, factors such as population growth, a weak economy, famine and armed conflict have contributed to keeping child labour high and school attendance low.

Bunyi (2008) adds that endemic poverty in many Sub Saharan Africa countries impacts on the education of girls in various ways. She reports that at the national level, inadequate resources constrain governments in their effort to provide education and result is that there are inadequate schools and girls more than boys get excluded.

Earlier, Hart (1992) reported that the work of the family in non-industrial countries may not reflect greater awareness of children's competence in these cultures, but simply the greater need for work in the family economy. He further clarified that choice was an important distinction in determining whether a child was participating or being exploited. When, however, a young child is trapped in a house working all the time, it is hard to blame parents for exploitation if they themselves are doing this out of economic necessity. On the other hand, it is important for the child to know that the family is being exploited by the situation, and that the pressures put upon her parents prevent them from offering her the childhood she deserves. It is also important that families and societies be encouraged to reassess the 'necessity' of child labour to ensure it has not simply become an excuse for governmental or societal inaction.

The African Population and Health Research Centre (2007) clarified that although the government introduced free primary education in 2003, an estimated 1,000,000 children of school going age are not attending school. Similarly, the World Bank report (2005b) established that teenage pregnancy is one of the main reasons for girls dropping out of primary school at the age of 12-14. It adds that girls as young as 14 are frequently faced with child care and do not have the support to help them attend school. As Kuria is a poor community, this study will help in gaining a better understanding of the extent to which economic factors contribute to school withdrawal.

**Violence as a barrier to inclusion.**

Unsafe educational environments within the school lead to girls avoiding schools or to their parents asking them to stay away from schools. According to the report by United Nations Girls Education Initiative (UNGEI, 2005) the physical and psychological wellbeing of many children is at risk when the environment within and near their schools is violent. This situation is more likely to cause them to drop out of school entirely and threatens their right to education. Issues of unsafe environment include corporal punishment, violence and sexual harassment against girls by their fellow students and teachers and the risk of violence against girls when travelling to and from school.

An unsafe environment outside the school could prevent many girls from participating in education. A similar view is given by UNICEF (2004) which reports that war is a major barrier for girls wanting to go to school. School buildings are destroyed and the roads leading to them often have dangers ranging from attack to land mines. It furthers presents that many families are displaced from their villages during years of fighting. The report notes the contrast, with the number of girls in schools being on the rise in areas with cease fires.

Unequal power relations between men and women, rape and violence are factors that could be responsible for many young girls being subjected to sexual activities early in their lives. There is a likelihood that when young girls engage in sex they are unable to  say no to sex, and unable to protect themselves against pregnancy, have no power to decide when to have sex, and this may lead to them withdrawing from schools. Jewkes et al., (2001) study in South Africa found that many pregnant teenagers had probably been beaten repeatedly and experienced involuntary sexual introduction. They further note that these teenage sexual affairs are facilitated through unequal power associations which are strengthened by violence. They add that the inequality and lack of power in the relationships make the teenage girls who become pregnant unable to face their partners about them being unfaithful and age differences and poverty in their homes reinforce the situation.

According to the 2003 Kenya Demographic Health Survey, teenage pregnancy is frequent and the study found that a quarter of young women aged 15 to 19 years were either pregnant with their first child or were already mothers. Further statistics from the survey show that 19% of teenage girls were mothers, 5% were pregnant with the first child and 23% of them had begun child bearing. The fact that girls are unable to resist sexual pressures and sexual harassment by male teachers and boys may lead to low self-esteem and eventual drop out.

31

This is supported by Wood and Jewkes (1997) who noted that sexual encounters are sites in which unequal power relations between women and men are expressed. In the context of unequal power, it is always men who determine the timing of sexual intercourse and its nature, including whether or not condoms will be used. They further showed that power relations between men and women in South Africa are commonly manifested as, and imposed through, sexual violence and assault, meaning women commonly find themselves unable to negotiate the timing of sex, and the conditions under which it occurs. Many of them feel powerless even to protect themselves against pregnancy.

Teenage pregnancy has been seen as a threat to the sexual behaviour among the young and moral judgements are made against the girls. This fear that teenage pregnancy may negatively influence the sexual behaviour of other students confirms Pillow's (2006) study that noted a common assumption that the presence of a pregnant girl in school who is perceived to be sexually active may infect other students, activating widespread immoral and loose sexual conduct. According to Bank (2007a), throughout the first half of the 20th century it was common policy to exclude pregnant and mothering students from public schools on the grounds that they posed a threat to the control of sexual behaviour. She notes that this is still the case in various countries around the world where enrolments rates are low. Whether or not this is the case in Kuria district has not been explored. The CREAW (2007) points out that sexual activity among adolescent Kenyans begins quite early, often with many different partners before marriage. Moreover, this sexual activity is usually unprotected leading to unwanted pregnancies, unsafe abortions, dropping out of school prematurely, contracting STIs and STDs including HIV/AIDS.

All the above factors combine to present an unfriendly environment which girls must endure to remain in school, as a result of which their learning is severely compromised, even if they do remain. This is supported by research which indicates that access to education and learning has improved in areas that are peaceful or have witnessed cease fires. The influence of these factors need investigating in Kenya hence my study would help in understanding these barriers and how best they can be eliminated to improve inclusion of girls in education.

**General Policy Formulation and Implementation**

In defining policy, Ball (2006) suggests that policies should be examined as 'procedures' and 'results' and not 'things'. He says policy is equally challenging and always shifting in a state of "becoming, of 'was' and 'never was' and 'not quite', for any text a plurality of readers

must necessarily produce a plurality of readings" (p. 11). He further argued that policies are sometimes 'enacted' on the basis of misperception. However, there may often be key intermediaries of policy in any background who are dependent on upon by others to communicate policy to perspectives. But also certain policy texts may be collectively undermined. The aim of this study is to improve understanding about the implementation of the re-entry policy and the ways in which it might be currently undermined.

### Policy formulation.

Different scholars from different disciplines such as sociology and psychology among others have come up with different approaches to policy formulation. Porter and Hicks (1995) suggest that the ultimate success of any policy depends largely on how it is formulated. They argue that involving the mid-level technocrats and bureaucrats responsible for translating policies in the policy process earlier rather than later would achieve greater results. Lewin (2000) identified the top-down approach as the most familiar approach of planners and policy makers. However he also mentions that there are many critics of this approach who indicate that the top-down approach is unresponsive to the needs of the mass of people and that marginalised groups are often overlooked in the process of defining and implementing policy. He also argues that an alternative view of policy generation, bottom-up, starts from individual and social needs rather than a governmental view of priorities for development. He suggests that one way forward is to adopt a consultative method coupled with policy analysis of national priorities.

Proponents of a synthesis of top-down and bottom-up approaches like Sabatier (1986) assert that in contrast to the top-down approach which starts from a policy decision and focuses on the extent to which its objectives are attained over time and why, the bottom-up approach starts by identifying the network of actors involved in service delivery in one or more local areas and asks them about their goals, strategies, activities and contracts.

Drawing from Weick (1982), organisations that have common features such as set of rules governing them, agreement among members on what those rules are, monitoring structures in place to check on obedience to those rules and have provisions for receiving feedback for improvement, could be termed as being tight coupled organisations. On the other hand loose coupled organisations could be lacking consensus on policies or any of the features of a tight coupled organisation. Any of the above two systems adopted by any organisation is likely to impact on the way its policies are formulated and implemented.

At the same time theorists of loose coupling and tight coupling systems (Fusarelli, 2002; Weick, 1982) have argued for the advantages and disadvantages of each of the two approaches to policy formulation and implementation. However they add that successful general reform initiatives combine elements of both top-down and bottom-up strategies hence the possibility of both tight and loose coupling.

In a loose coupling system, people are interdependent, flexible and adjust to minor changes with rapid reactions to small deviations. As much as this system allows independence and enables native accommodation, their efforts are unclear and they do not share sense of direction. However in tight coupling system, opinion is unified and responses are consistent with obligations made after conceivable concerns.

Therefore, it can be noted that there is need for a balance between the two systems with regard to policy formulation and implementation. As much as it is important to recognise and accommodate diverse views from all stakeholders, it is equally important to have a shared sense of direction of their efforts. Finally, the common direction among all stakeholders should be built through consensus. This is what my study is advocating for with regard to the formulation and implementation of re-entry policy.

### Policy implementation.

Duemer and Mendez-Morse (2002) explain that implementation of any policy involves the process of moving from decision to operation, thereby understanding efforts to mutate policy during implementation are essential to recognizing how policy may change through implementation, from its original form. They maintain that it is fundamental to understand the differences between institutions and individuals since mutation is more likely when policy is developed in a climate that regards implementation as merely a technical detail. Further, they indicate that policy can be changed or revised by institutional officials from inception to implementation in a manner that more closely meets their conception of what is in their or the institution's best interests.

In trying to answer the question of why policies fail, Stasz and Wright (2005) identified three likely responsible disconnections: initial expectations, local application and its impact. They found that the implementation context is crucial in correctly defining the problem, matching it with available capacity, and considering the beliefs of the locality. Similarly according to Tee (2008), policy implementation is affected by the dynamic interaction between the central government and other system levels, where different values and survival issues of policies

take centre stage. He writes that although major education policies are designed at higher tiers of authority, the application of policy depends on lower levels: local authorities, school boards and teachers. In as much as bureaucrats are social agents they interpret policy goals and use a considerable amount of discretion in the practice of their duties.

Yanow (1993) posits that acts of implementation necessarily entail interpretations by actors in the situation hence multiple meanings and multiple interpretations are anticipated. He further suggests that these multiple interpretations may facilitate or impede the policy interpretation depending on how various actors make meanings of situations. He maintains that such multimodality becomes the reason for, and the explanation of, implementation difficulties as well as successes. The task of implementation analysis is therefore to uncover or anticipate these multiple interpretations. Hence it is important and desirable to cast the net of stakeholders widely to include the members of the greater public who have interest in the issue and also who are also involved in the creation and sharing of policy meaning.

It can be suggested that for policies in education to be more effective and achieve their objectives, it is vital for them to be consultative and incorporate the views of all stakeholders. This would ensure support of the policies by the public, leading to their full implementation. Any diversity of views and experiences from all stakeholders would ultimately enrich policy formulation and implementation process resulting to full and sustained attainment of its objectives. The findings about public participation in the policy process confirms Datnow and Park's (2009) study which explains that policy outcomes are determined by local factors since it is at this level that policies are interpreted and enacted. More importantly,

> public policy, to put it flatly, is a continuous process, the formulation of which is inseparable from its execution. Public policy is being formed as it is being executed, and it is likewise being executed as it is being formed (p. 350).

## Policies on Teenage Pregnancy while in Education

International literature relating to the schooling of girls who have experienced teenage pregnancy, and the implementation of relevant policies, tends to fall under the umbrella of gender equity, non-discrimination and specialist interventions for pregnant girls.

Teenage pregnancies have been generally in the past and also now viewed as undesirable. Jones et al. (1985) contend that there is broad agreement in developed countries that teenagers require help in avoiding pregnancies and births since they are viewed in general to

35

be undesirable. However they found out that one reason for the more successful experience of teenage pregnancy in developed countries was that possibly public attention was directed at a search for solutions to prevent increased teenage pregnancy and childbearing and not directly focussed on the morality of early sexual activity.

Allen and Bourke (1998), noted that most of the teenage mothers had not planned their pregnancy so many of them often reported being shocked or surprised to find that they were pregnant even if they had not been using contraception.

On the other hand Baragwaneth (1997) established that in New Zealand, although section 8 of the Education Act 1989 provides that "people who have special educational needs (whether because of disability or otherwise) have the same rights to enrol and receive education at state schools as people who do not" (p.2), many schools may not actively encourage young mothers to stay in school. She attributed this attitude to the fact that schools may not provide for the child and it is unreasonable to expect that a school should allow a student to bring her baby into the classroom. She further reveals that since young mothers suffer educational difficulties, first because of their pregnancy and then because of the need to care for their child, it means that they cannot practically be accommodated in a conventional class. She therefore suggests that there is need for policy to encompass students such as these and alternative systems of education, that if properly monitored and evaluated, can and do work.

A similar perspective is given by De Jonge (2001) who points out that teenage pregnancy is considered a public health problem in Western societies because its association with social and economic problems. Similarly Pillow (2006) notes that teenage pregnancy has been associated with cultural shortfalls and seen as carelessness on the side of the pregnant girls. She further adds that these conceptions and attitudes of teenage pregnancy as recklessness and negligence of the girls, impact on policy and practice affecting the education of pregnant and mothering students. She then suggests that the assumption that the pregnant girls are irresponsible has limited the monitoring and collection of information regarding the education of pregnant and mothering students. Consequently, she concludes that the education of pregnant and mothering students will continue to be determined not by knowledgeable investigation but by beliefs.

Policy responses on teenage pregnancy appear to have been unsuccessful. Vlachou (2004) reports that different countries have come up with stated intentions and written policies that

are meant to achieve inclusion. Although inclusion as a policy has received attention globally through debates, there are difficulties in its full attainment resulting in piecemeal reforms. She further argues that, ironically, as much as there is a growing concern over the issues of rights and inclusion, exclusionary practices and hindrances in various social contexts are evident. It is therefore paramount to understand why these policies that are meant to achieve inclusive education are unsuccessful. Equally, for the re-entry policy to be more useful in the realization of inclusive education there is need for a consultative approach, incorporation and sensitization of all stakeholders on issues about education. This could possibly lead to the support of education practices and policies by all education actors and give an opportunity for the marginalised, who are always the minority, to be heard. It could also help in the elimination of the prevalent exclusion and discrimination practices in education systems.

Responses to teenage pregnancy have often called for more support for the pregnant girls and mothering students. In line with supporting pregnant girls, De Jonge's (2001) study revealed that socio-economic problems are, to a great extent, precursors rather than penalties of teenage motherhood. He then suggested that policies need to give emphasis to support services for the young mothers to enable them to recover from social disadvantage.

Riordan (2002) clarifies this by stating that young parents are rarely specifically identified by education policies as a group 'at risk' of experiencing educational disadvantage or targeted by strategies or initiatives to combat early school leaving or educational disadvantage. He therefore recommends that there is a need for a response through a comprehensive support system involving all relevant agencies and education policies and strategies to recognize the diversity of needs, life experiences and circumstances amongst teenage parents.

Other policy responses have called for more outreach programmes to target and benefit all pregnant girls, mothering students and other girls in all settings. These outreach programmes are meant to support the pregnant girls, mothering students and prevent the occurrence of teenage pregnancy among other girls. Cummings and Williams (2008) affirm that marginal children and youth portray a special challenge to the world's education system since they are often invisible, vulnerable and regularly excluded. They further argue that reaching these children through conservative approaches is difficult. They suggest that educationalists concerned with educating marginal children must "get out of school" and provide educational programs using student-adapting provision thereby overcoming obstacles they face in accessing education.

Unterhalter (2007) agrees that provision of schools for all children and enrolment for girls are some of the global intervention approaches meant to bring about social justice. The aspects of girls' differences which make them vulnerable and often hard to reach, have made them receive special attention. She further clarifies this by mentioning that aid agencies' work in countries with a low net enrolment ratio has focussed on programmes to enhance girls' access to education.

Lewis and Lockheed (2007) concur that very little is known about how to successfully attract excluded girls into primary schools and retain them through secondary school. Though useful, existing knowledge on generic problems is unlikely to be sufficient in shaping policies that meet the needs and concerns of parents and children from excluded communities. They further found that experiences with excluded groups in some countries such as New Zealand and United States of America, showed that traditional incentives were insufficient to attract girls back to school, meaning, extra effort was required to reach them. It can be noted here that although the policy is in place in Kenya, it is not known to what extent it is meeting the needs of parents and children.

Policy implementation for inclusive education in general points to the importance of a 'ground up' approach, but where teenage pregnancy is concerned, literature still advocates a 'top-down' approach. The process of formulating and implementing policies in inclusive education has always neglected to take into account the voices of the excluded groups. The policies have often been informed by what the governments and policy makers think is the problem and not by the experiences and knowledge of the excluded groups, for example the pregnant teenagers and teenage parents. Osler and Starkey (2005) agree that the struggle for the right to education is an on-going process and educational exclusion routinely involves the process of multiple discrimination which is structural. They say that the affected people, despite their disadvantage, are often able to identify both ways in which they are excluded and the changes which need to take place if their right to education is to be secured.

Oduaran and Bhola (2006) argue that the challenge of the new century is to expand access, while dismantling existing structures of exclusion and discrimination. If this challenge is overcome then this could lead to a new order of accessing education being reconstructed which would serve the interests of all stakeholders. They further argue that ultimately, social justice would be realized, thereby serving the cause of prosperity and peace within, between, and among the nations of the world. It is worthy identifying the various existing forms of

exclusion and discrimination with the aim of eliminating them. The removal of these barriers would prepare the ground to ensure successful implementation of re-entry policy leading to inclusive education.

Bank (2007) asserts that across many highly industrialized countries, there is a crisis of consensus over inclusiveness in schools. On one hand there are those who want to reward students who are most productive, while on the other hand there are those who see the classroom as a public forum for challenging social injustices in education. She concurs that the conflicts of formal inclusion versus formal exclusion between these two groups, shape policy debates over whether to use pregnancy as a basis for grouping students and the nature of their education. It can be suggested here that democratic discussions among conflicting groups based on rationality and equality would bring about the much wanted consensus on educational policies. This is important as stakeholders' voices are significant in shaping educational policies and the inclusion of their views in policy formulation and implementation could lead to the support of the educational practices. Jacobsen (2009) points out that to maintain satisfaction and loyalty, it is critical to understand what the people have to say about their public schools, hence activating their voice. She further argues that the voice of the people can provide policy makers with important direction in policy formulation and implementation.

Aikman and Unterhalter (2007) agree that an analysis of the barriers and inequalities faced by girls and women inside and outside school in the most marginalised and exploited communities is important to government agencies. They maintain that involvement of girls and women and other marginalised groups in the planning of policy and implementation strategies would be of significant value. The incorporation of these marginal groups into decision making process will lead to successful innovative approaches to education while taking into account their rights of citizenships.

Stromquist (2001) argues that girls and women continue to face discrimination in the educational systems of their respective countries and studies focussing on access have failed to document these statistics. In this regard, more studies based on qualitative research methods are urgently needed. She further reports that education for girls still has tensions as access, completion and quality goals remain unfulfilled. In as much as compensatory policies make sense, there is a danger in restricting them to poor girls as the group most in need.

There seems to have been a shift in policy emphasis around the world away from seeing teenage pregnancy as a problem, to seeing it as a consequence of inequality. However, there is still a lack of research into the experiences of the young mothers (Arai, 2009; Pillow, 2006).

There is need for the repoliticisation of teen pregnancy as an education issue to enable pregnant and mothering students to be provided with the education for which they are eligible and that they merit. This move would enable a change of attention from the teen mothers to the educational policy and practice, recognising and acknowledging that pregnant and mothering students have the same rights to an education as their peers (Duncan, 2007; Pillow, 2006). It is towards this repoliticisation of teenage pregnancy and putting emphasis on the pregnant girls' and mothering students' experiences, that my study is directed.

Duncan (2007) noted that in Britain, the New Labour's political party used the teenage pregnancy strategy to understand teenage parents as victims of ignorance, misinformation and low expectations. He argued that there is little evidence that lack of knowledge causes pregnancy or that increased knowledge prevents it. He further noted that the age at which pregnancy occurs seems to have little effect on future social outcomes, and that many young mothers themselves express positive attitudes to motherhood, describing how motherhood has made them feel stronger, more competent, more connected to their children and more responsible. He believed that in this case becoming a young mother may not cause poor outcomes in terms of education and income, rather both young motherhood and poor outcomes may be caused by pre-pregnancy social disadvantage. He therefore suggests that teenage parenting may therefore be a consequence of social disadvantage rather than its cause. He further argues that decisions about policy are made within a political culture, concerned with political gains and losses within a balance of forces. He concludes that narrow feasible solutions to implementation problems which promise some gain might be welcomed, but research implying that current policy is misconceived and that a new paradigm is needed, which therefore threatens political losses, may not even be recognized. He then recommends that to correct the situation instead of being focused on blaming the victims, attention should be directed towards removing the inequalities that produce the problem.

It can be noted that there are always symptoms that particular children are more likely to drop out and that there is need for the policy makers to understand that dropping out of school by

children is a process. It is also important that the policy makers identify these signs that are crucial areas of intervention. It is equally essential to understand how different interactions between factors work in particular contexts to exclude girls from education.

There seems to be strong support in the literature for accessing the views of stakeholders and this study aims to highlight the importance of considering stakeholders' opinions in relation to teenage pregnancy policies. Knowledge about the implementation of the re-entry policy would inform general policy in inclusive education. The literature in this section also indicates that researching stakeholders' perspectives is also important, as is sensitising people to the issues involved.

## Implementing Inclusive Policies

According to Ainscow, Booth and Dyson (2006) inclusion may be viewed as being about reducing discrimination on the basis of gender, class, disability, sexual orientation, ethnicity and family background. However they argue that setting global targets to be applied for specific groups has limited value, because exclusion always occurs locally. They add that consequently the priorities which need to be addressed are the barriers that need to be overcome within particular countries, regions and communities.

Most of the required changes recommended by the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action (1994) do not relate exclusively to the inclusion of children with special needs. They are part of a wider reform of education needed to improve its equality and relevance and promote higher levels of learning achievement by all pupils. The World Declaration on EFA underscored the need for a child-centred approach aimed at ensuring the successful schooling of all children. Similarly Ainscow et al. (2006) believed that inclusion referred to the presence, participation and achievement of all students vulnerable to exclusionary pressures, not only those with impairments or those who are categorised as having special educational needs. They further added that inclusion is concerned with all children and young people in schools, and inclusion and exclusion are linked together so that inclusion involves the active combating of exclusion, and inclusion is seen as a never ending process.

Ainscow and Miles (2009) claim that inclusion requires a move towards an analysis of the barriers to participation and learning experienced by students within the education system. They suggest that it must involve all stakeholders within the local community, including families, political and religious leaders and the media. They add that certain barriers could limit the presence, participation and performance of some learners. The promotion of

inclusive education should encourage the improvement of school conditions in ways that would be of benefit to all of their students.

The existence of exclusion and discrimination of girls as a group has led to some intervention measures being put in place by many developing countries in an effort to overcome the barriers that prevent girls from accessing education. It is believed that these interventions could bring about social justice, equity and inclusion of all and especially girls into educational systems. One of these intervention measures is the re-entry policy for girls after teenage pregnancy. Although this policy has been enacted in law in many developing countries, its implementation is yet to be assessed in terms of benefiting more girls and attracting them back to school.

Booth (1996) maintains that it is useful to think of inclusion in education as involving two processes: "the process of increasing the participation of pupils within the cultures and curricular of mainstream schools and the process of decreasing exclusionary pressures. To attempt the first without the second is self-defeating (p. 34)". He further explains that through participation, issues about the right to be included and the value of diversity are raised, since to be excluded is to be disempowered, to be constituted as 'other' and outside of a 'normal' frame of reference.

Barton (1997) states that there are conceptual challenges involved in defining inclusive education. He further writes that the intentions and values of inclusive education are part of a wider human rights approach to its social relations and conditions. He adds that the creation of equal opportunities for all, helps to provide a basis for the identification of existing features including policy and practices within the society and specific institutions that are unacceptable and must be challenged and changed.

Clark, Dyson, Millward and Robson (1999) argue that teachers who do not have the freedom of working individually, and follow a routinized and somewhat narrow expertise, are less likely to develop suitable problem-solving strategies which will enable them to respond appropriately to the diversity of learners in their classrooms. They then suggest that in terms of its internal structures and practices, the inclusive school is different from the non-inclusive school. Ainscow (2005) has suggested that inclusion must focus on increasing the capacity of local neighbourhood, mainstream schools to support the participation and learning of an increasingly diverse range of learners and this is what my study aims to do.

Several suggestions have been made to guide the implementation of inclusive policies (Barton, 1997; Booth, 1996; Clark et al., 1999; UNESCO, 1994). This study sought to investigate whether, in the experiences of stakeholders, these suggestions were reflected in the re-entry policy.

Sykes, Schneider and Plank (2009) contend that current literature acknowledges the complexities of implementing inclusive policies and the importance of ensuring that stakeholders' interests are met in order to ensure full uptake of the policies. They also identify a particular gap in the literature regarding inclusion and the experiences of minority group children. Furthermore, current theory implies that policy is less likely to be implemented if the general context is unsupportive. "To this end, the importance of including 'different types of knowledges' " is noted by Opfer (2009, p. 406). It is therefore crucial for the different experiences and perceptions of various stakeholders in relation to the re-entry policy to be understood with the objective of determining its implementation. This could help in gaining support of the policy from all stakeholders and inform inclusive education in general. This is supported by Sykes et al. (2009) who agree that research with this focus will contribute to furthering our understanding of the experiences of poor and minority children at secondary level. By focussing on the experiences of a specific minority group, young girls who have become pregnant while at school, and other stakeholders' perspectives, this study can contribute to the understanding of how to make the re-entry policy more effective.

## Pregnancy Policies in Africa

International literature on inclusive policies indicates that for government interventions in education to be sustained and to bring about positive changes, it is important to involve all the stakeholders in education. The understanding of these circumstances or causes of gender inequity would be crucial in gaining support for policies in education meant to bring about inclusive education. This could allow a diversity of stakeholders' voices to be heard and be incorporated in policy formulation and implementation. However, in Africa, policy responses to teenage pregnancy have not involved all stakeholders. This has often led to a lack of local support or resistance to policy implementation.

Several studies have suggested that policy interventions reflect the traditional western perspective. Some propose that more support is needed while others recommend preventative approaches. Mughogho and Chamdimba (2005) noted that the government of Malawi has initiated positive developments that are meant to eliminate biases in the education system,

and that a re-entry policy for pregnant girls is one of those initiatives. However they further established that despite such efforts, the re-entry policy lacks the support systems necessary for effective implementation, and it has not been widely publicised to the would-be beneficiaries. A similar perspective is given by Kadzamira (2007) who reported that most countries in the region of Southern Africa have now introduced policies of re-admission that allow teenage mothers to complete school. However, she also notes that there is evidence that where this policy has been implemented it has been more of a reactive than preventive strategy. She adds it is not well known to what extent girls are taking advantage of this policy initiative and returned to school after giving birth. She concludes that when the new pregnancy policy was assessed, it was found to be inadequate in dealing with the problem of teenage pregnancy. Therefore it would be quite informative to find out what other support systems those are likely to ensure the successful implementation of educational policies. It would also be important to find out how the views of the would-be beneficiaries of the educational policies could be incorporated in policy formulation and implementation.

Grant and Hallman (2008) note that, in the developing world, few studies have focused on the prevalence of school girl pregnancy and its relationship to prior school experiences and subsequent educational attainment. They maintain that except in qualitative studies, the potentially simultaneous factors affecting pregnancy and leaving school are rarely examined. They further report that although more and more countries now officially allow girls to remain in or return to school after a pregnancy, in many instances these policy changes have had little effect on girls' behaviours, perhaps because the policies are not uniformly enforced. They recommend that educational goals that may discourage school girl pregnancy should be fostered. A program should be designed that can identify and reach girls who perform poorly early with incentives for ensuring their timely progression through primary school and access to reproductive health information and services during the middle and secondary grades.

There are some new ideas that propose a new paradigm which is the unmaking of culture and affirmative action programmes in schools (e.g., Mwanzia & Strathdee, 2010). Chilisa (2002) reported that there has been an increase of gender-sensitive policies in education in Sub-Saharan Africa in the last decade which sought among other things to remove imbalances in school access, participation and achievement between boys and girls. One of the strategies which gave boys and girls equal opportunity to educational access and participation was allowing school girls who get pregnant to continue with their education. However in her case study of Botswana, she found that re-entry policies fall short of challenging and transforming

existing gender relations. This is because they are still bound to traditional ideologies that encourage domination and oppression of women by men. She concludes that the re-entry policy in Botswana has had minimal success, mainly because it has scarcely addressed the cultural practices that reinforce unequal power relations between men and women. It is worthwhile considering some of these existing traditional and ideological barriers that are strongly grounded in conservative cultural values which encourage domination and oppression. Dismantling some of these existing traditional barriers would be desirable since it would enable successful implementation of the re-entry policy for girls. However caution should be taken when dismantling the traditional cultures to attain transculturation and avoid resistance to change.

Klein, Kramarae, and Richardson, (2007) show that enrolment in secondary schools in Sub Saharan Africa represents 20 % of the appropriate age group (both boys and girls). This low percentage indicates that access to secondary school education continues to be very limited. They state that in an effort to reduce gender inequalities, policy making organs in many countries have undertaken several measures among them:

1. Involving institutions of civil society, especially women led NGOs that support the education of girls and women.
2. Developing and implementing school policies that do not expel pregnant girls, but rather enable them to complete their studies.
3. Providing accelerated programs for the girls who have been out of school for several years.
4. Designing and implementing general practices to welcome adolescent mothers and pregnant girls in school setting.

It is valuable to comprehend this connection between culture and re-entry policy since this would bring to light some of the societal, familial, individual and structural barriers that work against access and retention in education. This study aims to give some insights on how to improve the implementation of the re-entry policy and enable it to cater for teen parents' needs and those of their children. This could be realised by identifying existing social disadvantages that are unacceptable and must be changed, or challenged, and some of the support systems for effective implementation of the policy.

The next section will consider literature related to Kenya in order to see if the same tensions exist.

**Inclusive Policies in Kenya**

There is little literature in Kenya about the re-entry policy. The Elimu Yetu Coalition (2005) reported that even though Kenya's education policy does not separate girls' and women's schooling, their participation is categorised by noticeable inequalities. It further indicates that there are also wide variations in drop-out rates between regions, and in the last 10 years completion rates in Kenya have never exceeded 50%. The report adds that although legislation exists which recognises the rights and responsibilities of government and schools, it is quite another issue to have these recognized and enforced.

This is supported by Mensch, Clark, Lloyd and Erulkar (2001) who state that there is little attention to the context of adolescents' sexual activity. In their Kenyan study they found that pregnancy is unlikely to be the leading proximate cause of girls leaving school. They note that many other reasons may cause a girl to withdraw from school during her adolescence, including factors such as the absence of social and economic opportunities for girls and women and the demands placed on them. Coupled with the gender inequities known to exist within the education system, this may result in unsatisfactory school experiences, poor academic performance and resignation to, or preference for, early motherhood. They recommend that in such circumstances, the effort to make schools more congenial to girls would suggest itself as a course of action, rather than focusing on efforts to prevent them from becoming pregnant. These preventative approaches are in keeping with some of the western approaches mentioned earlier.

The CREAW (2007) report agrees that many studies on girls and women vis-à-vis health and education have been carried out in Kenya with conclusions on the various issues afflicting and affecting them. Furthermore, the report indicates that despite the necessity of accessing health and education services for this group of society it is regrettable that, in Kenya, only a small percentage can access these services easily with the majority having to contend with mediocre services that are few and far between. The report shows that education in Kenya is faced with many gender and regional disparities. For example, in Nairobi's informal settlements only 22% of 15 to 17 year old girls were enrolled in school compared to 68% nationally and 73% in rural areas. However, these studies do not specifically focus on pregnancy policies.

Mule (2008) found that since the 1970s, researchers and critics of Kenya's educational system have argued that the state has historically endorsed an expansionist approach that has

obscured the goal of gender equity in education and failed to address gender inequity in its obvious and subtle forms. She further argues that strategies such as boosting enrolments among others to expand education have failed to adequately address educational gender inequity in Kenya. Consequently Achoka (2007) commented that as a nation, although Kenya hopes to achieve EFA by the year 2015, this is an uphill task, given the various challenges in the education sector. He further states that the year 2015 is also significant globally because it is the target year for the fulfilment of the eight Millennium goals; however, the pandemic secondary school dropout in Kenya is alarming. For instance he found out that, in a period of 10 years, 1992-2002, the average dropout and completion rates for girls were 20% and 80% respectively, while for the boys the dropout and completion rates were 14% and 87% respectively. Achoka attributes the pandemic secondary school drop out to poverty, early pregnancies and marriages, HIV/AIDS, drug –abuse and low self-esteem.

Unterhalter (2007) notes that with the election of new government in Kenya in 2003, 1.3 million children returned to schools due to abolition of fees in primary schools. However this achievement became difficult to sustain due to insufficient provision of classrooms, teachers and general support from the public. She further points out that although there was increase of enrolment countrywide some parents kept their daughters away due to conditions at schools.

It can be observed here that it is vital to seek to know what these conditions at schools are which keep girls away and which become barriers in their accessing education and subsequent exclusion. In order to increase and sustain achievements in education in terms of access and retention, it is important that all these conditions are exhaustively identified and audited with the objective of removing them while making schools safe for all children, especially girls.

Mule (2008) points out that the reality is that adolescent girls and adult women are not always guaranteed the rights implied in various national and international conventions documents in Kenya. Education as a right must not be understood only in terms of access. Research has revealed that there is more to educational gender inequity than access, and that equity issues span across regional and economic differences. It would be of benefit to find out how to move beyond enrolment access and parity to include ways of expanding re-entry of girls into schools while taking care of their needs and those of their children.

## Conclusion

A review of relevant literature shows that there are different cultural understandings of education and the case for girls' education is made in relation to westernised concepts of education. This western perspective of girls' education might be expected to create difficulties especially in culturally strong regions such as Kuria. The re-entry policy for girls is located in this intersection between traditional African and western perspective of education. Teenage mothers in Kuria are in a very difficult place as they face all the barriers mentioned in the literature.

A review of the policy related literature shows that international literature currently supports a ground up approach to policy formulation and implementation. Pregnancy policies, however, seem to have been unsuccessful internationally. Furthermore, they appear to rely mainly on a supportive and preventative approach since teen pregnancy is still viewed as undesirable. There are several calls for a new paradigmatic approach that addresses the cultural and gendered contexts and encourages the young women. This shift focuses on the pregnant girls' and mothering students' experiences and interprets teenage pregnancy as an educational issue.

There is very little research about pregnancy policies and several writers identify a need for more research. In particular there is a call for research that involves stakeholders and seeks to understand the experiences of young women who are of school age and pregnant. Therefore this study would bring about deeper understanding of the re-entry policy and explore ways it can be made effective in attracting excluded girls back to school. It also highlights the importance of considering stakeholders' views in relation to pregnancy policies, an area that has been ignored as evidenced from the above reviewed literature. This knowledge on the implementation of the policy would inform general policy in inclusive education.

# CHAPTER FOUR

# METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, the location of critical theory background, with a particular focus on social justice is outlined. The methodology and methods of data collection, and data analysis are specified. A discussion of the credibility and trustworthiness of the study and ethical issues conclude this chapter.

This study sought to find out the perceptions of re-entry policy in Kuria for the MOE officials, head teachers, current students and parents. It also intended to elicit stories of young mothers who have dropped out of school. The specific questions that guided this study were:

1.     How is the re-entry policy perceived in the Kuria district for the head teachers, MOE officials, current students, teen mothers and parents?

        a) What is the awareness of the policy?

        b) What is the attitude of stakeholders to the re-entry policy?

        c) What is the knowledge about the policy?

2.     What are the stories of young mothers who have dropped out of school?
3.     What factors might improve girls' participation in school?
4.     What are the implications of this study for inclusive policy making?

## Theoretical Background

This study draws upon two frameworks for a better understanding of how the re-entry policy for girls after schoolgirl pregnancy might be better implemented. These frameworks are critical theory and social constructivism. I used critical theory as a lens in understanding the implementation of the re-entry policy for girls. One of the main tenets of critical theory as developed by Habermas, one of the leading critical theorists (Carr & Kemmis, 1986), is emancipation of people by making them aware of the basis of their misrepresentations through self-reflection and self-understanding of their situations. This liberation may lead to engaging the individuals in reconstruction to enable them to pursue their goals in life. Drawing from critical theory, I found a way to critique the implementation of re-entry policy with the objective of bringing to light relationships of power and inequality, and work towards empowerment. This could lead to transforming some of the participants' social

effects. Critical theory helped me in identifying and exploring my research problem which is the implementation of the re-entry policy for girls.

There is a possibility that almost all stakeholders in education view exclusion from school due to pregnancy as acceptable even though it could have denied many young girls access to education, better lives and may have led to their becoming miserable. By exposing these misrepresentations and experiences as taken for granted and unexamined, I hope to provide greater understanding of the re-entry policy for girls. This could lead to inculcation of hope among the groups of young girls who could have already given up and lost hope of completing schooling.

The implementation of the re-entry policy can be explained in terms of critical theory particularly in the use of the communicative actions. Critical theory takes the view that the stakeholders and actors in education such as policy makers, head teachers, teachers, MOE officials, students and parents, should be engaged in free, open and democratic deliberations in order to move beyond basic information, discussion and communications (Waghid, 2002). According to this theory, meaningful enlightenment and the ability to challenge the falsehoods and conventions that influence the implementation of the policy could be exposed through democratic deliberation and consultations. The illumination of situations attained due to communicative actions is expected to lead to cultivation of a belief system based on self-understanding and self-evaluation, hence an optimistic approach towards education for all and promotion of the re-entry policy. I believe that it is possible that the involvement of different groups of participants in education through democratic sharing of their experiences could lead to creating knowledge and awareness of how the purposes in their lives have been distorted. This understanding and cognizance of their circumstances could bring about ways of eliminating these distortions and the developing and engagement of rational interest.

Carr and Kemmis (1986) indicate that one of the central tenets of critical theory according to Habermas (1984) is emancipatory interest in liberty and independence. They further note that human beings may achieve self-emancipation through critical theory that could expose their distorted situations and show how they could be eliminated. Sykes, Schneider and Plank (2009) argue that critical theory is a suitable and robust legacy as it offers valuable insights in the policy arena that may help educational stakeholders such as teachers, practitioners, researchers, policy advocates, parents and students to jointly address concerns in education through research. They further note that social revolution as an agenda in educational practice

50

could be made stronger, clearer and more persuasive through critical theory. Therefore it can be argued that issues and challenges facing educational practices can be well understood by exposing them to critique. Through critical theory any misrepresentations about educational practices could be publicized and transformed for the better. This could lead to awareness and better understanding of re-entry policy and its improvement to make it more effective. According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000), critical theory clearly points out what sort of conduct is expected in a social democracy. They argue that it goes further than mere accounting for this behaviour to recognition of a society that is created on equality and democracy for all its members. In particular they emphasize that it seeks to encourage individual liberties, equality and empowerment within a democratic society. This is supported by Young (1992) who asserts that critical theory unwraps the problem through rational problem solving. He adds that critical theorists consider open communication to be critical and most resourceful in problem-solving to both community and learners in classroom.

Prasad (2005) explains that the theory of communicative action develops out of Habermas' (1984) proposition that to be human is to communicate with the intention of attaining the ultimate of honest agreement. He upholds that the harmonizing of undertakings of members of societies is a product of communication, so if that society is to be proficient in any form at all, then communication should be focussed on agreement, understanding and consensus. Referring to Habermas (1984), Prasad (2005) points out that to be current and moral, this consensus has to be reached under conditions of rationality and equality. What Habermas (1984) calls a model speech community can be attained by members of that community communicating rationally, conversationally and free of force and influence. A similar view is expressed by Wuthnow, Hunter, Bergesew and Kurzweil (1984) who report that the sincerity and truthfulness with which certain members direct their meanings to others, and whether or not acts of planned communication correctly express the contextual agreement that occurs among actors regarding standards of communication, gives communicative action its legitimacy. They further argue that Habermas wishes that knowledge and ideals are generated and debated on a more balanced, consensual, and democratic basis. It can then be concluded that by achieving an ideal speech community, different stakeholders in education will be able to share their experiences, views and insights on various educational issues. This may lead to democratic debates meant to transform educational policies and practices. However, given the sensitive nature of the topic under this study, there might be a problem that all participants would be able to be truthful and sincere about their experiences.

As identified in the literature review (Chapter 3) it is important that all stakeholders in education be actively involved in the process of formulation, implementation and monitoring of policies in education and, in particular, re-entry policy for girls. This involvement could lead to understanding of the policy created out of dialogue between different perceptions of the policy while eliminating chances of distorted communication. It could also give a chance to their views getting incorporated in the policy. Prasad (2005) outlines that, to Habermas, distorted communication impedes free and equal exchange of ideas and sharing of information which is a result of relying on one source of knowledge. He further states that the work of critical theorists is to critique the communicative value of any source of knowledge and maybe to replace it with participative forms of knowledge creation and problem solving. LaNear and Frattura (2009) argue that critical theory incorporates tenets of social justice into the practice of research and centres on the way in which discrimination and suppression form peoples' experience and understanding of the world. They maintain that a critical theory perspective is specifically concerned with issues of power and justice and the ways in which economy, race, class, gender, ideologies, discourses, education, religion, disability and other social identities and institutions interact to construct a social system. A critical lens helps to focus on some of the social injustices commonly experienced by people. A similar perspective is given by Mule (2008) who stresses that to bring about changes that will produce equity, fairness and justice, social and educational conditions in schools, educational policies and practices should be subjected to a rigorous examining and analytical investigation with the aim of uncovering exploitative power relationships.

Critical theory thus provides a framework for thinking about the re-entry policy in terms of social justice. It also provides a theoretical base for engaging all stakeholders in discussion about how the policy might be better implemented. Engaging in such a discussion is particularly important in terms of sensitising and consciousness raising, since it is possible that stakeholders may not even have heard of the policy. So far, critical theorists provide a way of thinking about developing a 'fair' society through involving all stakeholders.

However, because of their double stigmatisation as girls, and as pregnant and unmarried, the young girls' voices are not easily heard and they cannot take part as equal partners in the 'free, open and democratic' deliberations advocated by critical theorists. It is therefore easy to make assumptions about their experiences. In order to better understand what the girls and their families have to say, and how they position themselves in relation to school exclusion or re-entry, I draw from narrative theory which is informed by a socially constructed world

view. For this reason in order to better understand the implementation of the re-entry policy this study drew from the narrative theory to highlight young mothers' stories, their voices and those of their parents, and explore how the girls and their families construct their understanding of the situation, whilst at the same time giving them an opportunity to re-position themselves in relation to the policy.

Moen (2006) mentions that one way of organising life experiences into meaningful units is through a story. He further adds that our experiences are made of continuous interactions with ourselves and our surrounding world. According to Mankowski (2000) stories are powerful forms of communication to both others and for oneself. He maintains that they are told and retold in everyday conversation and especially in those social settings with formalized or ritualistic meaning to life events, and provide a sense of continuity, history, and of the future. Bruner (1991) concurs that we organise our experience and our memory of human happenings mainly in the form of narrative. Therefore a narrative is an account of events occurring over time. Connelly and Clandinin (1990) have also argued that narrative is a way of characterizing the phenomena of human experience. Thus, the study of narrative is the study of ways humans experience the world. This study employed a narrative approach because of its rich research values to discover the stories of the young mothers and their parents after schoolgirl pregnancy. This approach may also help the young mothers re-story their experiences after dropping out of school. Mankowski (2000) maintains that, in addition to the value of the findings or outcomes of the study, the process of doing narrative research can contribute to individuals' ability to locate themselves in a more powerful position and social change efforts.

This study aims to help in making it possible to hear the young girls' stories and get a better understanding of their experiences. This awareness could serve as a means of uplifting as well as documenting their voices, make these stories accessible to people who implement policy and other researchers and enrich data in this study.

I thus looked at my research problem through a critical theory lens, identifying the importance of the study. In keeping with critical theory, I intended to use my research as a form of sensitisation in order to give people a chance to think about the pregnancy policy. However, I chose a case study approach to gather data and analysed that data using a social constructivist lens and decided to give particular attention to the young girls' stories by presenting them as narratives. I contextualised these with an African context by reading them

using African metaphors. This was to allow me to listen and link my experience to the stories by using the well-known storylines. More of this is discussed in detail in Chapter 8.

**Methodology**

This study sought to find out more about the awareness and understanding of the re-entry policy by all stakeholders. It also intended to pay special attention to the stories of girls. Given the nature of the research problem this study could best be approached using qualitative research. According to Creswell (2009) qualitative research is a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. The process of research involves emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participants' setting, data analysis inductively building from particulars to general themes, and the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data.

In order to answer my questions I chose a qualitative methodology based on an understanding that there are multiple realities and the meaning we make is not an objective 'thing,' but a function of personal interaction and perception. Reality is a highly subjective phenomenon in need of interpreting rather than measuring. Beliefs rather than facts form the basis of perception (Merriam, 1988). At the same time Willig (2001) supports that qualitative researchers are interested in how research participants make sense of the world, experience events with their associated meanings. The aim of qualitative research is to study people in their own natural settings, describing and explaining their events and experiences.

A combination of individual interviews (officials, head teachers) and group interviews (students, parents, young mothers) were used. I was interested in determining the level of awareness and perceptions of the re-entry policy for girls among the participants studied. Their knowledge and experiences in relation to the re-entry policy would play an important role in overall understanding of the implementation of the re-entry policy for girls in public secondary schools of Kuria district, Kenya. Merriam (1988) outlines that research focussed on discovery, insight and understanding from the perspectives of those being studied offers the greatest promise of contributing significantly to the knowledge base and practice of education.

The choice of this methodology has been informed by the constructivist worldview. This was important in helping me understand how various participants construct their realities with regard to re-entry policy. This study is situated within the constructivist worldview in seeking to understand the MOE officials, head teachers, students and parents' experiences and

interpretation of the re-entry policy for girls who were probably having different views and understandings. The multiple realities that may be constructed by the MOE officials, head teachers, students and parents could be used to inform the implementation of the re-entry policy for girls. I also draw from social constructivism to include the voices of the young girls and their families who might otherwise be excluded from policy implementation. Given that people have different understandings of, in this case the re-entry policy for girls, I used an interpretive stance to make sense of data obtained from the participants.

Drawing from social constructivism, data was gathered from a variety of participants to understand the re-entry policy for girls from their points of view. In order to obtain what might be sensitive material, a less structured approach to data gathering was planned. The stories of the young girls were to stand alone as narrative accounts. The experiences of the young girls were important because this was a sensitive topic therefore I wanted to treat the information they shared very respectfully and allow them to talk or narrate rather than interrogate them with direct questions.

Creswell (2009) agrees that constructivist worldview enables research to rely as much as possible on the participants' views of the situation being studied. This worldview widens the questions allowing the participants to construct the meanings of situations, forged in discussions or interactions with others. Making sense of the meanings others have about the world becomes then the researchers' main interest. Gray (2009) adds that as subjects interact with each other, truth and meaning are created. This construction of meaning could be in different ways, even in relation to the same phenomena. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) explain that the main interest of social constructionists is the 'meaning making' activities of groups and individuals around their social phenomena.

Gray (2009) reports that since natural reality and social reality are different, they require different kinds of methods to understand them. He argues that understanding the real workings behind reality is more useful than generalizability. Qualitative approaches, data gathering and analysis are always linked to interpretive studies since they are inductive in nature and always seeking to explore people's experiences. Similarly Denzin and Lincoln (2003) remark that how people methodically construct their experiences and their meanings that inform and shape their reality constructing activities is vital in interpretive practices.

I expected the respondents to inform me of their understanding by freely narrating their experiences and perceptions. I adopted this method as I wanted to get the sense of their perception of the implementation of the re-entry policy for girls.

## Case Study Approach

Given my research questions as outlined in the previous section, case study is a suitable approach. Although this study could be well undertaken using an emancipatory action research project, time and finance constraints made it impossible to do so. I used a case study approach to gather some rich information on the policy. The use of the case study method in this study was necessary as I needed to develop an in-depth understanding of the implementation of the re-entry policy for girls in its contextual conditions. This was a single case study with multiple data sources. I chose this method to enable me solicit information from multiple and different sources as a means of corroborating evidence and shedding more light on my focus of study which was implementation of the re-entry policy for girls after schoolgirl pregnancy in Kuria district, Kenya. The study included several data sources - MOE officials, head teachers, currents students, young mothers and their parents provided information.

According to Yin (2003) the use of multiple sources of evidence in case studies enables an investigator to address a wider choice of chronological and social matters. He further clarifies that the most important advantage obtainable by using multiple sources is the development of converging lines of analysis. This means any case study finding or conclusion is likely to be more convincing and accurate if it is based on several different sources of information.

Yin (2003), Wiersma and Jurs (2005) contend that when the focus is on a current phenomenon within some actual-life setting and the investigator has little control of events, then case studies are the most appropriate strategy. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) recommend that in order to capture the close-up reality and thick description of participants lived experiences of, and thoughts about a situation, the use of case study is of utmost importance. They further say that rather than interpret, evaluate or judge events or situations as a researcher, it is good to allow them to speak for themselves. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) affirm that as a paradigm, interpretive research seeks to understand and interpret the world in terms of its actors meaning it is best suited to case study research. Yin (2003) emphasizes that for the wholeness and meaningful characteristics of real events to be retained then the use of case study method is important. He further  maintains that the case

study's unique strength is its ability to deal with a full variety of evidence while allowing different perspectives of the participants selected be determined and the bias of depending on one source of data of evidence eliminated.

I used the case study approach in this study as I wanted to examine the implementation of the re-entry policy for girls in detail. This was important as it could lead to understanding and possibly developing ways to improve the implementation of the policy. Merriam (1988) presents that when understanding is sought in order to improve practice, then a case study approach is the best method. She further states that qualitative case study is the suitable methodology if the knowledge base of various aspects of education is to be widened and fundamental issues of practice dealt with.

I had no ability to control the answers I got from the participants thereby allowing them to freely narrate their experiences. The understanding of these experiences was crucial in making sense of their perceptions of the re-entry policy for girls. Hughes (as cited by Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000), suggests that besides the case study approach being particularly valuable and blends description of events with their analysis, it has several advantages:

1.  It provides a chronological narrative of events relevant to the case.
2.  It is concerned with a rich and vivid description of events relevant to the case.
3.  It focuses on individual actors or groups of actors and seeks to understand their perception of events.

Stake (1978) shows that the use of words and illustrations of reports and the natural experience obtained in ordinary personal involvement, is an effective means of promoting understanding among all readers. He further elaborates that "to know a particular fleetingly of course is to know next to nothing. What becomes useful understanding is a full and thorough knowledge of the particular recognizing it also in new and foreign contexts" (p.5)

The above features of case studies qualified the use of the approach in this study as it was used to explore the implementation of the re-entry policy of girls' after school pregnancy in public secondary school in Kuria District, Kenya.

**The Setting**

This study employed case study approach to investigate the implementation of the re-entry policy for girls after school pregnancy. This study was conducted in Kuria district which is one of the districts in Nyanza province, Kenya. The focus and choice of the district was

influenced by the low enrolments of girls in the district. Kuria district is also one of the communities that are marginalised socially, economically and politically. It was therefore important to investigate the uptake of the re-entry policy in this far flung community. The Kuria people are also known for adhering strongly to of their culture. This could give an opportunity for the voices of the young mothers and their parents to be lifted up and the awareness and understanding of the re-entry policy for girls by head teachers and MOE officials to be determined.

Administratively Kuria district is headed by the District Commissioner (D.C). The district is divided into four divisions administered by District Officers (D.Os), and the divisions are further divided into Locations headed by Chiefs. The locations are also divided into sub-locations headed by Assistant Chiefs. A cluster of villages form a sub-location and are managed by Village Elders.

Kuria district has four educational divisions and each division consists of between ten and fifteen secondary schools and up to thirty primary schools. The district education office is managed by the District Education Officer (D.E.O) while the division by the Area Education Officer (A.E.O). Every division is divided into educational zones managed by Zonal Officers (ZO). Both public primary and secondary schools staff are employed and funded by the Government and administered by head teachers. All public primary schools are co-educational schools but some public secondary schools are boys only or girls only and others co-educational schools.

## Selection and Recruitment of Research Participants

Qualitative researchers employ different techniques of selecting participants in their research projects. The suitability of each of the selection techniques to a particular research topic is always specified. The participants in this study were nominated as they were the key sources of data in the implementation of the re-entry policy for girls in Kuria district. All the participants were selected according to their suitability for obtaining the information related to my research, in order to have adequate qualitative database to enable thick description of the implementation of the re-entry policy for girls.

Gall, Borg, and Gall (1996) explain that if the researcher cannot study all individuals, he will consider which of them have experiences or perceptions that give them special value as data sources. Creswell and Clark, (2007) recommend that participants who have experience with the phenomenon under study could be deliberately selected to give the needed information.

This is supported by Wiersma and Jurs (2005) who point out that the idea behind purposeful sampling is different from random sampling on the basis of choice of a sample of information rich cases that are studied in detail. They further write that this selection of a sample to meet the purpose of research is called purposeful sampling. Frankael and Wallen (2009) outline that the difference between purposeful sampling and convenience sampling is that investigators use their discretion to select a sample they believe will provide the required data in their study. Lincoln and Guba (1985) concur that qualitative researchers may prefer purposeful sampling to representative sampling as it widens the scope of data collected and uncovers a full range of multiple realities. Silverman (2010) concludes that investigators can select cases that portray the research aspects they are interested in.

The Human Ethics Committee of Victoria University of Wellington gave ethics approval for this study. Since all research projects in Kenya require approval, I sought consent for my research from the National Council for Science and Technology headquarters Nairobi, Kenya. My application for consent was approved and I was issued with a research permit (**Appendix B**). I then visited the Kuria education office and introduced myself to the District Education Officer who manages and coordinates all education matters in the district. I explained to him in detail about my research. Based on consent from the National Council for Science and Technology headquarters I was given written consent (**Appendix C**) that allowed me to approach MOE Officials, head teachers, and current students within Kuria district. I also visited the District Commissioner, Kuria District and explained to him about my study. He also gave me a written consent (**Appendix D**) that gave me permission to approach chiefs, parents, and young mothers within the district for the purposes of my study.

Upon approval for my research project from the relevant authorities as explained in the above section, I embarked on the process of selecting participants in this study. My starting point was the district education office where I got information on MOE staffing from the four educational divisions, type of schools (same sex or co-educational) and numbers of schools per division. The information from the DEO's office was then used to purposively select the four MOE officials to participate in this study. I selected four MOE officials (one from each division). The MOE Officials were selected because they were the ones in charge of the four divisions in the district and they oversee all the educational programmes in their respective divisions. The consideration made in selection of the participants from each division was to ensure that the entire district was involved in the study. Of the four MOE Officials who were given introduction letters, information sheets (**Appendix E**) and consent forms (**Appendix F**)

only three participated in the study. At the time of this study, two clans in one of the divisions in the district were embroiled in interclan wars. This fighting led to disruption of schooling and other activities, consequently it was not possible to conduct interviews with the AEOs in charge of the division affected.

Through the education office information sheets and consent forms were sent to schools inviting them to participate in this study. Of the 20 head teachers who accepted, signed and returned the consent forms, eight head teachers were purposively selected from the four divisions (two per division). Out of the eight head teachers, two were from girls' only secondary schools, one was from boys' only secondary school and five were from co-educational secondary schools. The eight head teachers were selected as they were the main implementing agents of the re-entry policy for girls in their respective schools.

In the case of the current students, based on the information from the DEO's office four schools (one school per division) were purposively selected. Of the four schools selected, two of them were girls' only schools and the other two were co-educational secondary schools. During my first visit to these schools, I introduced myself to the head teachers and outlined the purpose of my study in detail. I then gave out introduction letters, information sheets and consent forms for the head teachers, members of Board of Governors, parents and to the students who were to participate in the study and the students themselves. The information package on the study for the parents was given to the students who were to participate to take to their parents. The first five consenting students from each class were then purposively selected. In co-educational secondary schools the students who participated comprised of first five consenting girls and the first five consenting boys.

I identified girls who had dropped out of school due to pregnancy through the local leaders (chiefs) who are always aware of these matters. I approached the parents and asked permission to approach the girls. Although the local culture was more patriarchal, and I had to ask parents for consent. I had also to ask the young mothers for consent and the purpose of the research and their rights as participants were explained to them in detail. However because most of the parents were illiterate, the information in the consent forms was read to them and translated to the national language (Kiswahili) and verbal consent requested. Of the 15 young mothers who were sent the information sheets and consent forms, only four of them volunteered to participate in this study. There was no selection and all the consenting girls took part in the study.

Permission was sought from the Chiefs through the District Commissioner to approach the village elders, and Parent Teachers Associations in order to seek people who became participants amongst the parent/families of girls who dropped out of school due to teenage pregnancy. Of the 20 who were given information sheets and consent forms, only 12 volunteered to participate in the study. There was no selection here as all the consenting parents participated in the study. The participants were eight males and four females. There were five and seven participants in each group respectively.

The table below summarises the number of participants selected, methods of data collection and number of interviews conducted.

**Table 1. Overview of methods of data collection, participants involved, their attributes and number of interviews conducted**

| Participants | No. of Participants | Method of Data Collection | No. of Interviews |
|---|---|---|---|
| MOE Officials | 3 | Individual interviews (One per division) | 3 |
| Head teachers | 8 | Individual interviews (One head teacher per school) | 8 |
| Current students | 40 | Group discussion (Ten students per school) | 4 |
| Parents | 12 | Group discussion (Two groups) | 2 |
| Young mothers | 4 | Group discussion (Three as a group and one as part of current students) | 1 |
| **Participants** | **Divisions** | **Gender** | **Types of schools** |
| MOE Officials | 3 Divisions (one officer from each division) | 2 Males, 1 Female | - |
| Head teachers | 3 Divisions (3 head teachers per division in the first two divisions, 2 head teachers from the third division) | 5 Males, 3 Females | 5 co-educational schools, 2 girls only schools, 1 boys only school |
| Current students | 3 divisions (one group per division in two divisions, two groups from the third division) | 30 Females, 10 Males | 2 co-educational schools, 2 girls only schools |
| Parents | 2 Divisions (one group per division) | 8 Males, 4 Females | - |
| Young mothers | | 4 Females | |

### The Participants

#### MOE officials.

I targeted the four MOE officials in charge of the four divisions who were the Area Education Officers. I made the first visits to their offices to introduce myself and explain to them about the research I was undertaking. I explained in detail their rights as participants and their rights to withdraw. I also assured them that their privacy and confidentiality as participants would be maintained at all costs. During these first visits, agreements were reached when actual interviews were to be conducted. This was to ensure that the participants were comfortable with the arrangement in case it was in conflict with their working schedules.

I conducted interviews with three MOE Officials, in charge of three divisions. Of the three AEOs one was a female and the other two were males. The interviews took place in their offices during working hours. All the three MOEs agreed to the interviews being audio taped. It was not possible to interview one AEO since there were inter-clan wars going on in the division at the time of this study.

#### Head teachers.

I first visited the eight head teachers in their schools where I introduced myself and explained to them the purpose of their inclusion in the study. Their rights as participants and their rights to withdraw were explained in detail and they were assured that their privacy and confidentiality was to be maintained. During the first visit, arrangement was made as to when to carry out the interviews. Of the eight head teachers interviewed, three were females and five were males. All the interviews were carried out in their offices during working hours. All the head teachers were employees of the Government through the Teachers Service Commission (TSC).

#### Current students.

My focus was on students in the age bracket of 15-18 years who were to be in Form 3 and Form 4 (an equivalent of year 12 and 13, NZ). The choice of the classes was influenced by the fact that these were the students who were most likely to be affected by schoolgirl pregnancy.

**Young mothers.**

Of the four divisions, only two divisions participated in the study. The other two had inter clan wars so could not take part. Only four young mothers took part in the study. Two of the four girls had resumed schooling while the other two were yet to do so. The group interview of the young mothers took place in one of the schools where the one girl who had returned to school had re-enrolled. This was because one of the girls feared the wrath of her husband if he found out about the interview. At the time of the study the ages of the young mothers ranged between 17 and 24 years. Two of the young mothers had one child each, the third one who had returned to school had three children while the fourth young mother had two children.

**Parents.**

The first interview took place in one of the schools and the second one took place in a market centre. The school and market centres were chosen as venues for the interviews with parents considering their availability and convenience. Since the second interview was held in a market centre which was a public place, I secured a private room in one of the hotels in the market to ensure privacy for the participants during the interview. Of the parents who participated in the study, ten had had their daughters drop out of school due to teenage pregnancy. At the time of study, the age of the participants ranged from 35 to 70 years.

Data from parents were first translated from Kiswahili to English before they were analysed. This was due to the fact that most of the parents were illiterate and could only understand the national language Kiswahili. The focus group discussion with parents was conducted in Kiswahili in which I am fluent.

## Data Collection

In–person open ended interviews were used to collect data from the MOE Officials and the head teachers. I considered this method of data collection to be appropriate and convenient to the MOE officials and the head teachers since they were few. I used focus group discussions to collect data from the current students, parents and the young mothers. This method of data collection was suitable to the above participants given their number and my interest in obtaining diversity of perceptions and experiences with regard to the re-entry policy for girls after teenage pregnancy. Data from these sources were corroborated to illuminate the implementation of the re-entry policy for girls.

63

One of the data sources was the young girls. According to Mankowski (2000), soliciting stories from individuals has certain advantages over other, more "research driven" forms of data collection, such as personality inventories or attitude and belief questionnaires. Stories cannot as easily be fabricated or modified especially when they are recorded in the context of an on-going, trusting relationship as developed by engaging interviewers. He also argues that story telling gives participants an active role in constructing and communicating their own view points. The experiences of the young mothers were shared in a focus group discussion. This helped in creating a conducive atmosphere for narrating their stories as it was among equals who were possibly facing similar circumstances. It also encouraged them treat each other as equals and treat their experiences with confidence and respect. Moen (2006) asserts that in narrative research, stories of experience are shaped through discussions with the research subjects in a dialogue. I spent some time before the interview talking to the young mothers about my research. This created a rapport with them and assured them that their contributions and rights were to be respected. It helped create a free environment for sharing their stories. Using Connelly and Clandenin's (1990) idea on the collaborative, dialogic nature of the relationship between the researcher and his or her subjects, it was necessary to allow time and create space to develop a caring situation in which both the researcher and research subjects feel comfortable, and this was undertaken.

### Interviews with the MOE officials and head teachers.

Individual face-to-face interviews were conducted using interview schedules **(Appendix G)** to collect data from the MOE Officials and the head teachers. Fraenkel and Wallen, (2009) assert that the advantages of this method is that unclear issues can be clarified as well as asking participants to elaborate on responses that are pertinent to the study. Merriam (1988) agrees that when collecting and making sense of data in qualitative research that is focussed on meaning, an instrument sensitive to underlying meaning is required. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) support that interviews allow researchers and participants to discuss their interpretations of the world from their own point of view, bringing out its human nature.

In this study open ended interviews were conducted with three MOE officials and eight head teachers. Firstly an appointment with them was secured by visiting their offices. During this first visit I held informational sessions with them and explained their inclusion in the study. These sessions clearly detailed how participant's roles, information, confidentiality, voluntary participation and right of withdrawal any time, was going to be adhered to. At that time arrangements were made as to when the interviews were to be carried out. All the interviews

were audio taped. A digital recorder was used and I made short notes during the interviews. The summaries of salient issues from all the interviews were read to the participants. They were encouraged to make comments and corrections on the summary. All the interviews were then transcribed. The length of the interviews ranged from 40 minutes to one hour. At the end of all the interviews, the interviewees were thanked for their participation and contributions.

**Focus group discussions with current students, young mothers and their parents.**
I led 7 group discussions with school girls and parents (2 groups of parents, 1group of young mothers, and 4 groups of current students). There were between 5 and 10 participants in each group. Krueger and Casey (2009) state that to better understand how participants feel about a situation, listening and collecting data through focus groups is helpful. They further suggest that though the group should be large enough to provide a diversity of perceptions, they should also be small enough to enable all the members to share their experiences.

During introductions I welcomed the participants, gave an overview of the topic and helped them to set ground rules for the discussions. I also informed the participants that the sessions were to be audio taped so that none of their comments were missed. Information on who will get to listen to the recording and how it will be used was also given to the participants.

I led 4 group discussions with current students in four schools. The students were in Form 3 and Form 4 in the age bracket of 15-18 years. I took each class in turn and explained in detail the purpose of my study and the purpose of their inclusion in the study. Their rights as participants and the rights to withdraw were outlined. Issues concerning their privacy and confidentiality as participants were also explained. The time and date for the group discussion was agreed upon during these visits. The timing of each interview was negotiated with the school administration and the participants so as not to interrupt normal school learning and routine. Most of the interviews took place between four and five o'clock which was after classes when students were on break for co-curricular activities/games.

I conducted unstructured focus group interviews using narrative prompts **(Appendix H)** to find out stories from the young mothers. The interviews lasted 30 and 60 minutes. However one challenge was getting information from the female interviewees. I developed ways of presenting a safer and more comfortable environment for the young mothers and paid particular attention to the gender difference (see ethical discussion later in this chapter). I decided to bring the young people together in a focus group as they were more likely to be relaxed in a group of other women who had had (possibly) similar experiences. Times was

spent on ensuring the young people were comfortable with this arrangement and were aware of their rights to withdraw or not participate.

Because the girls may not have felt free to discuss their experiences in the presence of their families I decided to talk with them in a separate group. Also, as I would not be able to ensure in-group confidentiality in the focus groups, I spent time at the beginning, encouraging participants to respect the privacy of each other's contributions.

## Data Analysis

The table below shows the summary of data sources and data analysis.

**Table 2. Data sources and Forms of data analysis**

| Data source | Forms of Data analysis |
| --- | --- |
| MOE Officials<br>Head teachers<br>Current students<br>Parents | Thematic analysis |
| Young mothers | Narrative analysis |

Two forms of data analysis were conducted based on the data collected from interviews from head teachers, MOE officials, current students and their parents and episodes narrated by the young mothers and their parents. The first set of data from MOE officials, head teachers, current students and parents was analysed thematically. The second set of data, stories of the girls and their families was analysed narratively. I used the latter to add depth to the former. In particular I used thematic analysis for decision makers and narrative analysis for the young mothers.

Fraenkel and Wallen (2009) refer to data analysis as to when researchers make sense of gathered information on a phenomenon for the purposes of making it understandable. Wiersma and Jurs (2005) agree that to achieve accuracy in description and interpretation of the phenomenon then reduction of data is necessary.

### Thematic analysis.

I used thematic analysis and data from participants who were interviewed was coded to generate themes for interpretations. Braun and Clarke (2006) describe thematic analysis as a

method of identification, examination and recording patterns within data. They further add that through its theoretical freedom, it provides a flexible and useful tool which is capable of providing thick and in-depth information.

Drawing from Creswell's (2009) idea on general procedures in data analysis the following steps were used in data analysis:

1. The first step involved organizing and preparing data for analysis. I transcribed the interviews from the head teachers and MOE officials, current students and parents.
2. The second step was reading through all the data to obtain a general sense of the information and reflect on its overall meaning. I noted general impressions and initial thoughts about the data.
3. The third step, detailed analysis with a coding process, was undertaken. The data from participants was organized into categories and labelled based on the actual language of the participants in order to generate a large number of meanings.
4. In step four I used the coding process to generate a description of the setting or people as well as categories or themes for analysis. The coding was then used to generate a small number of themes for the study. The themes were then analysed for each individual case and across different cases.
5. Step five involved advancing how the description and themes were to be presented in the analysis.
6. The final step was making an interpretation or meaning of the data bringing out the lessons learnt (Taken from Creswell, 2009).

**Narrative analysis.**

Any narrative analysis faces two common challenges: hearing and re-presenting the story and analysing the stories. In response to this dilemma I decided to view the stories as performances in a specific cultural setting. I chose to analyse the narratives from the young girls perfomatively as I intended to put emphasis on the setting and cultural understanding of the narratives. I used some elements of thematic analysis to identify central guiding metaphors. Because the stories were told in a focus group setting I was faced with several episodic fragments. I decided to treat the stories as performances in an African setting and draw out several distinct story lines as I heard them. I chose to represent these by means of African metaphors.

The decision to use performative approach to read the stories from the young mothers was influenced by various narrative theorists. One of the narrative theorists Riessman (2008) points out that performance analysis involves close reading of contexts, including the influence of investigator, setting, and social circumstances on the production and interpretation of narrative. She further maintains that the meaning in the performative approach does not reside in a speaker's narrative, but in the dialogue between speaker and listener(s), investigator and transcript, and text and reader. The particular words and styles narrators select to recount experiences are interrogated and not taken at face value. Attention to broader contexts, beyond the interview or ethnographic situation, is a great strength of performative approach. Similarly Atkinson and Delamont (2006) assert that it is important that we recognise stories as contextual social phenomena, rather than verified personal accounts. They add that there is need to focus on the social and cultural context in which tales are told and recognise that all cultures or sub-cultures have narrative bonds. Talk, including narrative rights, is therefore performative of status and identity. It needs to be recognized that narratives are performative, and performances are often understood in narrative terms. Clandinin (2006) stress the importance of looking at time, sociality and place of narratives. Individual experiences are shaped by the larger social, cultural and institutional narratives within which they live and have lived. Hence it can be stated here that in analysing the narratives from the young mothers, I wanted to take into account the African cultural context and consider the existing story lines available to the young girls, through which the narratives can be read.

Telling story of one's journey is tracing one's steps through people, events and places that formed you. As we pause at each special memory we realize that we have indeed been formed by our encounters with the stories of others (Huber, et al., 2010).  Historical tales have the capacity to thrust socially delinquent persons into periods of intense critical self-examination from which (ideally, at least) they emerge chastened, repentant and determined to "live right". In short, historical tales have the power to change people's ideas about themselves, to force them to admit to social failings, to dwell seriously on the significance of these lapses, and to resolve, it is hoped once and for all, not to repeat them. They make you think about your life (Basso, 1996). The following stories have certainly impacted upon me in ways that changed my understanding of what might have been the young girls' experiences. It may also be possible that having an opportunity to share their stories was also helpful for the girls, but I have no evidence to support that. Partly because of the sensitive nature of the

topic and the difficulties of communicating with the young girls who do not have access to email and other modern means of communication, I have not been able to check the interpretations of these stories with the girls. My narrative analysis then presents the stories as stories to live by according to those story lines that are available or that can be readily accessed in an African setting (Huber et al, 2010).

Mankowski (2000) maintains that the emotional significance of information or its centrality to meaning plays a key role in determining the importance of a theme. He also says that stories are about something that the storyteller values. Creswell (2002) asserts that through themes, stories enhance understanding of individuals' experiences and help in retelling these experiences. Thematic analysis was used to identify common elements in the stories that formed themes for analysis.

Drawing from Creswell (2002), gathered stories were analysed for elements of the story and recurring themes. I rewrote the story to place it in a chronological sequence. The information in the restorying included interaction, continuity and situation. As stories were gathered in a focus group setting, stories were brief and episodic. Drawing from Creswell (2002) the restorying included:

1. Transcription whereby the focus group discussion was transcribed from an audiotape.
2. Retranscription in identifying the key elements of each episodic story and coded to identify particular storylines and metaphors used in the transcript.

In this study major themes cutting across all the participants were extracted from the stories for analysis and interpretation to uncover storylines, metaphors and other key narrative elements in order to uncover the meanings participants make of their experiences.

## Research Credibility and Trustworthiness

When researchers speak of qualitative research validity, they are usually referring to plausibility, credibility, trustworthiness, and therefore defensibility (Johnson & Christensen, 2008). Similarly Huberman and Miles (2002) argue that validity in qualitative research, in a broad sense, pertains to the relationship between an account and something outside of that account, whether this something is construed as objective reality, the constructions of actors, or a variety of other possible interpretations. They further explain that in qualitative research specific strategies that are different from quantitative research are followed in ensuring

validity. Here I discuss ways that were employed to ensure that the study's trustworthiness and credibility. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that the trustworthiness of research is important in evaluating its value as it involves founding of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. They outline various methods that could be used in research to ensure that it attains trustworthiness. In the next section I briefly discuss some of the methods used in this study to support its trustworthiness.

### Triangulation.

Triangulation enhances the trustworthiness and confidence in the findings of the study and can be achieved by use of multiple data methods, different data sources, member check and time spent in the field. Triangulation also brings about comprehensiveness and the fullest picture of a phenomenon including inconsistencies. It can also be confirmatory about the same results. Stake (2010) explains that many qualitative investigators are careful in proving that the meanings and evidence of their findings are conventional. He adds that qualitative researchers could attain credibility of their findings by considering and paying attention to more than one standpoint. Similarly Shenton (2004) notes that there are many strategies that qualitative researchers could use to uphold confidence in their research results. One of the strategies is triangulating their results which may involve use of different methods of data collection and a wide range of data sources among others. He adds that triangulation could enrich the overall representation and diversify viewpoints of the phenomenon under study. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) believe that triangulation is a powerful way of showing concurrent validity, particularly in qualitative research. Richards (2005) remarks that using multiple approaches promises very interesting results. It is always interesting to look at the same topic from different perspectives. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) explain that triangulation is a significant way of extending and adding richness and depth to any research.

I utilised 2 methods of data collection in this study, that is, interviews and focus group discussions using an interview schedule and narrative focus groups using minimal prompts. Their different insights were used to strengthen the evidence. I also solicited data from multiple sources (MOE Officials, head teachers, current students, young mothers and their parents). The evidence from these different sources was used to illuminate the themes.

### Member check.

During all the interviews I made a summary of the information and its interpretations. At the end of the interviews I presented the summaries to the participants. The participants were

then invited to make comments or corrections based on the summaries. I also got the opportunity at this time of further confirming and sensitising the participants on the importance of those issues they raised. Due to the distance between the location of the interviews and Victoria University of Wellington and where this study was undertaken, I was unable to give back to the participants written scripts to check or amend.

Research findings could be regarded as trustworthy, in that they represent the actuality of the participants' views by being authenticated through member checking, and by having the participants evaluate their responses for correctness and comprehensiveness. This produces a chance for participants' recollection of new information about their circumstances. Clarifying tentative study findings centred on the participants' reactions to their responses constitutes a good research (Gall et al., 1996; Reason & Rowan, 1981; Richards, 2005).

### Thick description.

I used rich thick description to convey the findings. Detailed descriptions of the findings including their contexts were given in this study. Creswell (2009) suggests that results become more realistic and richer through dense description. This description may transport readers to the setting and give the discussion that element of shared experience adding validity to the findings. It also enables readers to make a judgement about how relevant the findings are to their setting.

### Spending prolonged time.

I spent 3-4 months to gain experience with the participants during data collection. Creswell (2009) emphasizes that prolonged time in the field enables one to develop an in depth understanding of the phenomenon understudy and convey detail about the site and the people that lends credibility to the narrative account. The more experience that a researcher has with participants in their actual setting, the more accurate or valid will be the findings. Although the time spent in the field was long enough to obtain the information required, an extended period could have enabled the acquisition of more in-depth data to shed light on a greater aspects of the participants' culture.

## Ethical Issues

The Human Ethics Sub-Committee of Victoria University of Wellington gave ethics approval for this study and it followed the ethical guidelines laid down in their policies and practices. In this study the privacy, anonymity and confidentiality of participants was assured and maintained at all costs. Participants' identities were protected and their responses were used

for the research purposes only. The information from participants was stored safely and only accessed by the researcher.

I come from Kenya, Africa, and I was expected to adhere to some cultural traditions because I belonged to a similar culture to the one of the area where the study was undertaken. I had to seek permission from the chiefs to approach the village elders and then talk to parents. This demonstrated sensitivity to the local cultural traditions whereby the chiefs are regarded as symbols of authority. I had also to ask permission from parents to talk to their daughters, and pupils at school as this was important in showing respect to their fathers who are regarded in this community as heads and symbols of authority at the family level. However, seeking permission from chiefs, elders and parents to enable me approach the young girls, came into direct conflict with the critical theory stance that I have taken in this study. This is why I also asked permission from the young people themselves.

I met the expectations that I was supposed to reciprocate in some way to the participants because I was an African in an African setting. I gave some participants (parents and young mothers) reimbursement of their fares to the venues and explained to them that this was an appreciation for their participation in the study and not a reward or payment. However, the young mothers had greater expectations and the explanation on the limitations of providing reward or payment for participation in research did not stop them from asking for financial assistance in the form of bursaries to enable them return to school. I had to explain to them the importance of my research in highlighting their plight and in drawing the attention of the policy makers and the government to the re-entry policy with the aim of improving it. I also had to point out to them that I was unable to offer any financial assistance. I found myself in a difficult situation of being unable to assist the young mothers realize their dreams of returning to school. It is my hope that the findings and recommendations from this study will contribute towards improving the implementation of the re-entry policy and be of benefit to the young mothers.

Though some parents had given verbal consent for their children to participate in the study they were apprehensive about signing the consent forms. They explained to me this could mean that they were accepting that they were failures since their daughters had not returned to school, but I assured them this was purely for research purposes and I had to confirm this to them by showing them the signed consent forms.

All written materials (interview schedules, interview notes, etc.) and all electronic information was kept in a locked and password-protected file and access restricted to me. I did all the transcriptions rather than seeking the services of a secretary. I also promised that, 5 years after the conclusion of the research all materials will be destroyed and any audio recordings returned to participants or electronically wiped.

There were concerns about speaking to the young women alone because of gender difference. Being a male researcher I arranged to be accompanied by a female colleague from the MOE. The young mothers were encouraged to bring a supporter or a friend during the interviews. If there was a problem in engaging the young people, due to the gender differences, I intended to leave the group which was then to be facilitated by my colleague, or to conduct individual interviews but this situation never arose.

My willingness to adapt and listen to concerns helped to create a stronger link with participants and establish trust between us. For example, my willingness and readiness to listen to the concerns that the young mothers were raising could have made them to trust me and open up and narrate more about their experiences in relation to schoolgirl pregnancy. Silverman (2010) notes that luckily, following ethical guidelines can inadvertently sometimes enhance the analytic coverage of a research study.

The above outlined ethical principles were adhered to in this research as the involvement of the participants was out of informed consent. The consideration of privacy and confidentiality in carrying out the study enabled the participants to feel that they had a stake in the research process as well as facilitating the growth of trust between them and the researcher.

In conclusion, critical theory has been outlined as the framework that defined the research focus of this study. In this theory emancipation is advocated as one of its main tenets. It also addresses issues of social justice through emancipation. But the interpretive paradigm in which social constructivism sits has informed the selection of methodology. That is why it was important to investigate the diverse perceptions among the participants in relation to re-entry policy.

# CHAPTER FIVE

# DIFFERING PERCEPTIONS OF THE ROLE OF THE CULTURAL CONTEXT IN POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

In this chapter I will begin by exploring the ways in which the perceived cultural context positions girls in Kuria community, then examine the status of pregnant girls in the community, followed by lost educational opportunities for pregnant girls and finally conclude by showing that despite the perception that culture impacted negatively on education for girls, many parents interviewed were keen on their daughters completing schooling.

There were conflicting views about the role of culture in young mothers making decisions not to return to school. Participants interviewed identified various cultural factors which they thought were likely to impact on girls continued schooling after school pregnancy. A number of interviewees especially the head teachers and MOE officials constantly referred to cultural customs and practices as a key factor in pregnant girls dropping out of schools. They thought that some of these cultural factors affected the likelihood of school girls continuing with their education or returning to school after delivery. They perceived these cultural factors to be having negative influence on the implementation of the policy.

Several other participants interviewed believed that the valuing of cultural and social norms contributed in propagating cultural practices such as early marriages, female initiation and dowry payment among others. They felt that these cultural practices led to negative perceptions from the community about the status of girls and women, status of pregnant girls and education of girls.

The information provided about the Kuria community by some of the participants portrays it as a patriarchal community. Some of the officials and the head teachers reported that there is a widespread belief among the Kuria people that the father or male figure possesses much authority as the head of the family and therefore his decisions are very important and final. The decisions they made were to keep their daughters at home. These men are allowed to unilaterally make important family decisions on behalf of the other family members without question. They were believed to know what is good for the family precluding some members

74

of the family from making decisions on issues affecting their lives. This is, furthermore, likely to affect the young mothers in making decisions about returning to school.

However, Kuria families gave a different view which revealed that they valued education and wanted their daughters to complete their schooling. They appeared to put blame on other factors such as poverty as the reasons why they are unable to educate their daughters.

**Table 3. Abbreviations used in the findings**

| Abbreviation | Meaning |
|---|---|
| MOE. 1 | MOE Official 1 |
| HT. 1 | Head Teacher 1 |
| SCH 1. P 1 | School 1 Pupil 1 |
| G1.P1 | Group 1 Parent 1 |
| P 1 | Young Mother 1 |

## Status of Girls in Kuria

Some respondents, especially the officials and the head teachers, reported that from their experience with the Kuria people, cultural preferences played a big role in the education of girls. For example, some of the head teachers said that parental attitudes to education played a role in girls' school drop outs. They implied that there was a cultural bias that resulted in many of the parents being more likely to support education of boys than girls. This cultural tradition is likely to contribute to girls dropping out of school. The head teachers interviewed thought the parents' attitude towards their daughters could be negative because of the long term communal importance attached to boys compared to girls. They understood this parental attitude towards girls to be negative in relation to education of girls. Interestingly this participant framed them as a bias.

> *Then this other biases like I said boy-girl attitude in families that boys should continue girls should remain that one is another fact that if they are two or if they are three and one of them is a girl they would opt that boys continue the girls remain at home. I think those are the major ones [HT 8].*

The officials reported that dropping out from school by girls was due to various reasons but cultural factors accounted for many of these reasons. Cultural practices such as early marriages contributed to high drop out of girls from school. Officials said that traditionally

girls were meant to be groomed for marriage and after they have been initiated to adulthood then they were regarded to be ready for marriage. They said that it was still customary for Kuria families to withdraw their daughters from school in order to marry them off to conform to cultural practices. The officials thought that the practice of early marriage is likely to impact on girls schooling. They suggested that because of parental and cultural expectations, girls were likely to drop out of school after becoming pregnant. Many of the interviewees believed that early marriages were perceived as a cultural norm among the Kuria people.

> *You know the Kuria community has that custom and practice where girls tend to be married very early in life because of cultural practices. So most of our girls or a number of them are not able to proceed to the next level of education because of early marriage and that is majorly because of influence of their colleagues. Also these girls feel that at a certain age particularly after initiation that is at age of 14 or something like that they now become mothers and so the major preoccupation is to become like family members. So we have those who are dropping out of school because of marriage, early marriage [MOE 1].*

Some head teachers felt that it was the parents who were advocating for early marriage of their daughters. They believed that it was shameful to have a child out of wedlock among the Kuria. This could explain the problem of early marriages in the community. These cultural expectations and pressure contributes in pushing the pregnant girls to early marriages. So the head teachers thought that when girls become pregnant it justified the family's desire for the girls to drop out of school.

> *We have early marriages, we no apparent reason I can't even understand because some we try to follow up and see the kind of family background. We realize there is no problem in the family; it is the family prompting marriage [HT 5].*

Several respondents said that initiation and especially female circumcision was still being practiced by the Kuria people. Some of the officials thought that undergoing some of the cultural ceremonies such as female circumcision contributed to girls' drop out from school. They understood that after circumcision the young girls were ready for marriage hence going to school for them was not a priority. The officials' experience with Kuria people was that initiation and for that matter female circumcision prepared girls for marriage or motherhood

(at the age of 14 years). They further noted that some of these cultural practices played a key role in the initiates' socialisations and perceptions of some aspects of life. The officials also reported that some of these cultural practices contributed by adding pressure and making parents have high expectations of their daughters. Officials who were interviewed thought that some of the young mothers were influenced by other young mothers to drop out of school and get married. Some of these girls felt that by so doing they were conforming to their cultural expectations. Some of the head teachers felt that the parental attitude together with school pregnancy exacerbated the problem of school dropout for girls.

> *After most of our girls have undergone that rite of passage most of them opt to drop because they don't really feel to proceed to the next level of education [MOE 1].*

The students who were not pregnant had similar perceptions of cultural expectations that traditionally circumcision was regarded as a gateway to marriage, and it is for this reason some parents felt that after circumcision their daughters should get married and thus stopped them going to school. They reported that after circumcision the girls were considered to have acquired a new status of being adults. The students said that circumcision is used to initiate one from childhood into adulthood thus it was perceived as allowing those who have been initiated to take adult responsibilities including marriage. The students felt that after initiation, parents will rather have their children follow the community's traditions than schooling.

> *Yes they are supposed to get married. Some of them don't know that education is better than circumcision so that is why they prefer circumcision especially the illiterate people. They consider some of this circumcised that she is a grown up. She could just act like a grown-up [SCH 3 P6].*

Some students expressed the view that conformity to some of the traditions led to more cultural pressure on them. For example, female circumcision was regarded as a preparation for marriage. According to the community after circumcision one was now regarded as ready for marriage because during this rite of passage one is taught the responsibilities of adulthood as a mother, wife and member of the community. Students also noted that payment of dowry was a drive behind parents supporting early marriages.

It was clear that some girls were resenting some of these practices such as female circumcision. They revealed that they valued education more than cultural practices and so supported the return of girls to be taken to school.

> *After circumcision you are supposed to get married. Yes (laughter) you know they just circumcise a girl by saying that they are ready to get dowry. Yes that is why they participate more in circumcising girls instead of taking them to school [SCH 3 P4].*

Some of the parents interviewed reported that female circumcision was still being practised by the Kuria community. They reported that the practice was important among the Kuria since it was believed to reduce sexual urge. They further mentioned that due to the importance attached to circumcision it was compulsory for all females in Kuria and those who did not comply were regarded as outcasts. However they noted that gradually the people are discarding the practice meaning the rate at which it practised is reducing.

> *Female circumcision is still going on among the Kuria people though the rite is coming down. In the Kuria culture female circumcision is mandatory because they say it reduces sexual urge [G1P2].*

MOE officials reported that many parents regarded girls as a source of wealth which is why they preferred them to get married early, to acquire that wealth rather than educating them. They thought that the economic value attached to the girls through bride wealth impacts on girls' education. They said that among the Kuria people, girls were believed to have an economic value and were viewed as a source of riches through the payment of dowry. The officials interviewed therefore felt that parents expected that after girls attain the age for marriage they should marry so as to earn them dowry, which was in most cases in the form of cows. They also said that for the Kuria parents it meant that the more daughters one had the more cows the parents expected in form of dowry. Several officials interviewed thought therefore that for most parents dowry was the priority and not schooling. Many officials attributed this association of girls with dowry to the deeply held customs that are inimical to girls' education which may need to change. They felt that this attitude could also explain some parental resistance to the re-entry policy for girls as it was regarded as taking away traditional wealth from them.

*Because of culture they regard the girl to be prepared for marriage because they say the more girls you have the more cows you have. They look at the girl child as a form of exchange so it is not easy, it is a failure in some areas within Mabera division there is still that practice where a girl child is just waiting to be married not to be taken to school [MOE 3].*

Some of the head teachers interviewed reported that many of the parents in Kuria community valued dowry more than education. Some of the head teachers thought that parents would rather have their daughters get married and receive dowry than them going to school. The head teachers felt that this attachment to cows as a source of wealth motivated most of parents to withdraw their daughters from school and marry them off to get the dowry. Also, whenever a girl dropped out of school due to school pregnancy, then that was good reason to be married quickly to have the dowry. Some of the head teachers suggested that this attitude could affect the education of girls and the re-entry policy.

*The value also our community Kurian there's some attachment, they have a value especially in cattle which is seen as you know some kind of wealth so most parents tend to move some girls from school so that they can get married and get some dowry [HT 7].*

Some head teachers further reported that due to the lack of awareness of the re-entry policy and the community's culture, some parents were unwilling to send their daughters back to school after teenage pregnancy. They also noted that girls who became pregnant before marriage were not ready to continue with their studies. The head teachers interviewed thought this was due to cultural influence. This cultural belief that girls are regarded as a form of exchange made some parents resist the re-entry policy. They perceived the policy as a means of denying them the opportunity of getting cows from their daughters' marriage. However, some head teachers appreciated the efforts being made by the government to sensitise the people though more needs to be done. The head teachers also thought that more needs to be done to change this attitude among the parents towards the education of their daughters.

*I must say that averagely but not so much effective because sometimes the girls are not ready to go to school. They are not ready and the parents might also not be willing to have the girl back to school. As I have told you this idea of dowry immediately the girl becomes pregnant she has to look for a man and*

*she is married off. So it's not easy although the government is trying but it needs a lot to be done [HT 7].*

Some girls expressed the view that they felt silenced by others in their lives. They were not in charge of their lives and had given up since they were dependent on others to make decisions for them. This reflects the existence and entrenchment of the patriarchal system among the Kuria community which impacted on the girls' independence in making decisions, rendering them dependent on their male figures. The information provided by the girls on decision making showed that patriarchal culture influenced their thinking and takes away their independence which makes them submissive to cultural values and traditions. It also explains their silence and lack of confidence in themselves as they could have been socialised to obey cultural values without question. This ultimately denies them the freedom to choose what they would like to do. The above mentioned dependence could impact on the girls' decision to return to school especially in a situation where the other family members do not value education for girls.

*I have two people who make decisions in my life that is my father and my husband because I am married [P1].*

Information from some of the students interviewed noted that girls were likely to face cultural pressure to undergo some of the cultural ceremonies. The girls identified a number of ways in which they saw they are being pressured by their culture. One key issue they raised was female circumcision. They reported that traditionally it was mandatory for every female member in the Kuria community to undergo this rite of passage and any member who did not conform to this tradition was seen as going against the community. The girls said that the expectations of them by their families and community were a big burden to them. However some students regarded schooling as a means of liberating themselves from this cultural pressure. Some of the current students noted that they had the desire to compete with other communities in terms of attaining formal education. They wished to be protected from some of these cultural practices for example female circumcision and further reported that some of these cultural values were likely to isolate their community from other communities which thought to value education. The students were happy to note the dynamic nature of their society which is now changing and embracing education more than some of these cultural practices. They felt the desire to be independent and free from cultural obligations especially the undergoing some of the cultural practices.

*Yes to add on this, every community has its own culture you see for example this one female genital mutilation is for the Kurias. So if a girl is not circumcised she might not even be married so that was there before but as we continue the world is civilised, now we are competing with other communities for example Luo, Kisii, we are coming up. Me as one of the Kuris I say that we are now about this education. My daughter (laughter) will not be circumcised. I want them to be protected and to be somebody in future and become independent [SCH 3 P5].*

A few students interviewed however, suggested that some parents were not supporting the schooling of their daughters because they were unaware of the importance of education. Some of them never went to school and so they don't value schooling. Some of the students interviewed believed that some of the parents' attitude towards educating of their daughters reflected their cultural orientation.

## Status of Pregnant Girls

When girls get pregnant before marriage their life becomes more problematic. Some head teachers thought that because of cultural values, those girls who fall pregnant get scared and isolate themselves. Head teachers pointed to the fact that the Kuria community had some cultural expectations from its members. They reported that members of the community were expected to play different roles and behave according to the norms of the community. So when a member appeared not to conform to set societal expectations and values, then he/she was regarded as an outlaw. Some of the head teachers said that this cultural expectation was likely to contribute to some of the girls dropping out of school. They thought that some of the girls judged themselves based on their cultural expectations and isolated themselves accordingly and felt that some of the girls are forced to act to fulfil their cultural expectations.

*In our community especially Kuria, there is this problem, she might be seen as a social misfit by not being comfortable so they tend to run away very fast when they are discovered [HT 8].*

Officials reported that among the Kuria people when a girl has given birth she is now regarded as a woman and she should be married off. They said that because of the social stigma associated with pregnancy before marriage, the girl is always scared of the embarrassment to self and that of the family. They noted that when some families discover teenage pregnancy they opt to keep silent about it to avoid shame until the girl is married.

They thought that this attitude influences them to resist the re-entry policy hence become uncooperative. The officials felt that parents viewed the re-entry policy as a means of exposing this shame hence the focus on the pregnant girl getting married off to remove the shame from self and the family rather than continuing with her studies.

> *And I think most of our parents are normally informed although at another level they might not have been very cooperative on these girl-child issues because some of these issues alright can go minus their support. Let me say this level although the parents are most informed on this, you will find when it comes to issues pertaining pregnancies, some can go underground because of I don't know cultural whatever their perceptions [MOE 1].*

It is notable that although some girls were forced to conform to these traditions of the community, it was evident from the interviews with some students that some of the girls were fighting to liberate themselves from their communal cultural requirements. Some students interviewed reported that parents were forcing some girls into marriage when they were not ready for it. Information from the students showed that there were conflicts between the parents' expectations and those of the students. Some of the students thought that parental expectations forced them into roles they were not prepared for. This unpreparedness by some girls in married life was likely to affect their future parenthood. Some students thought it was important to be prepared and ready for some adulthood responsibilities such as marriage.

> *There are many responsibilities in marriage to make sacrifices in order to sustain that marriage so you find  yourself your parents force you in that situation of marriage you go to that situation knowing nothing [SCH 2 P 6].*

Some of the parents interviewed were so disturbed about the violation of cultural expectations that they thought that school pregnancy should be punished to make other girls fear becoming pregnant. They thought that punishing pregnant girls would discourage other girls from becoming pregnant and further proposed that the policy should be formulated in a way to act as a deterrent to other girls.

> *The policy should be in such a way such that it instils fear among girls not to be pregnant so that they know if they get pregnant there is a punishment waiting for them. There should be a sentence for those girls who get pregnant [G2P3].*

Yet some of the current students reported it was painful for them to witness their fellow students drop out of school due to pregnancy. They observed that school pregnancy was likely to affect the young mothers and lead them to make bad choices in life. They felt there is need for the pregnant girls to be supported both at school and at home to remain in school and return to school after delivery. They further noted that pregnant girls were faced with a precarious situation and if not well supported they might commit suicide to take away their lives in frustration. They seemed to value schooling as it could mean a bright future for the girls and their families.

> *It really pains because since school is for future life, and the girl has dropped out of school because of pregnancy it pains a lot, then the girl will go home and maybe she can even want to commit suicide [SCH 1 P5].*

The students further felt that some of the decisions made by the pregnant girls were likely to affect them for long in their lives. They stated that school pregnancy put pregnant girls in a position in the society that they needed to be understood and supported. The kind of support the pregnant girls are offered would likely determine what decisions they make concerning their pregnancy.

> *It will affect somebody psychologically if you get pregnant and abort, then you will be tormented for the rest of your life and students will discriminate you that you are a mother [SCH 2 P 9].*

## Lost Educational Opportunities

Some of the parents interviewed reported to have had high expectations of their children and in this case their daughters. They said that by their children going to school they increased chances of having better lives in future. Some of them noted that they did not expect their daughters to fall pregnant and were disappointed by their daughters dropping out of school due to teenage pregnancy. They said it was painful because according to them dropping out of school it reduced the chances of their daughters having successful and independent future lives. Many of the parents reported that they were shocked, attributing their shock to the hopes they had for their daughters. They said that they expected their daughters to complete their schooling so that they could help themselves later in life. Some of the parents interviewed thought that education was to enable their daughters to meet their personal and family obligations. The parents felt that non-completion of education meant that their daughters were unable to lead independent and successful lives.

*I was shocked because that was a tricky situation. She lost her chance of getting education; again I am forced to take care of her child because she is unable. It was painful to me [G1 P2].*

In contrast to some of the school officials who thought Kuria parents did not value education for girls, some of the parents interviewed viewed dropping out of school by their daughters as a source of misery. Educating girls was problematic to them. Many parents reported that the dropping out of school by their daughters was a painful experience. They looked at it as missed opportunities for their daughters to make their future lives better through education. They reported that it was burdensome to them and they were unable to cater for their daughters and their other children and pay the extra tuition fees needed to keep their pregnant daughters up to date with studies. Some of the parents interviewed reported that teenage pregnancy compounded the problem of educating their daughters.

*I have six daughters and they are giving me problems. They are problematic because when they go to school they get pregnant and bring problems. One of them got pregnant and now she is at home and getting tuition fees is a big problem [G 1.P 6].*

Many of the parents interviewed were illiterate or semi-literate due to other reasons. Almost all of them had little education and had not progressed beyond primary education. They thought that lack of education explained their economic and social status. In addition they reported that they had been unable to continue with their own studies because their parents were poor or did not value education. Consequently they had been unable to overcome their circumstances and remained poor. They blamed their parents for not motivating them to go to school. Some of the parents interviewed felt disappointed that they were unable to fulfil their dreams through education though they had the desire to continue schooling.

*My education was short lived and dropped out of school at class six and that is between 1953 and 1957. I was unable to continue due to lack of school fees. Though we were only paying Kshs 80 it was difficult to find at that time. Coupled with that I was orphaned because both of my parents had died and that is why I did not continue with my studies [G1P1].*

These parents were keen for their own children to be educated. Several parents interviewed acknowledged the fact that they had large families so were unable to meet the needs of all the

members. It was noted that these large families had come about due to some of them practising polygamy which is highly valued in their culture. Some parents reported that due to lack of tuition fees some of their children have dropped out of school. In the long run it had also affected the parents' attitude towards educating their children which they regarded as a burden to them. They seemed to have been overwhelmed by the numbers of their children and hence never regarded their schooling as a priority. However some of the parents said that they valued education of their children and especially their daughters. They showed the desire for their daughters to complete education and said this was likely to bring satisfaction to them. Some parents felt that because of the large numbers, those children who are able to complete their education are lucky and have a chance to have a bright future.

> *My family is big; I have four wives and more than twelve children. I have seven daughters and five sons. Among the seven daughters one was blessed and completed her education, the other one was about to complete school got pregnant and gave birth and she is now at home but still wants to return to school. She dropped out of school in Form Two but the problem is the size of the family hence unable to satisfy everyone's needs [G 1 P1].*

Some parents suggested that those responsible for impregnating their daughters should be dealt with accordingly. They felt that this could be one way of instilling fear among the would be offenders. They also noted that those responsible for impregnating the girls should be punished severely to act as a deterrent measure to others. They proposed harsh sentences against the offenders based on their expectations of their daughters' schooling. The severe penalty proposed by some of the respondents to the offenders explains their annoyance and negative attitude towards their daughters' being pregnant before completing their education. The parents interviewed thought that the severity of the punishment could discourage the potential offenders.

> *The offenders or those who impregnate girls should have their own law or policy with severe consequences [G2P4].*

Some parents also reported that they were bitter because they had spent a lot of resources on formal education of their daughters before they became pregnant. They considered these resources to have been wasted now that their daughters were no longer in school. Those parents who were bitter explained their reactions in terms of both shattered hopes of employment as well as loss of resources spent on education of their daughters before

pregnancy and eventual school dropout. Some parents seemed to blame those responsible for impregnating their daughters for the dropping out school of their daughters. They said that the teenage pregnancy was a source of disappointment and discouragement in paying for their daughters' education. The fact that the interviewed parents reported having paid fees for their daughters for the 2nd year after dropping out in the first year, shows that they valued education. Some of the parents further showed their bitterness by wanting to take action against those responsible for impregnating their daughters.

> *It is painful. It pained me that I have wasted my resources, because I paid fees for first term and when she started I paid kshs. 6,000 and all of it went to waste. The second year when she went back to school, I again paid for her first term and then in second term she conceived and this pained me so much. I wanted to take action against the boy who impregnated her but because I am merciful I stopped [G 2 P 2].*

However some parents reported that they were still hopeful that their daughters will go back to school after delivery. They seemed to realise that their daughters could have a better future by completing their formal education. Some of the parents further noted that they viewed the re-entry policy as another chance for their daughters completing school. They acknowledged the need for their daughters to continue schooling. Parents also expressed willingness to support their daughters to continue schooling by taking care of their children. However, they also reported that their daughters' school dropout could continue being problematic to them if not supported to go back to school.

> *I support the policy because after my daughter has delivered and given me problems, she cannot easily get some man to marry her. If she can let me take care of the child and go back to school the better, otherwise she might get another pregnancy and continue giving me more problems [G2 P1].*

Some of the parents reported that pregnancy before marriage was a taboo among the among the Kuria people. They said that those who committed the offence were excommunicated or punished by getting married off immediately. This was done to remove the shame from the individuals and their families. However some of these parents were happy with the change of some of these cultural practices. They seemed determined to do away with some of these cultural practices. They perceived the re-entry policy as one way of dealing with some of these traditions which they desired to do away with, such as early marriages.

86

> *We support the policy, in the past girls who got pregnant were chased away and got married immediately but now if it is possible for them to go back to school, it will reduce early marriages in our community [G 1 P 2].*

Some parents appeared to have embraced the change of attitude and accepted the state of their daughters being pregnant after it dawned on them that there was a possibility of them committing suicide due to subjection to hostility and rejection by family members and peers. Some of the parents attributed this change of attitude to the fact that they were concerned about their daughters' future lives. They acknowledged the benefits associated with their daughters' schooling. They also said that they had expectations of being assisted by their daughters after completing their schooling. Some of these parents saw the need of supporting and encouraging their daughters continue with their education by showing them they are not the only one facing such circumstances. Some parents thought this could help their daughters relate their circumstance with those of others hence taking them positively.

> *It was painful to me because I loved her so much. Girls are more likely to remember you as parents than boys. They will always remember their parents and assist where possible. It disturbs me when I see her at home with her child because I knew had she completed her education she would have been of benefit to herself and to me. I sat down with my wife and discussed her issue and advised her accordingly because some girls might commit suicide. We encouraged her that she is not the only one and she should be patient until she gave birth and the child is four months old[G1 P1].*

Some of the parents also thought that if they did not support their daughter during and after pregnancy they might procure abortion. Some of the parents believed that abortion was equivalent to murder. The fear they developed that their daughters might commit suicide or procure abortion took away their anger and the pain and they felt that their daughters should carry their pregnancies to full term and deliver. They reported being willing to support their daughters so that after delivery they could continue with their studies. Many of the parents who were interviewed seemed to have been disappointed when their daughters opted for marriage rather than continuing with their studies.

> *I sat with my wife and then talked to our daughter because she was saying she wanted to commit suicide. She was going round to the neighbours telling them that she was pregnant and she might commit suicide. When I got this*

*information it forced me to talk to her and advise her against committing suicide. We also discouraged her against trying to abort because according to us it amounted to murder. We also encouraged her and told her that after delivery we will help her go back to school. We thought she understood us but later she eloped and got married [G2P1].*

Similarly some parents stated that they had recognised the importance of educating girls and were aware of the value of education for their daughters. They viewed education as a means of attaining empowerment and independence for the girls. They observed that educating girls could enable them help themselves, their children and their families. Through education the participants hoped that the lives of their daughters could be different from theirs which they indicated was not good. They further felt that girls who are educated could be quite helpful to their families. They thought that since mothers stayed longer with their children, there was a possibility of them transferring the knowledge gained at school to their children. Therefore the participants suggested that nationwide benefits will be realised when girls are educated. Some of the parents interviewed expected that by educating their daughters they will be taken care of during their old age.

*I have learnt the importance of education from my paternal side. My father had daughters who were already married and they really took good care of him and even educated their children more than us. Mothers are the ones who stay with children longer than us and so if they are educated they transfer that knowledge to the children. If mothers happen to get employed they won't have problems with their families and nationwide there would be less problems [G1 P 5].*

**Conclusion**

All participants thought culture was important in decisions made. But, where officials saw culture as instrumental in keeping girls away, most families appeared to value education and were keen for their daughters to return to school. There seemed to be a common perception among some participants, especially the officials and head teachers, which showed that the re-entry policy was operating in a cultural context in which there are a number of factors mitigating against it. The officials thought that culture impacted on policy implementation. The experience of the officials was that some members of the community viewed the policy to be in contradiction of the traditional values and status of women. They felt that cultural

practices such as early marriage, female genital mutilation and dowry payment may cause girls to drop out of school. They attributed this to the greater value the community attached to those cultural practices. Therefore they observed that some parents may be reluctant to send their daughters to school if it contradicts their cultural position. The officials and head teachers further thought that this cultural mind-set may make parents prefer for their daughters to stay at home after teenage pregnancy, impacting on the policy. According to the officials it was against this background that the re-entry policy was being implemented.

However, some parents who were interviewed contradict the officials and head teachers' views. The parents reported that they valued education of their daughters though constrained by poverty. Some of the parents were interested in sending their daughters back to school after delivery. It is for this reason many of the parents were also of the opinion that the 'offenders' of school pregnancy (males) should be punished and preventive measures be put in place to prevent more girls from falling pregnant. For some of the parents it was important to focus on preventive measures as much as efforts that are made to solve the problem. The findings from some parents further noted a change of attitude and appreciation of education. This was reflected in their desire to educate their daughters. Finally, it can be concluded that this cultural setting, though perceived to be working against the policy is changing since culture is dynamic.

# CHAPTER SIX

# THE POLICY IS IMPORTANT THOUGH "SILENT"

The information gathered from the respondents highlighted three key areas of concern in relation to the policy:

1.      Lack of awareness

2.      Lack of clarity, specificity and guidelines of the policy

3.      Ideals informing the policy: conflicting views

Participants showed different levels of knowledge about the re-entry policy. There was a notable lack of awareness of the policy at various levels among the MOE Officials, head teachers, students, parents and other stakeholders.

While many acknowledged the importance of the policy when it was brought to their attention, some officials and head teachers expressed the view that the re-entry policy was not clear and they were unsure on how to implement it. There were particularly conflicting views about how to interpret the guidelines, and different practices with regard to when teenage pregnancy was discovered, when pregnant girls should leave school for delivery, how long should pregnant girls be absent from school and re-entry to school after delivery among others.

There were also diverse views from the different respondents about the value, usefulness and effectiveness of the policy. Many of the participants felt that it was a good idea to come up with the policy but it has been hard to implement it. They noted the ambiguity of the guidelines for the policy and ineffective communication of the policy to all other stakeholders, so regarded the policy to be silent. Others thought that the policy encouraged immoral behaviour. I take each of these three points in turn.

## Policy Awareness

Many of the respondents especially the MOE officials and the head teachers said that they neither fully understood the guidelines of the re-entry policy nor were they aware how it was supposed to be implemented. Although many appreciated its value, they were also concerned about the lack of awareness of the policy among the other stakeholders. They reported that

they had a dilemma and that this made the implementation of the policy difficult for them. The officials suggested more sensitisation about the policy needed to be done amongst all stakeholders. They thought that greater awareness of the policy could enable many of the stakeholders to appreciate its value. The officials thought that once the level of awareness about the policy was increased among parents, the importance of educating girls could be realised. The officials seemed to attribute the low levels of awareness about policy to the way it was introduced to stakeholders. For example they noted that the way the policy was introduced was not effective and more consultation could have been done. They felt that engagement of all stakeholders was necessary for effective policy formulation and implementation.

> *The policy is important though it is a bit quiet I don't know why. It has not come out well but it is very important because it gives the girl-child opportunity to continue with their studies. The way it was brought more sensitization should be done especially to the parents. It seems most people don't know about it [MOE 3].*

In the same vein, some of the head teachers reported that information about the policy guidelines was sketchy, which made its comprehension difficult. Some of them seemed not to have sighted and read the policy document so were unsure of its guidelines. They noted that the policy document was not available in their schools which meant they had nowhere to refer in case they needed clarification about the policy. Yet some of them said that they were unsure if the policy was indeed documented.

> *Like me I became aware of it in 1999 when I was at another school then we were involved with the Kuria girl child so we were able to know about it and we had a kind of a movement like a Non –Governmental Organisation. There is a document I don't have it right away but I think we had it here I think as head teachers there was a document that was done regarding the retention of the girl child in school [HT 4].*

While some head teachers stated that they had informed their students about the policy, others reported that they had deliberately withheld the information from their students. Those who had not shared the information about the re-entry policy with their students felt that as much as this information was important, the awareness of the policy among students could

influence many students to fall pregnant. They reported not to be in support of the re-entry policy.

> *The students well would not say we have told the students about that because if you go ahead and tell that now is official you can become pregnant and stay in school we will have so many cases (laughter). Actually it is important for them to know yaa but you see what we are cautious about is you can become pregnant and still stay in school [HT 8].*

Some of the parents interviewed reported that the policy had not been well disseminated among all the other parents and the students. Therefore they noted that there is need for the government to make a deliberate effort in creating awareness about the policy among all stakeholders. They further thought that effective enforcement and constant follow ups on the policy were necessary to increase its levels of awareness among stakeholders.

> *The government should enact the policy as a bylaw and enforce it, not just making statements and no follow ups. It should also increase the level of awareness of the policy by employing people to educate all the stakeholders about the policy [G 1 P6].*

## Policy: Lack of Clarity, Specificity and Guidelines

A number of officials and the head teachers outlined some of the difficulties in relation to implementing the re-entry policy. They commented on the lack of clear guidelines, specifically what to do when pregnancy is discovered, when girls should leave school to deliver, how long girls should be absent from school, and how pregnant girls who have returned to school should be treated.

> *We need some guidelines. If we could get to know how we are going to handle this right from the beginning then the moment it happens we would have known that if she becomes pregnant that is where we begin. But now you see all we have is a circular we don't know how to handle that circular. You see when you say we're introducing free primary education there's a circular but then you come up with guidelines on how this thing is going to be run but we've not had this when it comes to this policy. It's a policy on paper and nothing else. Yaa and guidelines on how we are going to do that and that's what will guide us on how to inform them even the information, how to pass*

*the information is important we should be taught. All the stakeholders in fact including these students. Their views on what should be done when this thing happens but I think now it is just a group of people who met and decided this is going to be done and then how it's going to be disseminated down here there was nothing it wasn't fair [HT 8].*

However some of the young mothers were aware of the re-entry policy. They said that their knowledge of the existence of the policy was good news, and had brought a sense of hope and encouragement to many of them. Some noted that when they became pregnant they were fearful that they might not have a chance to continue with their studies but the awareness of the policy brought hope. For example one of the young mothers who had resumed schooling noted that her awareness of the policy is what motivated her to come back to school.

*I heard about the policy and that is what encouraged me to be back, at first I feared how can I go back to school and yet I am married and aged, but when I heard about that policy is when it motivated me to be back [P3].*

### Refusal to implement the re-entry policy

Despite some of the head teachers reporting that they were aware of the policy and were implementing it in their schools, the interview results with some of the current students revealed otherwise. Some students noted that once one was discovered to be pregnant she was expelled from school. It became very clear from the students that though the re-entry policy is in place it is not being implemented at all. It has been left to the head teachers to decide how to implement it and some of them were not adhering to the existing guidelines of the policy. This non-compliance to the policy guidelines could be attributed to ambiguity of the policy or non-policy management systems.

*Okay, the two girls had boyfriends from outside then they just got pregnant and they had to drop out from school because the Principal does not allow any person, any girl to be in school while she is pregnant [SCH 4 P 2].*

### Detection of school pregnancy.

Many of the head teachers interviewed said that they encountered difficulties in detecting and confirming that the girls are pregnant. They also gave conflicting information as to whose responsibility it is to detect pregnancy, and how it should be done. Some head teachers reported that they relied on the physical signs to detect teenage pregnancy, while others made

use of the guidance and counselling services in their schools. Some head teachers further said that they made use of private and public health clinics to detect teenage pregnancy. They felt that this uncertainty in the detection and determination of school pregnancy complicated the implementation of the policy.

> *One, we normally after detecting through guidance and counselling mistress we call the parent and then explain this parent the true position. Because mostly they first refuse to acknowledge then we tell the parent and like in most cases are able to agree that these students are pregnant. But sometimes we use the health facility Nyayo wards in Isibania so that they get tested there for pregnancy [HT 4].*

**When pregnancy is discovered.**

One of the challenges some of the head teachers reported to be facing was in relation to what to do when pregnancy is discovered. They seemed to be unsure who should be involved, at what time and level of policy implementation. They had varied views as to what should be done once teenage pregnancy is discovered. For example, some head teachers noted that after discovering that some of their girl students were pregnant they were referred to the guidance and counselling departments, while others informed their parents first. The interviews with the head teachers further revealed that some of the head teachers allowed the pregnant girls to stay in school until they delivered, while others encouraged them to go home immediately until they delivered.

> *Okay most cases we refer them to the Guidance and counselling. I have a master for that and she is a madam, so she talks to the students and the case also referred to my office and we try to guide the girl, we advise the girl so that she can go home gives birth, she can still come back and proceed with her education[HT 7].*

Some of the current students interviewed felt that their head teachers acted on suspicion to subject them to undergo medical pregnancy tests. They reported that the medical check-ups were impromptu and their consent might not have been sought. The students felt that they were ambushed and were not prepared for medical checks in relation to teenage pregnancy. Teenage pregnancy detection reveals the ambiguity of the guidelines of the re-entry policy which could undermine its implementation.

*We were just called one morning and some medical doctors were in school and we were called to go and we went for check-ups. After the check-ups, the results were out that the two girls were found pregnant and the principal does not allow that so they were expelled [SCH 4 P 3].*

### When should pregnant girls leave school to deliver?

These diverse views on the re-entry policy pointed to unclear guidelines which seemed to affect its implementation. Opinions were divided among respondents, especially the head teachers as to when the pregnant girls should leave school to go home to deliver. There appeared to be no clear guideline indicating at what time a pregnant girl should leave school for delivery. This uncertainty about policy time out seemed to present a dilemma to many of the head teachers interviewed. Some of the head teachers felt that the decision as to when pregnant girls should go home should be their decision. This meant that the pregnant girls' continuation of schooling depended on their head teachers. In cases where some head teachers do not support the re-entry policy, then continuing of schooling for pregnant girls could be difficult.

*It has not been very clear. I think it has been clear on how long a girl should stay in school while pregnant but how long or when expected to admit them the policy is not clear[HT 2].*

Some of the head teachers felt that they should be given powers to decide when the pregnant girls should go home. They reported that there were no guidelines in relation to when pregnant girls should leave school and further noted that they have been implementing the policy without necessarily following any particular guidelines.

*I think the ministry would give us a leeway as we have done it quietly in the past. It would be time we are given a leeway that student whose found pregnant quietly we can network with other principals so that the girl moves to the other school so that stigmatisation should not be there[HT 1].*

### How long should pregnant girls be absent from school?

Information collected from the interviews with the head teachers described a lack of clarity in relation to various time frames in the policy. There appeared to be no agreement among participants as to how long the pregnant girls should stay at home before returning to school. Many of the respondents seemed to be unsure and views differed on when the girls should

come back to school after delivery. For some head teachers it should be immediately the young mother felt ready to do so, while others said that it should be after 6months or 1year. The head teachers interviewed attributed this dilemma to unclear guidelines noting that there should be clear guideline stipulating policy time length.

> *There isn't a time frame as soon as she is fit enough to be in school they say she can come in school. Even nine months, the tenth month after delivery she can come back. In fact there are cases where a girl gives birth then after one week she is in school. You know after delivery she becomes okay within a very short time but the moment she is heavy that burden really she does not fit into the system [HT 8].*

Some of the head teachers suggested a shorter period of absence from school for the pregnant girls. There was concern among some of the head teachers that if the pregnant girls are disengaged from their studies for long it may affect their performance. They were also more likely to find it difficult to cope with their academic work when they returned to school. Some participants therefore suggested a relatively short time of absence. However, some head teachers appeared to be concerned about the health of the baby and suggested a longer period that would enable the mother to have some quality time with her child.

> *So it means the minimum period should be stipulated, a minimum of six months because well this has got to do with development of the child because in my opinion it should be a minimum of six months. I think by this time the child has been weaned [HT 5].*

The MOE officials reported that there were no clear guidelines on length of absence in the policy. They noted that the Ministry has not defined how long pregnant girls should be absent from school. They felt that this has been left to them to determine at what time the girls should return to school. They thought this was more likely to lead to double standards of the policy during its implementation.

> *So as a Ministry we allow them silently and then we don't discriminate after that they come back and proceed with their studies. The Ministry is relatively silent about the actual time [MOE 1].*

**Difficulties in retaining pregnant girls in school.**

Another challenge noted by many of the head teachers was how to deal with pregnant girls who were in school. Not only were pregnant girls perceived as being mothers and different from others but often they were also seen as bad examples to the rest of the students by both their fellow students and teachers. While indicating the benefits of educating girls, many of the head teachers reported challenges faced in retaining the pregnant girls in their schools. They noted that pregnant girls also faced some challenges in continuing with their studies. They felt that there were no specific guidelines on how to help them know how to respond to these challenges. Some of them felt that pregnant girls are different from other students and should be handled differently. Many of them admitted to not knowing how to handle the pregnant girls while at school.

> *So I think the Ministry should come up with guidelines on how to handle students who become pregnant while in school but you can't tell me this girl has become pregnant she's together in the dormitory with the rest, you want them to run to class, run back she has to have different ways of operation in school. Now they've not brought that this same girl is supposed to stay with other students in class, these are young people, they are seeing a protruding stomach…the Ministry could come up with ways of handling these people, how are we supposed to live with them? Should we have different quarters for them? How should they be treated in class? Not necessarily telling us that they should remain in school, they are different people [HT 8].*

A number of head teachers reported that some of the challenges pregnant girls faced included being bullied and stigmatised by their fellow students and teachers. Some of the head teachers thought that this bullying and stigmatisation pointed to non-acceptance of the pregnant girls by their fellow students and teachers. They felt that this stigmatisation could affect their continued stay in school and their academic performance. The head teachers suggested the need for all teachers to be sensitised on matters concerning how to deal with pregnant girls. They felt that this could help them know how to respond to the needs of the pregnant girls.

> *Yap there's a lot of mocking, the way they look at her.  Even the teachers, you see even teachers have to be informed to know how to handle these people*

*otherwise they'll look at that person as a different person and handling is very different [HT 8].*

Some of the head teachers further reported that many of the pregnant girls were afraid and unable to face some of the challenges at school. They become ashamed and scared and opted to go home earlier to avoid stigmatisation. The head teachers noted that this stigmatisation of pregnant girls by fellow students and teachers impacts on the continuation of their studies. They felt that pregnant girls were in the wrong environment and should go home.

*Because socially it is like they feel she is at the wrong place at the right time, so they will be talking about her, the girl feels very uncomfortable; there is a girl who requested in the year 2007 to go home earlier before the period because she felt very uncomfortable, so it actually affects [HT 3].*

A particular dimension that some officials raised was in regard with participation of pregnant girls in physical activities. They felt that the state of the pregnant girls could make them unsuitable for physical education lessons. They reported that they were unsure how the teachers were to handle to pregnant girls during these lessons as there were no guidelines to that effect. This aspect of physical education presented dilemmas to the head teachers on how to deal with pregnant girls.

*One we expect every active boy and girl in school to be actively engaged in physical education and therefore we cannot have these girls doing physical education [MOE 1].*

However some of the students said that they were able to relate to the pregnant girls' situation. These students identified themselves with the pregnant girls and were willing to help them. They reported that they were ready to accept pregnant girls and support them to continue with their studies and noted the potential of the pregnant girls performing better in their studies.

*I can't lie, some people view them as bad, with some negative attitude, I take her as one of us, she is also a girl and has come back, and she can do better, so why hate her [SCH 1 P1].*

Despite support from some quarters, interview results suggested that the young mothers faced on-going difficulties and challenges while carrying the pregnancy. Some of the difficulties

experienced included discrimination and stigmatisation from fellow students and teachers. Some of the current students felt that the pregnant girls were morally bad and they were therefore unable to accept them and treat them as their colleagues. This rejection by their peers could lead to stress and isolation. This further could act as a source of discouragement from staying in school and continuing with their studies.

> *I think the principal took the right action because if the girl could continue staying in school they could create negative impact among other students in that they could say even if I become pregnant the principal will still leave me in school [SCH 4 P3].*

### Challenges of 'returning' to the same or different school after delivery.

The head teachers thought that pregnant girls were scared of their fellow students, teachers, family members and the community. Since school pregnancy was a source of ridicule, discrimination, stigmatisation and rejection, sometimes it was difficult for the girls to continue with their studies in the same school after delivery. Because of this stigmatisation, some of the young mothers might not be comfortable returning to the same schools after delivery. Some head teachers suggested re-entry to different schools after delivery as one of the strategies to make the young mothers more comfortable in continuing with their schooling. They thought that re-entering a different school could provide a more conducive environment and avoid stigmatisation. They further said that this could reduce the shame and enable them to concentrate in their studies. Some head teachers reported that because they were aware of these challenges faced by the pregnant girls, they were willing to assist them move to other schools after delivery.

> *The re-entry policy is quite admitting to girls but we have this challenge of a girl re-entering the same school after the process. When it comes to the student coming back to the same school we have occasionally gone out of our way to look for schools where these girls can settle without being stigmatised [HT 1].*

Some of the students also reported that some teachers as well as students made some jokes about pregnant girls which were likely to isolate them further from their peers and eventually lead them to drop out of school. They suggested that the pregnant girls should be re admitted to different schools after delivery to avoid this stigmatisation and discrimination.

*You find that when the girl has come back to school and teachers make jokes that "most of you are competing with us" this discourages the girls and end up failing. I think if such a thing happens to the girl after delivery she decides to come back to school, she should be taken to a different school and make new friends, that one at least she will feel secretive [SCH 1 P5].*

## Ideals Informing the Policy: Conflicting Views

Many of the officials who were interviewed expressed the view that the re-entry policy was important to the girls, families and to the community at large. They therefore seemed to support the policy for these potential benefits. Furthermore, many of the officials were in agreement that the policy, when practiced, had long lasting effects on the girls, the community, and the nation. They noted the connection between the re-entry policy and the benefits of education for girls and further reported that as mothers spent more time with their children than fathers, there is a likelihood of an educated mother bringing up an educated family. They also perceived educating girls as having positive effects on parenting roles and observed that educated mothers are more likely to make informed decisions during their motherhood on issues such as health education among others that affect their children. Officials also said that once there are educated families then it would be easier to have educated communities and nations.

*You know they are the family, they are the people bringing up children, and they are the mothers they are the people to bring up children so they are supposed to be educated more. It is very important in any community where the woman is being educated you know like the community becomes okay. Any way girls are the most important people. We are targeting girls if they get education everybody will get even our sons and daughters will get because they are the mothers and stay you know for long with the children [MOE 2].*

Of the head teachers interviewed, many reported that they were supportive of the re-entry policy for girls, as it gave the young girls a second chance to continue with their studies. The interview results from the head teachers also suggested that educating girls empowered them and enabled them to be independent. They stated that this liberation of girls through education could lead to self-articulation and self-reliance, making them aware of their rights. Some head teachers thought that education would enable girls to free themselves from cultural pressure which may force them to conform to some traditions. They also noted that

re-entry policy would reduce cases of early marriages that were widespread in their community.

> *I think it is a very good idea especially in this area where you find the children and early marriage is such a big issue. So usually we are able to put girls back to school, it enables the girls to complete school and later empowers them to be independent [HT 2].*

Some of the parents acknowledged the fact that education was important to their daughters. They observed that they were in support of the policy as it gave them an opportunity to participate in their daughters' education. They seemed to value education of their daughters.

> *According to me the policy is good because it gives a chance to parents to also be able to educate their daughters [G 1.P 2].*

However, some of the parents had mixed feelings towards the re-entry policy. They felt that it could be a bad influence to the other young girls. Some parents thought that that if pregnant girls were allowed to continue with their studies, this would encourage other students to engage in sexual relations and fall pregnant. They seemed to believe that the policy gave permission to girls to fall pregnant since they knew there had a chance of returning to school.

> *Although I think it acts as a bad example to the rest who can be easily influenced to do the same because they know even if they get pregnant they will still go back to school. It might encourage other girls to do those bad acts. They might copy from those who have dropped out of school due to pregnancy [G2P1].*

There also appeared to be tensions and conflicting perceptions among the head teachers towards the re-entry policy for girls. While many of the head teachers suggested that the policy could help educate girls, others viewed it as encouraging other girls to fall pregnant. They stated that the policy was a bad influence to the rest of the girls' population. They thought the policy was a spoiler and not a deterrent to other students in schools. They reported that the policy was making school pregnancy look acceptable. Some of these head teachers felt that the policy should include deterrents that would have the effect of discouraging other girls from falling pregnant.

*My feeling is that the policy is encouraging other girls to become pregnant. Another girl told me "madam I can go home deliver and come back," it is like they are thinking its normal, but if we had an alternative to make it look that it is wrong the better[HT 3].*

The current students interviewed reported sharp tensions in their perceptions of the re-entry policy. Some of the students were sympathetic with the young mothers' situation while others blamed the girls for their suffering. The sympathisers stated that it was painful for them since the young mothers are their colleagues and teenage pregnancy could lead to school dropout hence limiting their peers' chances of having a better future. Some of these students were concerned with the future lives of the pregnant girls. They thought that education was the only gateway to successful life and observed that there was need for the pregnant girls to be independent of their husbands in future. The students noted that dropping out of school was not a good decision and preferred that pregnant girls would have continued with their education. They also reported that without education men would look down upon women.

*You may get because in this life without education you can't make it. You see as we girls we have to be educated in that we may lead a good life in future. Now when my fellow girls who dropped out of school I think they took a bad choice of dropping out of school. Me if I could just get them and talk to them I'll just tell them come back to school so that they may make it in life because we can't depend on men, sometimes men are very harsh (laughter) [SCH 4 P 8].*

However some of the students were very judgemental and blamed the young mothers for what they were undergoing. They said that the young mothers should suffer so as to learn a lesson. The young mothers were embarrassments to the blamers. They viewed them as a bad example and influence to others hence they should be left to suffer for their mistakes. These students seemed to blame the young mothers for wasting their opportunities to better their future and also blamed them for wasting their parents' resources in case they dropped out of school. These students felt that school pregnancy should be punished.

*It is painful but if we take it from the negative side, I take the girl as a bad person. Because she knows how education is and she went for it, she knew the consequences are bad and she was going to drop out of school. I feel pain for her but all the same it serves her right [SCH 1P1].*

Although the head teachers noted that the re-entry policy was perceived as playing a crucial role in enhancing chances of young mothers completing their education for a bright future, some of them still had some reservations about it. For example, some of the head teachers felt that the policy was biased against the girls. Although the interviewees suggested that those responsible for impregnating the girls should be answerable, some head teachers revealed there had a dilemma about what to do when boys in the same school were responsible. They noted that there was no provision in the policy for the boys to be suspended from school when found to be responsible for impregnating girls. Some head teachers stated that as the pregnant girls go home to deliver, the boys responsible for the pregnancy continue schooling uninterrupted. They observed that the boys found to have impregnated school girls should share the responsibility of the pregnancy as well. Although the head teachers reported that parents felt that the school boys responsible for impregnating fellow school girls should be punished by staying out of school as well there was a dilemma about what to do and how to prove who was responsible for the pregnancy.

> *The society is biased to the girls because I had a problem where a boy was responsible of the pregnancy of a girl in the same class. So the girl had to go home because of that tiring period but the boy was still in school. So when the general meeting of the parents was called it was like " head teacher" expel the boy but I told them that we don't have the capacity to expel the boy it is only the director of education and then this one requires a lot of biological proves and elaborate process of detection of Deoxyribonucleic acid ( DNA)[HT4].*

## Conclusion

This chapter demonstrates that there were tensions in respect to how policy was perceived and how the guidelines on teenage pregnancy among officials were understood and implemented. Some of the officials seemed to be in confusion as to what are official guidelines to follow to implement the policy. They attributed this confusion to non-existence and non-availability of clear and specific guidelines on the policy. There also appeared to be no common perception of the re-entry policy for girls especially among the head teachers, students and parents. While some participants appreciated some of the ideals informing the policy, there are some who felt that the policy should be punitive enough to discourage school pregnancy among school girls. Many of the respondents felt that the implementation

of the policy needs to be reinforced and its guidelines spelt out clearly and effectively communicated to all stakeholders.

# CHAPTER SEVEN

# SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT TO IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLICY

A variety of approaches were proposed by participants to improve the implementation of the re-entry policy. A number of respondents who were in favour of the policy were of the view that the education of girls was still confronted with many challenges which needed to be tackled. Many of the respondents were in agreement that these challenges were to be dealt with by involving all stakeholders in education and using several different approaches. In this chapter I discuss three recurring themes: suggestions for various ways to support pregnant girls and teenage parents; a desire to sensitise all stakeholders about the re-entry policy; and the need to disseminate the policy effectively to all, especially the main agents of implementation who are the officials and the head teachers.

## Girls in Need of Help

Many of the interviewees seemed to be in agreement that due to the fact that the pregnant girls were faced with difficult situations that they need to be supported and encouraged by all other stakeholders to continue schooling. They recommended that this support could be best offered to the young mothers collectively at different times during their pregnancy and after delivery.

Some of the participants expressed some doubts about the pregnant girls continuing with their schooling if they felt rejected and neglected by their families. They observed that the understanding and support extended to pregnant girls by family members during this period was crucial in making them decide to continue schooling or return to school after delivery. The interviewees also believed that this support to the young girls from their families and their peers could give them the emotional support they needed to continue with their schooling.

> They can be advised against not getting pregnant but in case one gets pregnant she should not think it is the end of the world for her, she can still have another opportunity to come back to school[MOE 3].

Several respondents suggested that the pregnant girls need understanding and acceptance to carry on with their lives as students and as mothers. They said that this encouragement is likely to help the young girls absorb the new landscape of life. They noted that pregnant girls should be encouraged not to feel isolated so as to continue schooling. They suggested that pregnant girls should be supported during and after pregnancy. They further stated that the encouragement given pregnant girls could help them have a sense of belonging and feel accepted which might enable them decide to continue learning hence taking advantage of the policy for their benefits.

> So there should not be discouragement to the girls, instead teachers and parents at large should give them special care so that they can feel like others and make their future better [SCH 1 P2].

Some of the MOE officials reported that all caring adults and especially parents to the young mothers should encourage them about their situation. They stated that not all young mothers are ashamed of their status and give up with schooling once they are pregnant. It was noted that parents' support and encouragement was important and they thought that if the child was taken care of by the parents and family members, then the young mother may have the opportunity of continuing with her studies. They felt that this appreciation and understanding of the policy was likely to attract support from the family members and that with the support of the family members, the chances of young mothers returning and completing schooling were quite high. This support was also likely to encourage the parents and families to get involved in the re-entry policy for girls.

> That is where now the parent should come in and assist the girl. The parent should not be negative; the parent should come in and assist the girl to take care of this child so that the girl can have that free atmosphere to concentrate on her studies [MOE 3].

A few of the current students interviewed reported that the young mothers needed the support of their teachers, and more especially the female teachers and noted that pregnant girls need emotional and academic support from their teachers. They thought that teachers should understand the pregnant girls' situation and encourage them to continue schooling for their own good. These students thought female teachers were more likely to understand the pregnant girls' situation, thereby giving them confidence and hope to face life. They further felt that female teachers were more suited to support the pregnant girls against discouragement and insensitive remarks from fellow students and other members of teaching

staff and also that it was easier for the pregnant girls to confide in female teachers who could in return help them cope with their situation.

> *I think female teachers in schools should be lenient to the girl during the pregnancy because as females they may understand and at least comfort the girl to being a mother and introduce her to new ways and accept the way she is so that she takes the blame herself[SCH 1 P6].*

Some of the current students further noted that teenage pregnancy should be a concern of all and need not be demonised. They said that there should be partnerships among all stakeholders in working towards understanding teenage pregnancy for the benefits of the girls and eventually the whole society.  These students observed that understanding teenage pregnancy could make parents, teachers, and other stakeholders support the young mothers to continue schooling and felt that if the pregnant girls are unsupported it could make it difficult for them to complete their studies.

> *If a girls gets pregnant in school I think should be concerned as parents and teachers. Otherwise the girl can abort the baby and parents can chase the girl away from home [SCH 1P 5].*

Some of the interviewees, especially the MOE officials, reported that, many schools did not have functioning guidance and counselling departments. They said that in some of the schools where the departments existed, they were weak and lacked well trained and qualified personnel to offer specialised services to the pregnant girls. Interviewees noted that pregnant girls were a special group with special needs. They suggested the establishment and strengthening of guidance and counselling departments in all schools in order for them to be able to support the young mothers and further observed that the guidance and counselling departments should be well staffed with trained personnel for them to be able to offer effective and competent services to the students, and especially to pregnant girls. The interviewees thought that services provided by guidance and counselling departments in schools were likely to impact on the girls' decisions to continue schooling or not. They stated that the services were also likely to prepare the pregnant girls to deal with their situations and complete their studies.

> *We need well established guidance and counselling units at schools which we don't have any way. We require more teacher counsellors to handle some of*

*these because you will find a few of these girls who are pregnant in school would be having more problems at home which require a specialist, a counsellor as it were. Perhaps in future if schools would have you know counsellors at school level think they will be able to unearth the root cause of this key problem [MOE 1].*

Another aspect mentioned by some of the head teachers in relation to supporting girls' education was creating a safer environment for their schooling. They stated that a safe school environment was important in enabling girls' education to take place. This group noted that due to poverty many parents could not afford to send their daughters to boarding schools and that is why they ended up in day schools. They said that day schools involve girls walking long distances to and from school every day and that as they walk they are subjected to an unsafe environment that can lead them to other activities, for example engaging in premarital sex. They therefore suggested that the government should build more boarding secondary schools to shorten the distance the girls travel to and from schools, and make them affordable to all, creating a safer and more conducive environment for schooling.

*Then in as much as we are talking of affordable education the day schools were meant to bring schools closer such that they can go to school and back because it is expensive in boarding schools. But day schools have disadvantage, it is exposing the girls to a lot of interaction [HT 5].*

One key factor raised by several respondents in relation to school dropout for girls was poverty. They reported that due to poverty most of the girls who drop out of school are not able to return to school. In the same vein, they said that families that are poor may not be able to afford to pay for the education of all their children, so some may end up dropping out of school. They noted that there is need for financial assistance in the form of bursaries, scholarships and grants from the government, from organisations and from individuals to support the girls, especially young mothers. For example, some of the head teachers thought that supporting of the young mothers in the payment of tuition fees could be vital in helping them continue their schooling. They believed that if the pregnant girls are supported financially it might help them return to school which could contribute in improving literacy levels among women.

*Where I was before I came here Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) crusade they were able to finance and sponsor some girls in schools who were not*

*circumcised and continue with their education and that is what I think the government should do. They should be given special assistance and consideration for example bursaries and funds for these girls who make re-entry after pregnancy and delivery. I think in the society in Kenya majority of those who are illiterate are women so if that can be done an opportunity for girls to learn it will be okay [HT 4].*

Some of the current students were also in agreement that there were potential difficulties with the pregnant girls accessing sources of funds for their tuition fees as well as childcare expenses. They suggested that schools should devise ways of assisting them financially to enable them continue schooling and observed that lack of tuition fees was likely to make young mothers unable to return to school.

*For example the one who went home due to lack of fees for I support the school could have given her s bursary to support her school fees [SCH 2 P3].*

Many of the officials interviewed expressed the view that it was hard for the young mothers to provide for themselves and get those who can take care of their babies. They stated that the young mothers lacked funds to enable them provide their babies with proper care in terms of food, clothing and Medical care. They felt that the availability of childcare was likely to influence the young mothers in making decisions to return to school. They noted that even for those who had returned to school child care was a source of stress, and affected their ability to concentrate on their academic work, hence there is need of support that could be extended to the young mothers in the area of childcare. They suggested that governments should consider giving financial assistance to help young mothers provide for their babies. Many of the participants believed that family response to child care was crucial for young mothers in continuing their schooling. They said that family members should also extend their support to the young mothers by helping them to take care of their babies and observed that support in this area was likely to give a sense of assurance and confidence to the young mothers and encourage them to return to school. They felt that childcare support would give the young mothers time to concentrate on their studies.

*The government should also take up the responsibility because this is their citizen, may be by paying school fees for the girl that one can help like in the form of bursaries or if possible they can take the responsibility of looking after*

*the child, assisting like they have a centre whereby these children are taken there for may be their care [MOE 3].*

It can be noted that participants strongly believed that pregnant girls need various support services that could be offered by all stakeholders in order for them to be able to continue with their studies and return to school after delivery.

## Sensitisation of Stakeholders to the Policy Needed

Participants frequently mentioned the need for sensitisation. Some of the head teachers interviewed suggested that there was a need to create awareness among the current students about the importance of the re-entry policy for girls. They felt that this sensitisation about the policy was likely to make the students understand more about the policy and therefore appreciate it. They further thought if the students were fully aware of the re-entry policies then they were likely to appreciate the pregnant girls and support them. They also stated the sensitisation of the students regarding the policy could make many pregnant girls take advantage of it and return to school after delivery. A number of participants suggested that sensitisation about the policy was important in encouraging the young mothers and bringing change of attitude towards educating girls.

*I think these girls they should be made to understand. My view has always been if these girls can be told the exact position what happens in case they become pregnant, then they should be advised to stop becoming pregnant. Then they should continue because we normally get it difficult when there are relationships going on [HT4].*

Some of the MOE officials suggested partnerships or collaboration with other relevant government ministries or departments in sensitising the youth about the policy. They noted the need for training and sensitising young people, especially the girls, on a wide range of issues affecting them, and thought that this could be met by inviting professionals to come and talk to them. They felt that such talks could help create awareness and help the girls and their families deal with emotional issues such as school pregnancy. The officials further said that the professional talks may make the girls more knowledgeable on some aspects of their lives. Officials believed that such talks by professionals could equip the girls with skills of dealing with teenage pregnancy. They also felt that trained teachers would help support the pregnant girls.

*We also have other organisations which have come inside like Afya Two Nyanza (Health Two Nyanza). They come in and train two teachers per school who will form clubs in their various schools and they deal with early pregnancies, health education and cleanliness such like things. So in this programme we also invite clinical officers to come and the girls or students ask them questions and they also sensitise these students [MOE 3].*

It was noted by some of the head teachers that there was need for the parents also to be sensitised about the re-entry policy. They said that parents had to be aware of the policy for them to understand it and support its implementation. Some of the head teachers reported that this awareness may enable the parents to understand the kind of support to offer to their pregnant daughters. They thought that support by parents could assist their daughters continue with their schooling and felt that the awareness of the policy was necessary for continued support of the pregnant girls during and after delivery. They said therefore that parents and other family members need to be sensitised to understand the young mothers' situation.

*Well I feel there is need for awareness to be created not only to the teachers and students but also to the parents because these parents need to be aware of what is going on, all stakeholders generally must be made aware over the same so that if all aware together they can work towards assisting the girl[HT 3].*

Similarly some students also pointed to lack of information about the policy among rural parents, reporting that some of the parents who reside in rural areas could be lacking adequate knowledge about the policy which possibly contributed to their inability to respond to their daughters' needs when pregnant. They suggested the need for those parents to be empowered to support their daughters to continue schooling by being made aware of the policy. The students thought that awareness of the policy by parents was likely to give them the understanding and the ability to support their daughters continue with their studies.

*I think the parents can be sensitised because most parents from rural areas don't know how to go about it. Once a girl is pregnant they just abandon her and they can't take her back to school [SCH 4 P1].*

Some of the parents suggested the need for all parents to be aware of their children's rights and reported that some of their fellow parents are disappointed whenever their daughters drop out of school due to pregnancy because of their ignorance of the re-entry policy for girls. They noted that their annoyance was attributed to the feeling that their resources were being wasted during the drop out period. These parents mentioned that if the parents were aware of the policy then they could support their daughters during and after pregnancy so that they may continue with their schooling. They also felt that awareness of the policy by parents was likely to make them recognize and respect the human rights of their daughters and said that this awareness could let the parents accept the fact that there is a second chance to return to school after delivery through the re-entry policy for girls. Parents further thought this understanding would reduce any annoyance with their pregnant daughters and prevent eventual drop out.

> *I support the policy but there some of my fellow parents are very harsh when they are told that their daughters are pregnant they become so harsh and start complaining that their money has been wasted. I think these parents don't understand children's rights and are just ignorant. Those who know wait until the girl delivers and goes back to school [G2P5].*

Some of the officials recognised the fact that government input was needed to support the implementation of the re-entry policy. They mentioned the need for creating awareness among all stakeholders on re-entry policy for girls for its effective implementation to be realised. These officials also noted that it was important for the government to provide leadership in sensitisation of the policy and felt that creating awareness among all stakeholders was crucial for the policy to have communal and local support. They suggested government initiatives may make stakeholders understand the policy to and support it.

> *The government should look for a way of sensitising the community [MOE 3].*

Some officials mentioned the need for the sensitisation of the parents on issues affecting the girl child through role playing. These interviewees noted that parental involvement in issues affecting girls' education could be a source of encouragement for them to support their daughters' education. They reported that various working programmes, for example role modelling and motivational speaking were ways through which parents could be sensitised to support their the pregnant daughters. Interviewees felt that these kinds of programmes

were more likely to help parents in inspiring and mentoring their daughters to continue schooling after school pregnancy and said that mentoring programmes could also help their daughters identify themselves with their mentors and successful people in the society leading to them being motivated to continue schooling for a bright future. They thought that through these programmes pregnant school girls could be able to appreciate the role of education in their lives.

> *He even invites some of the role models-Kuria girls who have made it in life to come and they give us some speech or advise them accordingly. Because you these parents they see us as outsiders. Personally am not Mkuria so they think this education is may be for non-Kurias. But when we invite role models-Kuria girls who have made it, those who are working: nurses, teachers they see the difference [MOE 3].*

Another key issue that was raised by some respondents in relation to involvement of stakeholders in the re-entry policy was the role of non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Some head teachers reported that NGOs were better placed to create awareness about the re-entry policy. They said that given the nature of their activities which are always based on the grassroots levels, NGOs have good networks for creating awareness of the policy to the greater public. The respondents felt that this awareness by NGOs could bring about local support for the policy which they perceived was pivotal in bringing about effective policy implementation. They thought that there should be collaboration between the Government and some of the NGOs in undertaking some of the activities meant to create awareness about the policy among all stakeholders. They felt that the Government's role in coordinating this initiative and taking charge of the process was crucial and desirable.

> *May be for the MOE should organise seminars to educate the people. They should also involve NGOs because they reach people in the village so that these people should have the knowledge, information is very important. If the information has been delivered well then the policy will be effective [HT 7].*

Interesting key themes that came through the findings in this section were the role of government and NGOs in creation of awareness about the policy and the need for all stakeholders in education to be sensitised to the policy and support for implementation of policy.

**Better Dissemination of the Policy including Guidelines**

Respondents also felt that there should be guidelines on policy dissemination and noted that the process of policy formulation and implementation was not inclusive of all stakeholders. They suggested that all stakeholders should have an opportunity to contribute towards the policy.

Despite acknowledgement among the head teachers of the benefits of re-entry policy for girls, they stated that efforts to move it to wider and more effective levels of implementation needed to be addressed. In particular they suggested new ways to improve the policy by having clear guidelines on its implementation. Many of them reported that they had faced problems in implementing the policy due to unclear guidelines. They thought that the clarity of policy guidelines could enable different stakeholders to better understand and better perform their various roles in its implementation. Some of them felt that even though they were aware of the existence of the re-entry policy they were not sure how to implement it and noted that because of their status, pregnant girls were different from other students, therefore deserved different treatment. They observed that specific guidelines on how to deal with the pregnant could be helpful.

> *Well there are loopholes because you know this now a mother, it is not a girl like any other girl in school. This one is a mother and back at home when you have expectant mothers are treated differently, you don't treat them like you treat others. So I think the Ministry should come up with guidelines on how to handle students who become pregnant while in school but you can't tell me this girl has become pregnant she is together in the dormitory with the rest, you want them to run to class, run back she has to have different ways of operation in school. Now they have not brought those guidelines and that this same girl is supposed to stay with other students in class, these are young people and they are seeing a protruding stomach [HT 7].*

Many of the head teachers interviewed also felt that there should be clear guidelines on how to handle the pregnant girls in school. They also stated that there should be guidance on what kind of support that they should offer to pregnant girls during school pregnancy and when they return to school after delivery.

> *If the Ministry could come up with ways of handling these people, how are we supposed to live with them? Should we have different quarters for them? How*

*should they be treated in class? But not necessarily telling us that they should*
*remain in school, they are different people [HT8].*

Some of the parents interviewed suggested that official input was needed to assess the level of policy implementation among all the stakeholders. They noted that this could be done by having regular follow ups and monitoring of the policy with the aim of improving on it and making it more effective. The parents felt that the follow-ups should be done by the Government. They suggested that the Government should put into practice what it says and thought that these constant follow ups could lead to the effectiveness and usefulness of policy implementation being realised.

*The policy should be strengthened. The government should follow what it says*
*by actions [G1P3].*

Many of the officials interviewed noted that they were not fully aware of the guidelines on policy implementation and attributed this to the way the policy was introduced to them. They reported that communication about the policy to them was brief and in the form of circulars and notices which lacked further clarifications or guidelines on how to implement it. The officials felt that this form of communication was ineffective as they are the main agents of educational policy sensitization and implementation. They said that there was need for them to be regularly updated on the new developments in their profession, noted that for them to embrace the new changes and comply with them there was need for professional development through refresher courses and in-services courses. The officials observed that professional development they envisaged could prepare and equip them for their roles in understanding and implementing government policies in education. Interviewees thought their involvement could help them have a deeper understanding of the changes and be part of the process.

*We don't go for a seminar we were told by a circular. At least there was*
*something lacking. These people did not you know take it up seriously because*
*they were not in-serviced. I think it is best that people are taken to a seminar*
*they are told and that will be okay [MOE 2].*

Many of the head teachers also felt that the existing guidelines were not well communicated to them and observed that the Government should have recognised them as the main implementing agents of the policy. They thought that if they were to be involved in the

process of policy formulation and implementation then the policy was likely to achieve its objectives. Their participation was also likely to make them better understand the guidelines which they were to use for implementing the policy.

> *It should have started from the grassroots; people should have been involved, like the teachers should have been taken for the seminars about this policy before it was introduced because we are the people who implement the policies. So it should have started from down and then get now or kind of a pilot for the first time to see whether it is working and then the Ministry now should have come up with it in full force[HT7].*

Some of the head teachers also suggested that local leaders especially the chiefs should be part of the communication process of the policy to stakeholders. They noted that communication of the policy through local leaders would help in understanding the policy and supporting it and said that the involvement of the chiefs could lead to change of attitude among stakeholders towards education of girls.

> *The chiefs should hold meetings to educate and talk to the parents so that they talk to their daughters that marriage is not an end because that is the problem. Most families would be happy if the girl is married but once they are told the child has to wait to be old enough to get married we will not be worried of re-entry policy [HT 2].*

Several of the head teachers interviewed expressed the view that there is need for all other stakeholders to be involved in policy formulation and implementation. They felt that the government should consult widely and incorporate the views of all other stakeholders before implementing any policy. They said this involvement of stakeholders could give them the opportunity of actively participating in the entire process of coming up with the policy. They felt that involvement of stakeholders could bring about a sense of ownership and public participation thereby supporting the implementation of the policy. The head teachers thought that this public participation is crucial in policy implementation and observed that they were not part of the process and felt left out.

> *So you would rather you know have some forums so that people discuss or the stakeholders discuss about policies they give you know contributions before it goes up to be initiated. Yap because you find like even some of the policies*

*that all times we are supposed to implement, they are brought to us, we are*
*told they came from us but at times you wonder when did they go there. I have*
*feeling that would have made it more open you feel really part of it such that*
*not your duty is just to implement but you find at least something that is for us*
*[HT 5].*

**Conclusion**

These responses show that participants view the implementation of the re-entry policy as a multi-diverse problem that needs a multi-diverse solution. Participants thought that the policy needs to be disseminated effectively among all stakeholders and widely discussed for it to be well implemented. The participants' views were that there is need for all stakeholders to be sensitised about the needs of the young mothers and learn how best to respond to them. They identified several strategies and measures to be employed to improve the policy and support the young mothers. The participants believed that the development of these strategies and services should bring about more community involvement, support and ownership of the policy. They suggested that this public participation in the policy implementation was to be achieved through collaboration and partnerships among all stakeholders and NGOs as a collective responsibility. They felt that a multi-pronged approach that combines the efforts of all stakeholders could effectively deal with all the challenges facing girls' education. However, interestingly, no one mentioned any preventive (health, gender role or sex education) initiatives as part of support to the policy.

# CHAPTER EIGHT

# THE GIRLS' STORIES

## Introduction

I begin this chapter by explaining the rationale for presenting the young mothers' stories as narratives. The basis for contextualising the stories in an African setting and listening to them using the African metaphors is then specified. Next the girls' stories as narratives are outlined. My listening and understanding of the narratives concludes the chapter.

The stories of the young mothers are presented here separately as narrative accounts to honour the young mothers and their experiences and make their voices stand out, as they are in danger of being overlooked in much of the literature and discussion about the policy. Young mothers are certainly defamed, and their experiences generalised and taken for granted. This narrative approach is intended to give an opportunity to listen to, and to record, their individual experiences in their unique social contexts.

The young mothers' experiences were likely to be sensitive, hence the decision to treat their comments particularly respectfully, because they are in danger of being unfairly abused or treated negatively in other representations. The hope was that a narrative approach might enable the young mothers to freely narrate their experiences, rather than subjecting them to direct interview questions.

Rather than subject the young mothers to a critical analysis, I wanted to listen carefully to them. Listening to their stories gave me an opportunity to understand how personal and socio-cultural factors contributed to the construction of their life stories. The girls' stories were inspirational to me as a researcher and surprised me with their hopefulness. Although the young girls are usually perceived as failures and having given up, their stories portrayed hope and desire for change. Therefore I felt it was important to share my understanding of these experiences in this chapter. At the same time, I also hoped that it might be useful to the girls to share their experiences with their colleagues who might have encountered related situations.

Whilst drawing on the narrative theorists referred to in the methodology, I decided to do something slightly different by paying particular attention to the cultural context in which the

stories from the young mothers were told. In drawing on African mythology, I was really seeing the stories as performances within a certain cultural context, which in this case was Africa. The presentation of the girls' stories as performances offered me a particular way of listening to them. The focus was on the interpretation of their symbolisation or imagery by drawing on some of the themes that are common in the African culture of storytelling. The attention to the available African story lines enabled me to "read" or listen to the stories.

However, I am aware that the stories the young mothers told me could be different from those they might tell others. When thinking of these stories I took into account that they were performed for me, and that they were likely to be performed differently for another audience. It was not possible to check out data or have on-going discussion with the young mothers given the distance between New Zealand and Kenya. Equally some of the young mothers were in fear that their husbands might find out that they had participated in the interviews. Being a male researcher it was also challenging to talk to the girls, and for them to tell their stories freely to me. For these reasons the stories were not rich in detail as they could possibly have been in other circumstances. In looking for a way of listening to these partial stories I chose to use the devise of reading them through the cultural story lines that are available to both the girls and myself.

## Introduction to African Culture of Story Telling

Ever since ancient times, storytelling in African culture has been a way of passing on the traditions and beliefs of a particular society from one generation to the next. It has also been used as a means of passing on traditions and codes of behaviour as well as maintaining social order. African tales are told and retold under the shade of a tree or around a village campfire, passing on the history, philosophy and moral laws of the people. The tradition of storytelling is one of the most ancient in African culture; this tradition is rich with many stories, songs, poems, and religious and tribal customs due to the diversity of people living in this vast continent. Entire complex cultures have been carried down through the centuries by the spoken word.

All of the various tribes in ancient Africa have enjoyed telling stories. The main functions of storytelling among any particular group of people regardless of their race or location are to entertain, record the history of the people or group the story belongs to, teach principles of life and morality, provide them with some explanation of their origin, provide the patterns for problem solving, and give a sense of identity to the people.

African myths and folktales have traditionally offered to the different African people's explanations that satisfied their curiosities, demonstrating that oral literature has the capacity to satisfy the desire of human beings to transcend the world in which they exist. Hence Africans were able to draw from different genres in their stories to reveal central guiding metaphors, for example the genre of hope, quest and despair among others. The genre of hope involved living with a philosophy of the present being the future, therefore optimistic. The genre of quest described the acceptance of the present situation as an opportunity for change. And the genre of despair was like living in the empty present and being overwhelmed.

Animals play a prominent role as metaphors in African storytelling. Animals also played a prominent role in ancient African people's daily thoughts, conversations, and oral literature, due to the fact that African people lived their lives in close proximity to the wild animals that shared their land. The storylines from these stories are still alive and referred to, but they traditionally evolved through people's close association with the land. In many of these tales, Africans attributed human feelings and desires to particular animals, and even derived ethical ideals from their behaviour. Animals are the source of many African tales, and they also figure prominently in religious rites and myths. There are also innumerable animal fables, some of which are pure fantasy, and others which are projections of human desires.

The metaphors represented by the chameleon and the hyena are, for example, commonly found in many African stories and myths. The chameleon is shown as being slow but cunning in her natural habitat, she is able to camouflage herself by blending with her surrounding, both literal and social. She is capable of camouflaging her intentions to survive among those who are bigger and faster than herself. In such circumstances, she is shown as being tricky just like the Hare. The chameleon is used in narratives meant to ridicule social follies such as one not having his or her own personal values. The spider was depicted as a great hero in many African folktales. She also was extremely shrewd and capable of overcoming every plot (Akivanga & Odaga, 1982).

The hyena was always portrayed as being confused and always overwhelmed by different situations. She was incapable of focussing on one issue and this led to the hyena being a looser in many ways. She symbolised selfishness, greed, confusion and indecisiveness. These negative qualities and the harm she causes others makes her hated by animal and human characters alike (Chesaina, 1997). The moral teachings from stories with the hyena were that indecisiveness could lead to wasted opportunities.

The hen is shown as being a friend of man and a bird equivalent to the gazelle and goat in representing the mother in the bird kingdom. She is quite protective of her chicks (Chesaina, 1997). It was easier for her to put behind previous setbacks and she always worked hard to succeed. The moral teaching from the hen was persistence and focus on whatever one is doing in order to succeed.

## 'African Story Lines'

These are different stories from the young girls' stories. They exist in the cultural memory and are available for use.

### The chameleon: Hope.

A tale was told among the Kuria people of Kenya of how the chameleon always had the ability to change bad situations into opportunities for better things. At one time the animal kingdom experienced suffering from mankind by hunting for animals and destroying the animals habitat. The king of the animals, the lion never knew what to do. Mankind was feared among the animals as man had superior weapons and dogs that he used for hunting animals. Whenever the king of the animals prepared for a battle with mankind the animals were never ready to face the battle. One day the chameleon came out and said to the king that she was ready to face mankind to end their troubles. The lion called all other animals to break the news to them. All the other animals laughed thinking it was a joke given that the chameleon was among the smallest and the slowest of all the animals. But as the chameleon insisted, the king and other animals granted her her wish. The battle was set and man was invited for a fight on a valley with tall and green grass. When man arrived in the battle field the chameleon was already there, and because of her ability to camouflage herself, man was not able to see her because she was as green as the grass. Man sat down to wait for his enemy, and that is when the chameleon walked slowly on his back and spat into his eyes, and man became blind and could not see. The chameleon stood on his head and called its fellow animals to come and kill man and so their suffering ended. Since that day the chameleon became a hero, and the other animals turned their ridicule and laughter to praise and respect to the chameleon.

This story line offers people in African society, and especially the Kuria people of Kenya, the position of the chameleon as they interacted with each other in facing with socio-cultural challenges. Hope is the dominant storyline in the above tale.

**The hyena: Indecisiveness.**

A tale was also told about the indecisive hyena. The hyena was invited by his friend to attend a ceremony organised by fellow animals. On her way she reached a junction of two roads. Before she could take her direction to the ceremony she met some other animals coming from a different ceremony. They told the hyena of how good the other ceremony was with lots of fun and plenty of food to eat and also remarked that the ceremony was still going on. The hyena decided to abandon her plans of attending the first ceremony and set her journey to the second one. However before she went far she met yet other animals coming from the first ceremony and informed her how well the first ceremony was going and talked about the delicious food and the drinks there. They further informed her that the host was waiting for her and had even kept some food for her. At that point the hyena again changed her mind and set for the first ceremony. The hyena kept on moving in between the two ceremonies and became too late and missed out on both. The dominant storyline form the above tale was indecisiveness.

People in the African society were warned not to be in the position of the hyena which was known to be indecisive as it might lead to despair and missed opportunities for making their lives better.

**The ever seeking hen: Persistence.**

Another tale was told about the ever seeking hen. A mother hen was looking for some food. She did not feel like going elsewhere so she kept pecking into earth repeatedly in the same place. Meanwhile an eagle flew by and perched on the branch of a tree close to where the hen was. The eagle was so curious at what the hen was doing that he kept on looking at her. After a few minutes, the eagle called out to the hen. "Hello, my friend, I know you are looking for some grub. But why are you digging in the same place? Why don't you try in different places? I'm sure you'll have better luck!" The hen replied, "you are right my friend, but you see I can't fly about like you do. That is why I keep digging in the same place." "Is that so!" said the eagle. "In that case you should use my golden needle. It will enable you to fly about here and there. Do you know that at one time I was also not able to fly? I started to flying only after my wings were sewn with a golden needle."

The hen became excited. She wanted to borrow the eagle's golden needle. The eagle agreed but told her, "you have to return it tomorrow evening." After giving the hen his golden needle, the eagle flew away. The hen started to sew her wings with the needle. But

unfortunately the needle fell from her beak into some sand. She hurriedly looked for the needle but could not find it. The hen became very worried and kept looking all around. But the needle was hidden in the dirt in the ground and the hen could not find it even though she tried her best.

This went on until late evening. Just then the eagle appeared. He sat on the same branch and was wondering what the hen was looking for. "What are you digging for?" He asked the hen. The hen felt embarrassed. "I'm so sorry dear friend; I have lost your needle. It's buried somewhere in this place but I can't find it," she told the eagle. "What? You have lost my needle?" shouted the eagle in anger. "You have to find my needle! I shall give you until tomorrow. If by then you don't have my needle, I will eat you up for dinner!" The mother hen was now panicky; finally she gave up and went into hiding to avoid being eaten by the eagle.

From that time onwards hens have always been scratching the earth in search of the golden needle given by the eagle. They also hide themselves whenever an eagle flies in the sky above. Persistence was the dominant storyline in the above tale.

Like the hen, African people were always encouraged to keep on seeking whatever they treasured without giving up. It was believed that the spirit of ever seeking could one day yield good fruits or be rewarded by success.

These, then, become stories on which people can draw, when they make sense of their life narratives. The above tales represented by the animals had moral teachings of hope, despair, persistence and importance of thinking things through. They were told to inspire the good values and warn against vices. They were meant to shape peoples' lives.

As cultural forms, the stories are available to facilitate the telling of the young girls' experiences and may even enable them to explore their experiences of dropping out of school due to teenage pregnancy in their own words. They are also available to help in listening to, and reading, the young mothers' diverse narratives and in reinterpreting them within the broader social and cultural landscape. This will, in turn, offer one possible reading of the meaning of the re-entry policy for the young mothers who dropped out of school due to teenage pregnancy while putting their voices and life stories for recording and interpretation in the foreground.

In the process of telling their stories, the young mothers took numerous positions similar to those of the animals mentioned above. However in representing the young mothers' stories, I have taken the key image generally as the position of the narrator. As indicated in the Methodology Chapter Four, I used thematic narrative analysis to identify three themes that correspond to the African genres of hope, quest and despair. I chose different animals (Chameleon, hen and hyena) to symbolise the positions that were made available to the girls.

## Narratives of the young Mothers

### Narrative of hope- Boke (Chameleon).

Boke presented herself as an individual hopeful of a bright future engaged in a process of self-development. This story echoes the genre of hope, represented by the chameleon whose tale told of a search for a special treasure or goal involving many hazards along the way: of challenges, tests, dilemmas and trials hence demanding courage and endurance in order to be successful. Boke sat twice for her end of primary national examinations and qualified to join secondary school. She performed well enough in both attempts of Standard eight examinations but due to lack of tuition fees she was unable to proceed to Form one. In that state of despair and frustration, Boke fell pregnant and almost gave up hope that she would ever complete her education. In her desperation Boke got married but her dream of completing her schooling never died.

Boke's inability to join secondary school was the first challenge she faced in pursuit of her special treasure, education. Like the hen, she never gave up and so enrolled again in Standard eight. This time, like the chameleon, she achieved. However, at this point again, lack of tuition fees became the low point in her struggle to acquire education.

> *What made me be out of school, I completed my class 8, and in my background there was nobody to take me for my further studies, I again tried to be back the next year, I enrolled in class 8 and achieved, I also searched for anyone who can help, none again was there to help and that is when I decided to get married.*

This first test in Boke's life made her unhappy as a young girl. This made her feel lonely and she took it as a challenge to work out how to get out of the situation she was in. The fact that she knew she was bright in class made it more painful, though it also gave her the strength to want to overcome the challenge. The loss of support and company from her peers made her experience at home unbearable. She also lacked familial and financial support that could give

her assurances that she was to be successful in life. Boke had concerns about the uncertainties she felt about being able to access secondary education. However, she always sought to counter the situation and look for new possibilities in her life.

> *When I was at home I felt so bad because when I saw my colleagues whom we were with at school at previous times, when they had different jobs and yet when I remembered that I was at the top in class than them, when I found them doing different jobs infact I felt very bad and that is why I decided even to be back.*

Boke's husband supported her to return to school. He understood the benefits of education and was ready to sacrifice for his wife. He enabled her to overcome her first challenge by helping her pay her tuition fees. In this way she was able to counter her first challenge and be able to start her new possible journey towards her success.  She had always desired to attend secondary school and become successful in life and the fact that she was now a mother of three children made her take the idea of returning to school seriously.

> *The support I get to be back in school is from my husband when he heard that I want to come back to school he was very much eager and was very much interested on it and that is why he decided to support me fully in anything I need to be back to school.*

Her being back to school had renewed her hopes for a bright future in a way that was most that gratifying. "*I do enjoy being in school with other pupils!*" The success of her colleagues at school had also motivated her to come back to school by the virtue of the fact that she was bright in class and knew she could do as well as them.

In her desire to acquire education another challenge arose, and Boke viewed herself as facing a test of trying to manage the tensions of learning in school and at the same time taking care of her family. Nevertheless she accepted her position in society by recognizing the role of her husband in her life and the extra responsibility of taking care of her children, though both responsibilities subjected her to the danger of being distracted, like the hyena. The support she got from her husband to pay her school fees shaped her future life. It made her to move forward on her journey of becoming successful, a journey that, in time, supported her to live and tell new stories of herself; stories that proved she was capable of finishing her secondary education and stories of being successful and respectable in the society.

*The challenges I do face as I have at first I have children, these challenges I do face so many of them because when I am in school especially when I am in class putting my mind to be in class, going back home when given homework, I find it difficult because I have to do other responsibilities as a woman in the house, cook for the husband , look after the children when we are required to come to school at weekends it is difficult for me because I am supposed to go to the farm to work for my children.*

However she was hopeful that her coming back to school would help her take care of her family. Irrespective of her circumstances after marriage, she appreciated the fruits of education to her as a person and to her family

> *"...going to school so that later I can assist my family...that is why I decided to come back to school."*

Like the spider, she overcomes the plot. She felt victorious by overcoming her trials in life and now she was happy to be in school. Boke had been able to overcome the stigma from colleagues and the society in pursuit of her dream. She felt she had lost a lot as a young girl indicating that she was old. It also showed that success comes with a price and responsibilities.

> *"...though my years are gone I am old...I feel so happy...I do not fear neither do I shame myself I just enjoy the studies...."*

Boke perceived the re-entry policy for girls positively and drew her encouragement from it. She saw it as providing her with new opportunities for her development and for the development of her family. She identified herself with other girls who had dropped out of school due to teenage pregnancy. Her triumphant story was meant to act as a source of inspiration to her fellow young mothers. Boke's story held potential not only in shaping new possibilities in her life but, also in the future of her children and the lives of future young mothers who will drop out of school due to pregnancy.

> *Most of us were eager to go back to school because when a girl is pregnant she feels to be separate from others being shy or lonely but when the policy was announced that even if a girl is pregnant while in school and she wishes to be back and continue with her studies the policy is good because it has encouraged me to be back in school.*

126

There could be many young mothers like Boke who are hopeful of completing their education after dropping out due to teenage pregnancy. They may view the re-entry policy for girls as an opportunity to continue with their education.  However for them to realize this dream they have to overcome some challenges such as poverty and family responsibilities.

**Narrative of quest – Robi (Hen).**

Robi had hoped to do well in her primary school education and join secondary school. As a young girl the future looked bright. The idea of having a good job and earning a decent life after school made her focus on performing well in her studies. However her hopes were shattered when Robi got pregnant while in school. After delivery, and when she was ready to return to school, she lacked sponsorship for her education. She came from a poor background and could not afford to pay her tuition fees.  Like the hen when it lost the golden needle, she also felt so sad and embarrassed.

> *The problem that occurred to me is simply because of lack of money. I didn't*
> *have the sponsor who can fund me to continue with my education*

Robi was unable to continue with her education and this stressed her a lot. She became desperate and wondered if she could ever achieve her dream of a good life in future. The fact that her class mates were continuing with their education while she was at home worsened her situation. She became very bitter and started blaming herself and at this point she took the position of the hyena, however she never lost sight of the new possibility of returning to school and completing her secondary education. She knew that this possibility held significant potential for supporting her present and future lives, and the life of her child.

> *When I left the school I felt very guilty because others were continuing with*
> *their studies and me I was at home. So I felt very guilty and therefore, tearful*
> *was cascading down my cheeks asking day after day who I get to sponsor me*
> *to continue with my studies?*

Although Robi's situation and future looked uncertain, she hoped to continue with her education at some stage in life. Her quest for good life in the future renewed her focus upon the present. Robi accepted her situation and expected to overcome it with time.

> *If I come back to school I will feel very happy because I will be one day God*
> *willing I will be somebody reasonable and therefore the society will respect*
> *me that I am educated.*

Robi expected her return to school to eventually earn her good life and respect in the society. She was aware of the re-entry policy for girls, but due to lack of tuition fees she was unable to take advantage of it. Although she had a right to return to school through the re-entry policy, other barriers such as poverty made it difficult from it becoming a reality.

> *I have heard about it when I gave birth to a child I did not get a supporter who could bring me back to school so that I could continue. I was eager to come but lack of money made me not come.*

The re-entry policy for girls kept her hope alive and she knew that it impacted on other young girls like her. Robi's identification with other young girls in the same situation could have acted as a source of inspiration to them. Robi's quest for good life could motivate other young girls not to give up. There could be other young girls like Robi who still have the desire to return to school but are held back by several different barriers.

> *This policy is a good policy because when it will go on it will make other girls like me to continue with school and they would not give up.*

Robi accepted that there could be no help from her family. She understood her background as being poor but still this did not let her quest or dream for good life die. Robi still hoped that one day she could get someone to fund her education and complete schooling for a better life. Resonating with the tale of still seeking, she saw her present situation as an opportunity for change and had faith that it will come soon hence taking the position of the chameleon.

> *I feel lonely when I am there at home, my background no help nobody can help us, so with me I usually pray to God telling Him, God if at all you are with me why can't you help me to complete my form 4 so that one day I am someone at our home, because our home there is nobody who has continued with education and completed form 4 level.*

Robi's quest for education came from within herself. She had such a determination to be back to school irrespective of her present circumstances. Robi understood the future and that of her child depended on her returning to school.

> *It is only myself I sat down and I swore to God that I should be back to school so that one day one time I may help my kid I do ask questions day after day if I*

*would not be educated how can I get the food my kid will eat so I decided to come back to school.*

Robi remained positive that her quest for education and ultimately a bright future would be realised one day. Like the hen, she was still seeking to achieve her desire of a good life. Robi's story represents many other young mothers who are determined to have the best in life irrespective of their circumstances.

### Narrative of despair- Matinde (Hyena).

Matinde appreciated the importance of education. She recognized the impact of education in an individual's life. She did aspire to have education and lead a better life in future.

*"Somebody learned is different from others and she is making her life better in future days.""*

However Matinde's aspiration of good life was cut short when she became pregnant before she could complete her education. For some time she had a feeling of despair and the situation was overwhelming. She grew fearful of continuing with school, fearing that she will be unsupported by colleagues, teachers and parents.

*I was in school when I got pregnant and I thought the teachers could send me away...*

The teenage pregnancy brought loneliness to Matinde and these made her long for, and miss, her time in school. While at home Matinde lost the company and support of her classmates. This brought to Matinde the feeling of living the empty present. She had to live by a feeling of not being as good as other students in her school.

*I felt very lonely, the companionship I had in school I missed it so much, the questions that I could ask some students to help me I missed because I could not get them.*

Matinde remembered her time in school as being enjoyable and good. She enjoyed the company of her classmates which she was missing. She was happy when she was schooling and things looked good then.

*My time in school I do enjoy with my fellow students, like when discussing some questions I do understand many things that I did not and teachers I ask questions and they explain to me and I get knowledgeable.*

Matinde's stay at home made her long for the time when she will return to school though there was nothing to show that could be a possibility. She admitted that education was to make a positive mark in her children's lives.

*When I come back to school as I am intending to come back I will be very happy and pray that God help me so that in future I will be a person respected in the society.*

After delivery of her child Matinde continued staying at home. While at home Matinde got pregnant again. Matinde saw this as yet another setback in life of difficulties. It brought despair and loss of any kind of hope of returning to school.

*"...when I stayed at home I got pregnant and that is why I am at home."*

The second pregnancy brought hopelessness to Matinde. Though she expected to return to school the present situation brought a feeling of an overwhelming sense of loss. Her present was empty hence there was no hope in the future. She appeared to have accepted her fate and given up. Matinde's return to school was far off in her distant imagination. She felt discriminated against by parents, teachers and colleagues. She had to live with a feeling that she did not fit in either setting (school and home).

There could be other young mothers such as Matinde who are experiencing a feeling of hopelessness and despair brought about due to poverty, and other barriers like second pregnancies. Their present circumstances bring a sense of confusion not knowing what to do, hence drawing from the hyena position.

## Listening to the Stories

The stories from the young mothers were an expression of unique individual experiences. Each of the young mothers interviewed narrated a different story although faced with similar challenges. The stories clearly reflected the individual construction and making meaning of their situations. The stories further portrayed individual actions and what the young mothers chose to do as a result of positioning themselves differently in their stories. For example in

some of their stories they positioned themselves as having given up and in a state of despair, but later as the narration continues they position themselves as having hope of returning to school.

Listening to the stories, there was evidence that the girls' experiences have been shaped by the larger social-cultural and institutional narratives. For example, one of the young mothers reported in her narration that it was her husband and her father who made decision for her. This could be a clear reflection that her position in the story has been entangled with the wider socio-cultural contexts. Another young mother expressed the fear of her husband, if he found that she had participated in this study. This also evidences the impact of the socio-cultural contexts on the experiences and the narration of those experiences. The time of telling the stories could also have influenced the narration of the stories. Two of the young mothers interviewed had given birth and were at home while one of them had returned to school at the time of this study. The interview took place in one of the schools which could have impacted on the telling of the stories. The young mothers could have felt safer, securer and more appreciated.

In remembering their student lives, the young mothers portrayed pictures of success. They showed how they were capable in terms of academic performance while in school and were not failures and that they were good students when they were at school. For example, one of the young mothers remembered in her story that she used to be top in her class academically. The place where the stories were being told could have influenced the remembering of these scenes of success. In telling about their future, the young mothers tied the aspect of completing schooling with the value of being good mothers to their children.

The young mothers' stories were also a reflection of scenes of suffering. They painted their experiences out of school as the ones marked with loneliness. They talked of lack of support and of their desperation. These narratives showed that they were drained with the pain of dropping out of school. Some of the young mothers' stories had scenes which compared the two experiences: one while in school and the other one out of school. In their narration, all of them were in favour of their experiences in school, which showed that their experiences out of school were undesirable to them.

As I was listening to the stories from the young mothers, I found myself in a difficult situation, hence taking different positions represented by the animals. Firstly their scenes of suffering drew me to taking the position of chameleon who was supposed to perform miracles

and enable the young mothers return to school to complete their studies. Secondly, as I was not capable of performing miracles then, I found myself taking a different position represented by another animal, the spider. I took this position by explaining to the young mothers the objectives of my research. This position helped me to think through and understand their experiences while reflecting on the challenges and difficulties of conducting research in circumstances of ecocnomic hardship. It also helped me in representing and retelling their stories in a way that might impact on various audiences.

To sum up, in listening to these stories from the young mothers, it is important to note that the told stories could be partial stories of their experiences. By providing an opportunity to tell their stories, is also letting the girls know that they are important and worth listening to, and inviting them to talk together about their experiences in a group, might enable them to support and inspire each other. Therefore it would be necessary to listen to many more of their stories before making any decisions or interpretations of their experiences. Lastly it was quite impressive to note that the girls' obvious value of education for both themselves and their children ran across all the stories.

# CHAPTER NINE

# DISCUSSION

**Introduction**

The discussion in this chapter reflects on the study findings in relation to reviewed literature and other related academic studies, and to the research questions with which this study began. Five important themes emerge for discussion.

Firstly, findings from the study demonstrate the intricacy of this particular educational problem, and point to the controversies any discussion is likely to provoke. Attitudes to the policy varied considerably and there were many conflicting views as to its value, the nature and existence of any problem with the policy, who was responsible, and what should be done. Nevertheless, all participants in this study demonstrated a strong desire to be involved in such discussions. From this I conclude that more emphasis should be placed on participation, thus building on the more usual policy responses of prevention and protection.

Secondly, the study reveals a concerning lack of awareness and understanding of both the policy and the guidelines. From this it is possible to argue that pregnancy must be seen as a process, as a sequence of events each step of which requires specific attention.

Thirdly, many socio-cultural factors were important in preventing young mothers from returning to school. It can be argued that school pregnancy is a symptom of underlying socio-cultural disadvantage and that these disadvantages 'select' who will become pregnant (Duncan, 2007). Preventive approaches are thus important, but must address wider socio-cultural issues.

Related to this, school drop-out due to pregnancy also appears to be a complex interplay of gender roles and perspectives. In this view teenage pregnancy can be seen as an indicator of wider gender issues in education. In particular, there appears to be an absence of interest in good fathering, both in these findings and in the literature. This important issue requires more research.

Finally, the stories of the young girls reflect a strong commitment to education, and an enduring hope that they might be able to continue their studies, despite the many obstacles they have encountered. Motherhood had made them even keener to resume their studies.

These are moving narratives and were analysed separately to draw out the importance of their experiences. They were also meant to honour young mothers, bring out the unheard voices, and respect the uniqueness of individuality and construction of particular experiences.

In this chapter, I take each of these points in turn, showing how findings in this study add to and make a contribution to the existing literature. I conclude by discussing the limitations of the study and implications for future policy development and implementation.

## Pregnancy as A Complex Problem

Dealing with school age pregnancy is obviously a complex matter. There are no simple answers. Participants in this study did not always agree on the value of the policy. Whilst there was general agreement about the value of education for girls and the importance of retaining girls at school among parents and current students, some MOE officials and head teachers thought that might encourage immorality among other students. Most participants especially the officials and the head teachers thought the policy was problematic, but some (see next section) were unaware of its existence. Those who were aware thought different aspects were problematic. For example the head teachers reported that there were no specific guidelines on how to treat pregnant girls in schools. Lack of clear guidance to the head teachers on how to handle each stage of the process made the implementation of the policy difficult.

There was noticeable disagreement on what should be done. Some thought the girls should be punished; others thought they should be supported. Some of the head teachers and current students blamed the pregnant girls and felt they should suffer for their mistakes. They further suggested that the pregnant girls should be punished before readmitted back to school. However, some of the head teachers, students and many of the parents were of the opinion that the pregnant girls should be supported to remain in school and return to school after delivery. A few of the teachers and parents thought that insufficient attention was given to the boys or adults involved. For example, some of the parents suggested that the boys responsible for the pregnancy should also be out of school when the pregnant girl goes home to deliver. For the adults responsible for impregnating girls, some parents felt that they should be punished severely. Some parents even proposed that the government should give them a harsh jail sentence since they were spoiling the education of their daughters.

One interesting and important difference was the contrasting attitude of school officials and Kuria about the influence of cultural practices. Where school officials tended to blame Kuria

traditional practices of circumcision, early marriage, and the economic importance of girls as a form of barter  for girls dropping out of school, the Kuria girls and their parents appeared to recognise education as  important and a way out of poverty. The parents were determined to support their daughters to complete their education for better lives in future. They also expected that if their daughters were successful they could also take care of them at old age. The Kuria girls also acknowledged that education was important for their successful lives and those of their families.

These differing views make it unlikely that the policy could succeed. Conflicting opinions without a common focus would make the implementation of the policy difficult. It appears that there has been little chance for the policy and its implications to be discussed so that various stakeholders could hear and have a chance to understand each other's viewpoints. This would be a necessary step if they were to commit to some joint action.  However, it was also strikingly obvious that the vast majority of participants from all groups would value a chance to be included in on-going discussions about formulation and implementation.

Participants in this study felt concerned that they did not have any input in the designing, development and implementation of the re-entry policy. The findings here suggest that the incorporation of the stakeholders' views in the policy is essential as it would ensure stakeholders support the policy and that the policy is relevant and sensitive to the needs of teenage parents. The information from the literature in chapter three, for example, which indicates that some teenage parents regard teenage parenthood as a positive experience, would be quite vital for the policy developers to include in the policy. The positive experiences of teenage parenthood would help the relevant stakeholders to support the teenagers to become good mothers and fathers. Therefore it would be necessary for these positive experiences to be included in the policy.

Lack of incorporation of stakeholders' views in the current policy in this study confirms Duncan's (2007) study which found that his participants were not involved in the designing and developing of policies affecting them. He noted that there was a remarkable lack of teenage parent 'grassroots' or 'bottom up' organizations, which can express their feelings and experiences as welfare subjects, based around some collective identity.

There was a strong desire for participation in the implementation of the policy from all participants. A number of participants in this study proposed various strategies that should be employed to implement the re-entry policy. Most of the strategies mentioned by the

135

participants were to be undertaken by the government in collaboration with all other stakeholders. These partnerships were important as they could bring about support of the policy.

Some of the head teachers mentioned that holding of workshops, mounting of seminars, undertaking of professional development, provision of scholarships and financial assistance to the pregnant girls, all require huge amounts of money. They therefore suggested that the policy could be successful if the government collaborated with all stakeholders in the designing, developing and implementing the policy. Involving other agencies, for example the NGOs, could lead to reduced cost of formulating, disseminating and implementing of the policy for the government.

The Centre for Study of Adolescence (2008) established that successful implementation of the guidelines requires a multi-pronged approach that combines community sensitization and awareness creation with support to both the community and school system to create a facilitative environment that supports re-entry of girls. It further affirmed that this approach was vital as it involved dealing with all the causes of teenage pregnancy. This finding supported the conclusion of an earlier study by Meekers and Ahmed (1999) who noted that there was a continued need to endeavour for more inclusive programmes to prevent adolescent pregnancy, as well as need for policies that encourage and facilitate the return to school of girls who dropped out because of pregnancy. This is also the finding of this research.

The importance of collaboration with other stakeholders has also been raised by Aikman and Unterhalter (2005) who suggest that a policy development process should actively involve an informal body of teachers, parents and representatives of the women's' movement. They believe that this combination of forces can deliver change by working together with strategies that are interrelated and supported by government and donor resources to sustain implementation. This finding is in line with the Elimu Yetu Coalition (2005) study which confirmed that government and civil society have much work to do together to continue to raise awareness at community and local levels.

The importance of sensitising the community supported by participants in my study confirms the Centre for Study of Adolescence (2008) report which revealed that involvement of the community in the implementation of the policy is essential and that community support reduces opposition to implementation. It also found that where the community is actively

involved, they are more likely to contribute to implementation by supporting other activities as was the case in their project. It noted that community support also helps reduce stigma and motivates girls to stay and complete school. Similarly the Ministry of Education Namibia (2008) found that liaison with NGOs and community groups could also facilitate effective implementation of the re-entry policy. For example, it reported that Kenya's re-entry policy has been supported in practice by the efforts of the Forum for African Women Educationalists, which has been instrumental in raising awareness of the re-admission policy and in mobilizing communities to support young mothers in their efforts to return to school.

Thus it can be suggested here that the work of sensitisation and creating awareness about the policy could be effectively done by collaborating and partnering with all stakeholders, other government agencies and NGOs. The partnerships and collaborations are likely to give a chance for the public and stakeholders to partake in the formulation, development and implementation of the policy. The strong desire by participants in this study to be part of any on-going discussion supports the findings of those who argue for inclusive policy making.

The Elimu Yetu Coalition's (2005) study noted that despite a range of interventions and policy changes aimed at improving the education of girls, there were still many obstacles to further progress. Similarly Aikman and Unterhalter (2005) study confirmed that there needs to be a set of combined actions for change and gender equality, including teacher training, support for schools in poor communities and social provisions that underscores the importance of investing in girls' education. They submitted that when each strategy comprises of a package of interconnected measures, rather than isolated and unplanned interventions then desirable change would be achievable.

As expected in any policy, there have been debates internationally and nationally on the best way to deal with teenage pregnancy. However the voices of all stakeholders and especially the girls and teenage parents are missing from these debates and that will mean that many of the solutions proposed will largely be ill-informed and unworkable. It can be argued that there is need for public participation in the development and implementation of the policy which would also mean that the views and concerns of the teenage parents would be included in the policy so that it works for them too.

Involvement of all stakeholders in the policy process would ensure participation and sensitisation of all issues relating to the policy. This would further mean that all stakeholders would have an opportunity to take part in the on-going debates about various aspects of the

policy that are not agreeable to all. Rather than advocating for mere support and prevention programmes on the policy, this participatory form of policy formulation and implementation would ensure stakeholders' understanding, input and collaboration in the entire policy process.

**Lack of Awareness and Understanding of the Policy and its Lack of Clarity and Specificity of Policy Guidelines**

Many of the officials, head teachers and current students reported that most parents in the rural areas of the community were unaware of the policy. They attributed this to the inability of the government in communicating the policy effectively to all stakeholders in all regions of the country. Some of the participants further connected this lack of awareness to the failure by the Government to involve all stakeholders in designing, developing and communicating of the policy, thus supporting the discussion in the previous section.

The Standard Newspaper Friday, 13th May 2010 gives a classic example of the low levels of awareness about the policy.

> *It reported that residents of Marakwet East district protested against the management of a school for allegedly allowing pregnant girls to continue learning in the institution. They claimed that the school had kept the six girls who were reportedly pregnant against education officials. They also alleged that a form four girl who was pregnant and attending lessons at the school delivered during April holidays. "The school has contravened the policies and we want it to be answerable to the violation" said one parent.*

Discussion around the policy revealed that while some of the participants were aware of the policy, there was confusion among them on what constitutes the official policy and on how it should be implemented. There was also no common understanding of the policy among the participants. This meant that the officials and the head teachers were faced with challenges when implementing the policy.

Furthermore it soon became clear that, far from being a single event, pregnancy was a process with decisions needed about how to handle each stage: discovery, treatment of pregnant students, cessation of studies, follow up, possible re-entry, support and repositioning of the young mothers.

Clear guidelines on how to handle pregnant girls were also lacking in many of the schools and confusing among many of the respondents in this study. The finding from this study showed that there was no uniform criterion used in the handling of pregnant girls, consequently this largely meant that the implementation of the policy was not universally practiced. In a situation where a head teacher has a negative attitude to teenage pregnancy, it may mean that implementation of re-entry policy may suffer. Specifically they mentioned that there were no clear and specific guidelines on when pregnant girls should leave school, how long they should be out of school, how to handle them while in school and upon re-entering school after delivery and what kind of support to give to the pregnant girls.

Many of the officials, principals, head teachers and teachers found the current policy guidelines inadequate and confusing in many aspects. A range of specific problems for which principals, head teachers and teachers might seek guidelines emerge before, and during the course of a pregnancy. First there is the dilemma of how to detect a pregnancy. In some schools pregnancy testing was compulsory while in other schools it was not. Other principals thought this compulsory school pregnancy testing was intrusive. Second, there was no shared understanding of the policy guideline among the head teachers on when should pregnant girls leave school for delivery. Some of the head teachers felt that it should be immediately the pregnancy was detected, yet others preferred the time when pregnancy starts to show. Some head teachers were of the opinion that pregnant girls should remain in school until they are physically unable to do so. Next, there seemed to be some misunderstanding among the head teachers in this study as to how long pregnant girls should stay at home. Some head teachers in this study observed that young mothers could return to school after their babies have been weaned, others suggested six months while some mentioned one year. There were also inconsistent practices among the head teachers in relation to re-entry of young mothers to different schools after delivery. Were they to be treated equally to other students? Finally, there was the problem of the retention of pregnant girls in schools. What support, if any, was to be given? Therefore the understanding and practice of the policy was varied and confusing among the MOE officials, principals and head teachers. This confusion allowed for both positive and negative responses. Where some teachers made use of the confusion and unclear guidelines to go the extra mile and be particularly supportive others were able to be negatively judgemental and effect too early an exclusion.

Lack of awareness on re-entry policy and existence of guidelines among the MOE officials meant that the officials were unable to offer advice and guidance to their clients who are the

principals, head teachers, teachers and parents. The lack of knowledge among the officials about the policy was likely to spill over to the head teachers whom they are meant to give professional advice and guidance since they acknowledged the fact that most stakeholders are unaware of the policy.

The findings in this study are consistent with studies in other countries (Bhana et al., 2010; Centre for Study of Adolescence, 2008; Elimu Yetu Coalition, 2005; Riordan, 2002 & Social Exclusion Unit on teenage pregnancy, 1999) which have noted that there were no specific guidelines for schools on how best to support pregnant teenagers and teenage parents in full time post primary education, and that many of the school head teachers, parents, teachers, and students were unaware of the existence of the policy guidelines. This situation highlighted the difficulties in addressing the needs and concerns of the teenage mothers even though legally they are supposed to attend school. These studies also revealed that some school authorities could use this absence of guidelines to discreetly or openly discourage pregnant school girls from continuing in school, particularly during pregnancy. They presented that the response by a school to a pupils' pregnancy plays a significant part in determining the extent and nature of the pupils' involvement in mainstream education. Therefore they recommended that the Government must acknowledge the important role that teachers play and provide them with more professional development around policy and develop specific guidelines to assist pregnant teenagers and teenage mothers.

Another significant finding from my study was that there were no monitoring and follow up procedures put in place by the MOE on the implementation of re-entry policy. The MOE officials in this study reported that they had not developed instruments of assessing and making follow ups on girls who drop out of school as a result of school pregnancy. This finding showed that policy management system was lacking therefore it could be difficult to evaluate the impact of the policy for improvement purposes. The non-follow-ups on implementation of re-entry policy further means that the MOE had no way of assessing the usefulness or effectiveness of the policy. It also meant that there were no ways of detecting those schools that were not complying with the policy and it was also difficult to audit the policy.

This is consistent with the Centre for Study of Adolescence (2008) study which found out that there were no mechanisms put in place by the MOE, Kenya, to monitor the implementation of the re-entry policy for girls. It further added that the Ministry had no way

of assessing how successful the policy was in promoting the right of girls to education. A similar finding has been reported by the MOE, Namibia (2008) which showed that for school pregnancy policy to be consistently implemented at all schools throughout the country, there needs to be an inclusion of some monitoring mechanism within the policy. It further suggested that it should be mandatory for all schools to record and keep information with regard to the number of student pregnancies per year, what steps taken in respect of the students involved and whether or not the student parents returned to the same school or transferred to another school. It further added that there should also be efforts at tracing the pregnant girls and follow up what happens after delivery. This finding is supported by Ainscow and Miles (2009) who have suggested that data are essential in appraising the usefulness of interventions, strategies, processes and plan new initiatives. They noted that in these senses, information can, arguably be seen as "the life-blood of continuous improvement" (p. 3). Findings from my study go further in suggesting that any such monitoring needs to check implementation at several stages of the pregnancy process and not just occurrence and compliance.

As revealed by this study, many of the MOE officials, principals, head teachers and teachers were not sure and clear of the policy's guidelines. Some of the existing guidelines were not well understood and needed to be reviewed. In particular, guidelines need to recognise pregnancy as a series of stages, and guidelines need to be written for each stage. In keeping with the findings discussed in the previous section of this chapter, such guidelines could benefit from stakeholder input.

To sum up, as noted in the reviewed literature on general policy formulation and implementation in this study (Chapter three), there are policy documents and guidelines promulgated from the national level but the school system is very loose and this is coupled with the fact that implementation is weak.

## Socio-cultural Factors 'select' who will be Pregnant

Despite many participants in this study mentioning teenage pregnancy as one of the reasons for girls dropping out of school, there were other underlying social factors responsible. Many of the participants seemed not to recognize these other factors that pushed young girls into pregnancy and eventually teenage motherhood.

The perception of the MOE officials and the head teachers that girls and, for that matter young parents, are to blame for dropping out of school seemed to victimise the girls. For this

reason some of the officials and the head teachers thought that to some extent re-entry policy was tolerating immorality in the society. They therefore suggested that the re-entry policy should be punitive so as to prevent other girls from becoming potentially immoral. This kind of position taken by some of the head teachers and MOE officials in this study was likely to bring resistance to the re-entry policy. It is hard to agree with some of the participants in this study that pregnant girls should be blamed solely for their situations as there were other factors such as poverty, cultural practices and violence which disadvantaged girls in the society.

On the other hand some head teachers and MOE officials in this study seemed to believe that cultural practices were largely the cause of school pregnancy and girls' eventual dropout from school. The experiences of the officials and the head teachers were that some cultural practices such as early marriages, dowry payment and female genital mutilation undermined the education of girls. They stated that these practices were part of the culture, and that some of the teaching the initiates to these practices undergo make them aware that they are now adults and ready for marriage. The officials and head teachers felt that the initiates' realisation that they are now adults makes it difficult for them to continue being students in schools. They thought that because of these cultural beliefs the members of the Kuria community did not value education.

> *For example, the Daily Nation Newspaper, Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> December, 2011 reports that hundreds of schoolgirls in Kuria districts underwent the traditional rite of passage (Female Genital Mutilation) that now allow them to get married raising doubts as to whether they will continue with their studies in the New Year. Teachers in the area said that while the practice had been part of the culture, it leads to significant deterioration in the standard of education as girls drop out of school soon afterwards. The rituals the initiates go through before the material day is like parallel education. They learn that they are adults and they can stand up to anybody besides starting a home. It is very difficult for the teachers to discipline such children. The locals defended the practice, arguing that the constitution protected cultural practices of communities.*

However, as mentioned in the first section, the Kuria parents and Kuria students implied that such beliefs and practices were becoming less popular and are out-dated. They further

reported that since culture is dynamic, they are embracing changes and it would be unfair to generalise about people. They appeared to place a high value on education with most naming lack of financial resources as the main barrier to their return to school. In this study, many of the pregnant girls were unable to remain or return to school after delivery due to poverty. Some of the MOE officials, principals and head teachers in this study further reported that the Government seemed to lack resources to implement the policy effectively. However there was strong evidence from some of other participants in this study, especially the parents that they valued the education of their daughters and the young mothers showed that they were keen to complete their schooling. It is for this reason that they expressed their disappointment at failing to send their daughters to school due to other factors such as poverty. These social disadvantages were beyond the means of many of the parents to overcome them. Blaming Kuria traditions for the drop out of Kuria girls may be an easier option for school decision makers than grappling with lack of guidelines and differing viewpoints. If this is the case, then cultural disadvantage can be added to the list of social disadvantages already noted in the literature in the next paragraph.

The finding that poverty was a major deterrent to on-going education confirms Boyle, Brock, Mace and Sibbons' (2002) review of six country studies, which found that children were kept out of school by many other factors besides the cost of education. They noted that these barriers included education quality, gender disparity, health problems, and access issues. Similarly a report by Educational Quality Improvement Program (EQUIP, 2007) confirmed that there was need to recognise the fact that specific groups of children such as minority, girls, HIV/AIDS orphans, special needs children, rural children and child labourers are excluded from education for unique reasons. It also found that reducing the costs of education was unlikely to eliminate all of the barriers these groups were confronted with as they also face additional challenges such as early marriage, pregnancy, discrimination, and distance to school, higher opportunity costs and a lack of school choice. Consequently it can be noted here that there could be many social factors that lead to adolescent girls and boys having sex, therefore teenage pregnancy. This finding is reflected in Bhana et al. (2010) who noted that the social context through which pregnancy and parenting is experienced is significant in shaping educational opportunities for pregnant teenagers and young mothers. This is consistent with Duncan (2007), who states that factors that exclude many girls from school are linked to social disadvantage, and that it is the younger women in deprived areas who are most likely to become pregnant and least likely to use abortion to solve unplanned pregnancy.

He argues that subsequent young parenting is then seen to reinforce disadvantage. He then concludes that in this sense sociocultural disadvantage may 'select' particular young women and men, to become teenage parents, and this disadvantage will continue to post pregnancy.

As revealed in this study, gender violence confirms the Bhana et al. (2010) finding which shows that it is people from poorer backgrounds who are less able to protect themselves from violence. For instance, one of the participants in my study reported that girls had to walk a long way, unprotected to school. The participant further noted that this situation exposed them to sexual violence as they walked to and from school. It was also not possible to conduct interviews in one of the divisions in Kuria district (see next section on limitations of the research) due to inter-clan wars. This form of conflicts is likely to subject girls and women to some violence including sexual violence.

Contrary to findings in some of reviewed research, which portray teenage parents as social threats and social victims, the young mothers in this study reported that teenage motherhood had given them the desire to return to school and complete their studies. They hoped that through education they could be able to offer quality lives to their children. The teenage parents in this study felt that motherhood had made them to be more focussed in life with the aim of working for a better future for themselves and that of their children. This finding confirms Duncan's (2007) study reported motherhood as being a positive experience and a powerful catalyst for becoming more mature, and for redirecting their lives for the better. Mothering often 'anchors the self, fosters a sense of purpose and meaning, reweaves connections, and provides a new sense of future' (p.316). Therefore he further observed that quantitative research is a one sided outlook of teenage parenting, which is unable to capture the thought and feelings of teenage mothers themselves. This finding is supported by De Jonge (2001) who confirmed that a qualitative method is important since it may allow women themselves to be heard, which does not often happen when issues surrounding teenage pregnancies are discussed. Like the participants in Duncan's (2007) study, some of the participants in my study reported that there were other factors related to socio-cultural disadvantages that influenced the participation of girls in education. Therefore it can be argued that this social and cultural disadvantage is what exposes girls to teenage pregnancy and then teenage motherhood. It can also be noted that these socio-cultural disadvantages could be jointly working against girls in many communities. It is also worth mentioning here that for the intervention measures to be effective, it will be important to focus on the elimination of all those socio-cultural disadvantages that could be impacting on education of

girls. However, to eliminate cultural practices that disadvantage girls could be problematic in terms of their morality or necessity. Moreover it can be contended that the membership of teenage mothers of a specific social class and area, is likely to explain why some of the young women become teenage mothers while others do not. This finding is confirmed by Riordan's (2002) study which revealed that motherhood itself may become an exclusionary factor for young women because of the lack of childcare and child friendly practices in places of education and training.

Therefore it can be stated that there could be many pre-pregnancy factors that contribute to making many girls become teenage mothers. But many of the policy initiatives meant to respond to teenage motherhood overlook these pre-pregnancy factors. Findings here suggest that for the initiatives and policies meant to assist the teenage parents to continue with schooling to be effectively implemented, attention is to be paid towards the removal as far as possible of all those factors that make many girls to be educationally disadvantaged. The Government and other agencies associated with education, need therefore to refocus on addressing the existing poverty and some of the cultural practices that affect education of girls. Rather than only highlighting the undesirable aspects of teenage pregnancy and blaming the girls, effort needs to be made to tackle the underlying problems of educating girls. Taking into account the strong evidence from qualitative research that captures the positive experiences of teenage parents would help in having a balanced development of policy around teenage parenting.

## Gender-based Discrimination

It is, of course, girls who most feel the effects of the socio-cultural disadvantages discussed above. Not only were the young mothers unable to continue schooling through lack of funds, they also were criticised by some of the officials, principals, head teachers, teachers and current students for immoral behaviour. In this view pregnancy was seen as an offence. Those who were against the policy felt that it should act as a deterrent to other girls falling pregnant. Therefore they suggested that the policy should be punitive to discourage other girls from abusing it and becoming pregnant. They further proposed that those responsible for the girls' pregnancy should also be punished. Those who opposed the policy further recommended that there should be a law to deal with the offenders and it should be severe to discourage others from committing the same offence.

Some of the current students in this study admitted that pregnant girls were discriminated against by their fellow students. They reported that they were called names and regarded as 'mothers' who should be at home. Some of the students blamed the pregnant girls for their circumstances and felt that they should suffer the consequences. They further observed that the pregnant girls had wasted their parents' resources in terms of tuition fees since they are to drop out of school. Other students suggested that the pregnant girls should be punished and re-entry policy should be conditional and punitive to discourage the girls from falling pregnant again. They thought that the pregnant girls were irresponsible and of loose morals. Some of the parents also felt that their pregnant daughters had wasted their money when they dropped out of school before completing their education.

Some parents showed annoyance when they discovered that their daughters were pregnant. It was painful to the parents as they realized that their daughters might not complete their education because of teenage pregnancy. Some of the parents also felt that their resources in terms of tuition fees had gone to waste since their daughters would drop out of school due to teenage pregnancy.

Some of the teachers in this study perceived the pregnant girls to be immoral and failures in life. Some teachers felt that after the girls became pregnant they should go home immediately as according to them they were now mothers. They were of the opinion that the pregnant girls could no longer manage their academic work and their performance could not be at par with the rest of the students.

The perception of some of the officials and head teachers was also that the pregnant girls were a special group therefore required special treatment. They felt that as they needed to be handled differently, they should not be mixed with the other students, also that some of the services required by the pregnant girls could only be provided at their homes. Some of the head teachers consequently felt that the pregnant girls should go home and only come back after they had delivered.

It can thus be inferred from these comments, which came from all participant groups, that the girls were likely to be subjected to criticism and negative comments. Adding to the harmful effects of such verbal condemnation, were some gender discriminatory practices that some school leaders might subsequently enforce. It can be noted here that the perception of the officials and the head teachers that the pregnant girls should be isolated from the rest of the students amounts to discrimination based on the girls' status.

This finding is consistent with Bhana et al. (2010) who found that becoming pregnant prompts dislike and sexual defilement. They noted that the presence of pregnant girls in schools was perceived as an influence that led to sexual abuse among other girls. They found that some teachers in South African schools felt that allowing young mothers to return to school after delivery was like not punishing them for their sexual immorality. This finding also confirms the Centre for Study of Adolescence (2008) study which found that there was resistance to the policy from those who thought that allowing young mothers back to school would trigger a multiplier effect among other girls and have a negative impact.

Another finding in this study was that although some teachers acknowledged being aware of the policy and its guidelines, they rarely implemented them. Some of the current students reported that whenever a girl was discovered to be pregnant in their school she was expelled. This is consistent with the Centre for Study of Adolescence (2008) report which found that the guideline was not being utilised by many schools as they prefer to expel pregnant girls instead.

What was also interesting in my study was that some participants felt that as much as the policy was meant to benefit pregnant girls in practice it was working against them. Some of the teachers and parents thought that the policy was biased therefore unfair to the girls. They argued that when the pregnant girls leave school to go and deliver, the boys responsible for their pregnancy remain in school continuing with their studies so the participants thought that the policy was disadvantaging girls. They suggested that the boys should also go home and wait until the girls deliver and return to school together and felt that if the boys were also allowed to go home, they would take responsibility of their actions.

However this debate is quite controversial because the Kenya Education Act of 1968 that governs and manages education does not provide for the suspension of boys due to teenage pregnancy. Also, the powers of expelling any student from any school in Kenya, is vested in the Director of Education. Nevertheless some principals and head teachers still illegally expel pregnant girls from schools. There was also a serious omission in the existing guidelines on what should be further action taken in relation to the boys responsible for impregnating girls besides guidance and counselling. It can be argued here that allowing both the boy and girl to go home would not be beneficial to them as they are to be future father and mother to the child. The teenage parents need education to help them provide the child with quality life and therefore schools should be required to provide such programmes. Sensitisation of all

147

stakeholders to the policy could help them in appreciating the teenage parenthood and endeavour to assist the teenage parents to make the best out of their experiences. This finding is confirmed by Hunt (2008) who found that in countries like Botswana and Malawi where the law requires that both the boy father and the girl mother are provisionally excluded from school, if attending; in practice this only affects the girl. It can therefore be noted that excluding the boy father from school does not help at all, instead efforts should made to educate all stakeholders about teenage parenting. Equally having on-site child care facilities would enable boy fathers to also practice their parenting skills and bond with their children. Therefore the good aspects and positive experiences of teenage parenthood should be included in the policy to help the teenage parents become better fathers and mothers.

It is of great significance in these findings, that though some participants thought boys should be held responsible, and that on-going education for both boys and girls was important, no participants mentioned the importance of fathering, or that boys in general should learn what it was to be a good father. This is crucially important if gendered attitudes are to be addressed in education. There was absence of study or consideration of the boy father in the literature.

There is one final point worthy of mention: throughout, participants, if they mentioned fathers at all, assumed that those responsible for the pregnancies were boys attending schools. However, other studies (Wood & Jewkes, 1997) note the incidences of rape and abuse by teachers. This disempowerment of girls is likely to make the policy unsuccessful and gender violence needs to be addressed in schools.

It was interesting to note that rather than directing attention to preventing teenage pregnancy, many studies have focused on supporting pregnant girls. As noted in chapter three in this study, several studies have shown that the prevention component of the policy has been underplayed. Few of the participants in this study mentioned any prevention measures to be put in place to reduce school pregnancy. However in suggesting some prevention measures, some of the participants proposed that there should be collaboration and partnerships with other related mainstream ministries, for example the Ministry of Health. The collaboration between the two ministries would ensure that the girls and the youth generally were offered sex education and prevention measures, for example, the use of contraceptives and condoms made available to them.

The importance of preventive measures confirms previous studies (Grant & Hallman, 2008; Jones et al., 1985; MOE Namibia, 2008), which found that teenage pregnancy rates are lower

in countries where there is greater availability of contraceptive services and sex education. They further indicated that clearly, then, it is possible to achieve lower teenage pregnancy rates even in the presence of high rates of sexual activity. They were in agreement that for school girls who become pregnant, access to pregnancy termination services and public support for crèches (day care centres) associated with schools (for girls who choose to bring their pregnancies to term) would provide greater prospects for girls to complete their schooling. They found that it was possible to discourage pregnancy and unsafe sexual behaviour without resorting to punishing those who have already made mistakes meaning positive approaches to prevention are likely to be much more effective in any event. Both girls and boys need to be targeted with such initiatives.

Similarly the Centre for Study of Adolescence (2008) report confirmed that there was need to improve the physical environment in school and empowering girls on sexual reproductive health and rights through provision of sexuality education. It further suggested that it was important to not only deal with the problem after it has occurred, but also take into account preventive measures to ensure that other girls do not find themselves in similar situations. This finding confirms Bhana et al. (2010) who agree that to assist teachers, a closer working relationship between departments of health and education may need to be established so that combined resources from both sectors can produce a more empowering environment for teachers to assist pregnant teenagers and young mothers at school.

A similar finding is expressed by Wood and Jewkes (1997) who established that not only should gender violence be made a focus of sexuality intervention programmes, but attention should be moved towards changing the attitudes and practices of men. They further found that unless the spotlight shifts towards men, health promotion initiatives in the field of sexual health will continue to be inadequate. However it can be argued that there is need to go beyond sex education and have prevention and educational programmes that address and discuss gender, women's rights, and gender violence.

## Support Needed for the Pregnant Girls and Teenage Parents

Although many of the pregnant girls felt unacceptable both at school and at home they observed that if they were supported at school and at home they were willing to remain in school during pregnancy and return to school after delivery. Teenage parents truly are an exceptional group of people with a unique set of issues and needs. While they may not have

planned their pregnancy many of the pregnant girls in this study showed determination to return to school and complete their education.

A similar finding revealing how teenage parents might be overburdened by responsibilities yet hopeful is expressed by Riordan (2002) who confirmed that teenagers' personal, social and educational life may be disrupted by the demands of pregnancy and parenting. He further noted that for the teenage parents to remain in school or return to school after delivery, it requires considerable individual determination and family support. It can be noted that the kind of support offered to the pregnant girls and young mothers plays a key role in enabling them to remain in school or return to school after delivery. Therefore it is important to identify and make available the relevant support services to the pregnant school girls and teenage parents.

One particularly interesting finding of this study was that whereas many of the participants thought that pregnant girls had lost opportunity in education, the young mothers still had hope of returning to school and complete their studies. Many of the participants felt that pregnant girls and teenage parents should be supported to remain in school and return to school after delivery. Some of the participants in this study suggested the need for all stakeholders to come to terms with the needs of the pregnant girls and learn how best to respond to them. Many of the young mothers in this study reported to be concerned about the care of their children. They appeared to be torn between wanting to remain at home and take care of their children and return back to school. Those who had returned back to school reported to be concerned about the safety and care of their children.

Some of the current students seemed to support the re-entry policy and sympathised with the pregnant girls. They felt that the pregnant girls should be supported and given a chance to complete their studies. Those who sympathised with the pregnant girls felt that they needed education for their better future lives and those of their children. These students thought that by completing education girls were likely to become good mothers.

Some of the parents were also supportive of their daughters and were keen on them continuing with their education. These parents were willing to take care of their daughters' children to allow them to concentrate in their studies. Therefore some of the parents felt that pregnant girls need to be supported to complete their education.

At the same time, some of the MOE officials and head teachers appreciated the re-entry policy and viewed it as a means through which pregnant girls were given a second chance to complete their education. They therefore advocated for the support for pregnant girls to return to school and recognised the individual and communal benefits associated with educating girls. They also felt that educating girls was providing them with one of their basic human rights. Some head teachers reported that if the pregnant girls were well supported both at home and at school, they could cope with their studies and return to school after delivery.

A study by Allen and Dowling (1998) found that teenage motherhood may often result in many negative short-term outcomes such as relationships breakdown, financial hardship, dependence on benefits, and lack of a social life, unexpected responsibilities, unsatisfactory housing, and difficulties in forming new relationships. He then noted that these sudden and unplanned extra responsibilities could be a burden to many of the teenage parents. This report calls for all stakeholders to improve understanding of the pregnant girls' situation and offering them necessary support.

Lack of money and lack of child-care were the main obstacles that prevented teenage mothers from undertaking activities outside the home and were also found to be important factors in other studies (Bradshaw & Miller, 1991; Hudson & Ineichen, 1991; Phoenix, 1991 as cited in De Jonge, 2001). De Jonge (2001) noted that to recover from social disadvantage women need assistance with childcare to enable them to complete their education or find work. He further recommended that to tackle the teenage mothers' poverty, reducing income inequalities as well as improving absolute living standards should be the top policy priorities. This could lead to a reduction in teenage pregnancy rates and in the alleviation of its adverse consequences.

This finding is confirmed by Baragwanath's (1997) study which noted that the only effective practical means of averting the loss of such young women and children from a real participation in society is to bring both mother and child back to school, as practiced in many USA states such as Wisconsin, Maryland and Illinois. She further argued that young mothers do not wish to be parted from their children. However she added that access to and the cost of crèche facilities could be prohibitive for many disadvantaged families. Similarly Riordan (2002) found that in order to benefit from appropriate educational opportunities and experiences the specific educational support needs and barriers encountered by young parents must be recognized and acknowledged within policies and services. He noted that availability

and accessibility of childcare has particular significance for school aged parents and that difficulty in accessing affordable, quality childcare was repeatedly cited by young parents as a key factor in determining whether or not young parents can participate in education or training.

It can be argued here that strong parental support is fundamental to pregnant students continuing in education. Young mothers' choices in education, training or employment can be restricted by the extent and level of family support particularly where young mothers are dependent upon family support to facilitate these choices.

Supporting pregnant girls is in line with Bhana et al. (2010) study which found that teachers' support for pregnant teenagers and teenage mothers can promote gender equality and mitigate the negative consequences attributed to early pregnancy. Similarly the MOE Namibia (2008) mentions a 1999 study which noted that research in various countries indicated that teenage pregnancy policies are just one of many factors which affect the likelihood that a school girl will return to school after giving birth. It further noted that the girls' ability to return will also be affected by the extent of support they receive from parents or other relatives who are willing to help them care for the children. Correspondingly, girls who have completed higher levels of schooling are more likely to be motivated to continue.

Therefore it can be argued that the kind of support offered to the pregnant girls could be a key determinant for the girls remaining in school and completing their studies. It is equally important that the support for pregnant girls at home and at school should be inclusive enough to promote their remaining in school and continuing with schooling after delivery.

Dealing with teenage pregnancy is a complex matter. This study had the overarching aim of sensitising participants to some of the issues that make teenage pregnancy multifaceted. There are many factors responsible for the teenage girls falling pregnant while others prevent pregnant teenage girls from taking advantage of the policy and return to school. All these factors contribute in making teenage pregnancy complicated which is why there is a need to look at it as a process rather than a single event. There is no shared understanding and attitude among participants in relation to different aspects of the policy and its value. Participants attributed their lack of awareness and understanding of the policy to their lack of involvement in the development and dissemination of the policy. Participants seemed to want to be involved in further discussions especially about the formulation of more helpful guidelines and their implementation. Due to its complexity, prevention of teenage pregnancy and the re-

engagement of girls in education after pregnancy require participation, collaboration, and partnering of all stakeholders.

# CHAPTER TEN

# CONCLUSION

## Introduction

In this chapter, the overarching research objectives are outlined, followed by a summary of the main findings and my final reflections on this research journey. I conclude by discussing the limitations of the study, implications for education policy and practice, specific recommendations and implications for further research.

## Main Research Objectives

The aim of this study was to explore the implementation of the re-entry policy for girls after teenage pregnancy. In it I investigated the perceptions of the policy by the MOE officials, the head teachers, current students, young mothers and their parents. In keeping with my critical theoretical stance, the study also aimed to present the voices of the young mothers and their families and to give them an opportunity to narrate their experiences of dealing with school pregnancy. Another objective of this study was to investigate how the relevant stakeholders in education could make the re-entry policy more effective in attracting more girls back to school after delivery. Findings from this study are intended to contribute to improving gender education, inclusive policy making and implementation in African contexts.

## Summary of Main Findings

One of the main findings in this study was the range of often-conflicting views among the participants regarding the policy. There were diverse opinions as to the usefulness of the policy, the effectiveness of the policy and how it is practiced. For example, participants in this study differed significantly on views the role of culture played in determining the re-entry of young girls to school after teenage pregnancy.

The study also reveals a concerning lack of awareness and understanding of both the policy and the guidelines among the MOE officials and head teachers. Those few MOE officials and head teachers who were aware of the policy, lacked adequate knowledge and understanding about its guidelines. In most cases the policy document was unavailable in many of the schools in this study. The understanding of the policy and its guidelines as experienced by the MOE officials and the head teachers was unclear, conflicting and confusing. Furthermore, it became apparent that pregnancy for schoolgirls is not a single event. Policy guidelines need

to be able to advice on a range of different situations that arise during the course of a pregnancy while at school.

Many participants in this study voiced their concern of being left out in the policy making process. They reported that being excluded from the policy making process, denied them a chance to participate in discussions on issues concerning the policy.

A fourth important issue emerging from this study was that although schoolgirl pregnancy was one of the causes of girls dropping out of school it would appear that schoolgirl pregnancy was just a symptom of underlying sociocultural disadvantages that affected girls' education. Many participants in this study identified poverty and some cultural practices such as early marriages, dowry payments and female circumcision as some of the disadvantages that impacted negatively on the policy. It is therefore possible to make an argument that sociocultural disadvantages 'selects' who will become pregnant.

Finally the girls' strong commitment to education was another finding from this study. The young mothers reported that they were still hopeful and keen on completing their schooling. They stated that there was a strong connection between education and their brighter future lives and those of their children. The desire to have quality lives, become better mothers and bring up better families was the drive behind their commitment to complete their education.

## Conclusion

In keeping with a narrative perspective, I end with some reflections on my own story and how it has changed as a result of this research journey. When I started this journey I expected to find a group of young mothers who have given up with their education and settled into motherhood as their new ways of life. It was quite motivating that the young mothers I met and those who participated in my study, were hopeful about life and their return to school to complete their studies. I have gained many new insights into the young mothers' lives and their experiences. These insights have made me realise that although the young mothers could be experiencing disadvantaged conditions or circumstances, they do not have disadvantaged brains or abilities. The following quote from one of the young mothers attests to my finding.

> *When I was at home I felt so bad when I saw my colleagues whom we were*
> *with at school at previous times having different jobs and I remembered that I*

*was at the top of class than them. When I found them doing different jobs I felt*
*bad and that is why I decided even to be back to school.*

The above quote made me think about my journey and helped me to understand that the young mothers' experiences were, although varied, individualistic and narrated in particular contexts, similar in their desire to return to school and value education as a means of getting out of poverty. As I explained in the narrative chapter their accounts had such impact that I was drawn in and found myself taking different positions with regard to their stories. This has changed my initial attitude and position from when I started this journey to where I am now.

## Limitations of the Research

One of the limitations of this study was that some of the participants saw me as a stranger. Some of the parents were not sure of my role as a researcher. This could have prompted some of the parents not to feel free to discuss issues touching on their children, especially daughters. Some of the parents became defensive of their roles in the education of their daughters. They thought that my role was to seek information from them to use it to accuse them before the Government. The parents to some extent felt that they had failed in their duties of educating their children. This could have made some of them withhold some information from the researcher. However I explained to them in detail my role as a researcher. I assured them that the information collected will be used for the research purposes only.

The young mothers interviewed perceived my role as being more than a researcher. They expected that after the interviews I could help them financially to return to school. During the interviews they had reported that poverty was one of the factors that worked against their re-entry to school. Many of them could have felt disappointed and therefore not ready to participate in the study. It might also have caused the young mothers to overemphasize the importance of education to me in the hope that I might see them as deserving to return to school. However I had to clarify my role and the objectives of my research. I also informed them that the findings of the research were likely to improve the policy and hence they were likely to have a chance to complete their studies even though I was unable to assist them financially then.

Another problem was in relation to the gender difference between me as the researcher and many of the participants, especially the young mothers, and many of the current students. They may not have felt free enough to share with me the finer details of their teenage

motherhood. The sensitive nature of the study could have also made the young mothers hesitant to share their experiences. At the same time some of them reported that they feared for the dire consequences if their husbands found that they had taken part in this study. This particular fear among the young mothers could have made some of them withhold some information about their experiences. Time was taken to explain to the girls my role as a researcher and the objectives of my research. They were further assured that the information they shared with the researcher was confidential and will only be used for the research. The researcher was accompanied by a female colleague from the MOE district headquarters, who was to conduct the interviews in case the girls were not comfortable with me. This situation never arose.

As researcher, I had to work hard to get data and obtain all other relevant information as the time spent in the field was limited. It was difficult to get the finer details of the community's culture and cover all aspects. At the time of this study there were also inter clan wars going on. This made it difficult to conduct interviews in these areas where there were wars.

This research was of a qualitative nature employing a case study approach. Information was gathered in detail in a particular context with unique characteristics. While it may not be possible to generalise its findings to other areas in the country, it raises general policy issues that may apply to other regions.

## Implications for Education Policy and Practice

The findings in this study demonstrate that the challenges of policy formulation and implementation need to be confronted and tackled by a wide range of stakeholders, government at all levels, civil society and its organizations, and the private sector particularly in African setting.

Overall public participation could be vital in policy formulation and implementation. This would give a chance to all stakeholders to participate in debates concerning issues about teenage pregnancy. Public involvement in the process of policy making may lead to understanding and harmonisation of diverse views from various stakeholders to arrive at a common focus. This could lead to local ownership and support of the policy hence making its implementation easier.

There is need for the existing guidelines to be reviewed with the aim of including all aspects of teenage pregnancy. This would ultimately ensure effective implementation of the policy

and help clarify any conflicting information about teenage pregnancy. It would be necessary to incorporate the views of the main implementing agents (MOE officials and head teachers) and all other stakeholders. It will also be essential to review and develop guidelines to reflect and meet the needs of the young mothers and bring clarity in all aspects around teenage pregnancy and the implementation of the re-entry policy. It is equally important that the guidelines on re-entry policy are made available to all schools and other academic institutions to facilitate its implementation.

There is need for the Government to undertake regular professional development of all officials and for head teachers to be updated on new developments or changes in educational policies. This would help them to embrace new ideas and be part of the changes that are taking place in the education sector.

It would also be beneficial to the pregnant girls if the guidelines on re-entry policy could be written in such a way that they promote inclusive education in line with inclusive school practices such as safe schools for girls, accommodation for mother and child and gender equity, among others. The policy needs to be elaborate enough and include all aspects of teenage pregnancy for smooth implementation.

It can be argued that regular monitoring and follow-up mechanisms would play a key role in the implementation of the re-entry policy, bringing about consistency and uniformity in implementing the policy at all schools. The monitoring could also help to identify areas in the policy that need to be reviewed and improved for effective implementation of the policy. The monitoring could also reveal some of the challenges that those who are implementing the policy could be facing. Therefore it can be suggested that there is need for development and strengthening of regular monitoring mechanisms at all levels to enhance the implementation of the guidelines on re-entry policy.

For the policy to be helpful to the pregnant girls and young mothers there is need to sensitize teachers and school administrators about the guidelines of the re-entry policy and how to implement them. The guidelines on the policy should also be effectively communicated to all officials and head teachers who are the main implementing agents and who should be taken through the process and understand them for easier implementation. This will ensure that the teachers and MOE officials are aware of the guidelines, clearly understand them and are sure on how to implement them.

It is my view that for the re-entry policy to be helpful to many of the teenage parents and to be effectively implemented the socio-cultural disadvantages at both school and family levels should be dealt with accordingly. Rather than targeting teenage pregnancy and young mothers as the focus, policy should be directed towards the causes of the socially disadvantaged families, communities and institutions. Therefore it can be argued that if these socio-cultural disadvantages are dealt with more effectively, then the implementation of the re-entry policy could be effective and ultimately benefit the teenage parents. The removal of these socio-cultural disadvantages would also help in making schools and families friendlier and in a position to support the teenage parents to complete their education.

All stakeholders should understand that any boys responsible for the girls' pregnancies should be supported to be good fathers of their children. The fact that not all fathers might be boys should not prevent all boys, fathers or not, being taught how to be good fathers when the time comes. Equally the education of both the boy and girl could be important for them and their child. Thus, all efforts should be made to support both of them remain in school and for the pregnant girl return to school after delivery. As part of this, the Government should take the responsibility to support the young mothers by establishing child care centres/crèches at the schools for the children.

It is necessary for the pregnant girls to be given opportunities and support to enjoy their right to education and get equal chances of having quality lives in future. It would be desirable if these girls and women's' rights, as with other human rights, are protected as envisaged and outlined in official documents.

It would be also important to involve the NGOs in the process of policy making. Many NGOs have got wider networks for their activities which can be used by the Government in sensitising and creating awareness about the policy. The NGOs could also partner with the Government in holding discussions concerning the policy.

There is need for the government to focus on prevention of teenage pregnancy. The teenagers should be empowered with knowledge and skills on matters related to sex and to building healthy, respectful relationships with the opposite sex. This is likely to enable them to have greater control of their sexual behaviour and make informed choices. It would also be important for the males to unlearn some of their cultural practices which position them to have some advantages over the girls on matters dealing with sex. They should recognize that

girls, as human beings, have rights and therefore deserve respect and should be allowed to participate in making decisions on all matters affecting their lives.

## Specific Recommendations

- The community and all other stakeholders should be involved in designing, developing and implementing the re-entry policy. This would be done by taking the conversation into the local community in order to help the implementing agents to understand the difficulties of implementing a national policy in a local context. The shift would enhance the community's participation in the policy process.

- There is need to constantly and consistently incorporate the views of all stakeholders in the policy, especially the views of the teenage parents and their experiences of parenthood. Those involved in the implementation of the policy need to hear what the young mothers are saying if they really want to encourage them to come back to school.

- The policy and school environment should be inclusive. The key issue is that school pregnancy is a very complex problem and Kuria culture is changing but also the school culture needs to change so that it is more supportive of all girls. A gender shift is needed.

- It is important to create awareness and sensitisation to the policy among all communities and other stakeholders of education in order to recognise the rights of girls and appreciate the importance of educating girls.

- The policy needs to be re-written paying particular attention to the language used. The policy should not be rigid, unrealistic and judgemental, but rather reflect its intent which is to encourage girls back to school and not to blame them. It needs to be reviewed and monitored regularly.


I have been thinking about the recommendations, and I have been thinking about how I might conduct myself differently in order to implement these recommendations. For instance, I am planning to take the findings of this study to the Kuria people particularly by engaging the head teachers and MOE officials in Kuria district through a conference. I have also thought how I might share my findings with some NGOs who are undertaking various activities in the district. I am aware of some of the difficulties that I might face in implementing the findings. However, I understand, and do not underestimate, the difficulties of engaging all stakeholders in a bottom up approach to the policy. There is a culture of not taking research findings

seriously and of policy being driven by national political interests. Another challenge could be the blame game between the implementing agents and the policy formulators on whose responsibility is it to take up gender social justice in schools.

## Implications for Further Research

In this study I investigated the implementation of the educational re-entry policy for girls after teenage pregnancy in one area. As this was a case study and the findings might not be generalised, there would be need for similar studies to be conducted in other areas of the country to understand the need for a more general uptake of the policy.

It may also be important for a national survey to be carried out to audit the implementation of the policy. This would be necessary to identify the challenges and responses to the policy from the stakeholders.

One of the findings from this study was the deafening silence and omission on what happens to the boy father as the current guidelines are not very clear about it. There is need for further research to be carried out on the impact of the teenage pregnancy on the boy father and how their experiences could be used to improve the policy.

Another finding from this study was that teenage pregnancy is a complex issue and usually involves the interplay of many factors. Schoolgirl pregnancy could be viewed as a consequence and not a cause of girls dropping out from school. Future studies might be necessary to investigate the other underlying social disadvantages that impact negatively on the education of the girl child.

Many of the teenage mothers in this study reported about the positive motivation they got from teenage motherhood. It gave them new hope and courage to face life and more so for the benefit of their children. There is need for future research to be conducted on the experiences of teenage mothers and teenage parents to inform policy. The experiences of the teenage parents would be used to inform the practice of the re-entry policy and the education of young mother and parents.

It is important to emphasise the importance of investigating and having more accurate data on teenage pregnancy. It is also of necessity that teenage pregnancy is viewed as a consequence of the interplay of many factors and not a cause. Rather than generalising schoolgirl pregnancy, understand that the young mothers are quite individualistic, affected by varied pre-pregnancy and post pregnancy factors and have different abilities. The young mothers

have potential and hope for having bright future so their education should be a concern of everybody. The practice of their education should be supported by evidence and especially from teenage parenting experiences. According to the CSA (2008), the re-entry policy in Kenya was meant to give the girls a second chance to complete their schooling. But are we sure that the girls had the first chance? As one of the participants in this study reports, educating girls benefits the entire family and nation.

> *It is very important in any community where the woman is being educated you know like the community becomes okay. Anyway girls are the most important people we are targeting if they get education everybody will get even our sons and daughters will get because they are the mothers and stay you know for long with the children [MOE 2].*

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# APPENDICES

# Appendix A: Current policy guidelines

**Annex II Excerpts of the school return policy passed in 1994**

- Girls who become pregnant should be admitted back to school unconditionally

- Headteachers, District and Municipal Education Officers should assist such girls to be readmitted to other schools to avoid psychological and emotional suffering

- Intensive guidance and counselling should be provided to the affected girl, parents, teachers and other girls in the school.

- Once a girls is sent home, the parents should be summoned to the school and receive some counselling after which they should take their daughter home. Headteachers and other teachers should understanding when handling cases of this nature.

- The school should keep in touch with such girls and their families so as to monitor what is happening and provide the necessary moral, emotional and spiritual support. Counselling for both the girl and parents should not be discontinued.

- The Parents should seek readmission of their daughter to school after the baby is weaned. Headteachers should provide the necessary help in this regard. In case of any problem, the Provincial, District and Municipal Education Officers should assist.

- Other girls in the school should be counselled on consequences of irresponsible sexual behaviour, adolescent sexuality, boy/girl relationships, negative peer influences, building self-confidence and self-esteem

- Those who make girls pregnant should be exposed. For example teachers and other adults in the community should face legal action. Boys should be given counselling so that they can take responsibility for their actions.

Source: MOE December 1998 (cited in CSA 2008:45)

## Annex III: Excerpts of the National School Health Policy

### Teenage pregnancy in school

Teenage pregnancy is one of the key causes of school drop out by girls. Girls therefore need to be protected from teenage pregnancy and supported if pregnancy occurs to enable them pursue their education. Therefore:

- Girls will undergo voluntary medical screening once per term;
- A pregnant female learner shall be allowed to continue with classes for as long as possible;
- Both the student and her parents shall be counselled on the importance of ensuring good outcome of the pregnancy by attending Ante-Natal Clinic and ensuring safe delivery, and the possibilities of continuing with education after delivery;
- Efforts shall be made to get information on the circumstances leading to pregnancy and about the other party involved. A children's officer shall be informed
- Action, including legal action will be taken if the father of the unborn child is an adult (over 18 years). Child-fathers (boys less than 18 years)shall receive counselling and rehabilitation;
- Young mothers shall be encouraged to learn to look after their child in order to bond with the child as much as possible;
- New born babies must be allowed the benefit of breastfeeding as much as possible including exclusive breastfeeding for six months and introduction of complementary feeding at 6 months of age while continuing breastfeeding;
- Young mothers shall be encouraged to attend child welfare clinics (youth friendly) and ensure that babies are fully vaccinated.

At the appropriate time the adolescent mothers may seek readmission into the same school or if they wish so join other schools.

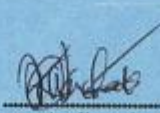The following practice shall be observed in the event of re-admission:

- Her parents/guardian shall be encouraged to make adequate arrangements for the care of the child at home while the young mother is in school. This is to avoid unnecessary interruptions to the teenage mother's studies.
- As far as possible, the teenage mother shall be allowed to join at the level where she left;
- The school administration shall make all efforts to treat the teenage mother like other students and not keep reminding her of her mistake. To all intents and purposes the school fraternity shall act as if nothing had happened to her;

- Teenage mothers in school shall not be allowed to form groupings e.g of young mothers clubs.
- Counselling services shall be available to the teenage mothers including re-emphasis on life skills for avoidance of future unplanned pregnancies;
- Confidentiality and professionalism shall be adhered to in handling the teenage mother

Source: National School Health Policy (2009: 23-24)

# Appendix B:  Research permit from national council of science and technology

## CONDITIONS

1. You must report to the District Commissioner and the District Education Officer of the area before embarking on your research. Failure to do that may lead to the cancellation of your permit
2. Government Officers will not be interviewed with-out prior appointment.
3. No questionnaire will be used unless it has been approved.
4. Excavation, filming and collection of biological specimens are subject to further permission from the relevant Government Ministries.
5. You are required to submit at least two(2)/four(4) bound copies of your final report for Kenyans and non-Kenyans respectively.
6. The Government of Kenya reserves the right to modify the conditions of this permit including its cancellation without notice

GPK6055t3mt10/2009

**REPUBLIC OF KENYA**

**RESEARCH CLEARANCE PERMIT**

(CONDITIONS— see back page)

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**PAGE 2**

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT:

Prof./Dr./Mr./Mrs./Miss...... KODEK MIGIRO OMWANCH

of (Address) ...... VICTORIA UNIVERSITY P.O. BOX 600 WELLINGTON, NEW ZEALAND

has been permitted to conduct research in......

......Location,

...... KURIA ......District,

...... NYANZA ......Province,

on the topic...... IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RE-ENTRY POLICY FOR GIRLS AFTER SCHOOL PREGNANCY: A CASE STUDY OF PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS OF KURIA DISTRICT, KENYA.

for a period ending...... 30TH JUNE ......20 10

**PAGE 3**

Research Permit No. NCST/RRI/12/1/SS/63

Date of issue...... 18/03/2010

Fee received...... SHS 2,000

Applicant's Signature

Secretary National Council for Science and Technology

178

# Appendix C: Introduction letter from district education officer , Kuria district

## MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

When replying please quote

DISTRICT EDUCATION OFFICE,
KURIA WEST DISTRICT,
P.O. BOX 60,
**KEHANCHA**

**DATE:** 23 MARCH, 2010

**REF:KUR/W/ED/SA/23/VOLII/230**

TO
ALL PRINCIPALS
KURIA WEST SECONDARY SCHOOLS

## RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION
## FOR MR. KODEK MIGIRO OMWANCHA

The above named is a student of Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand.
He will be carrying out research on **'Implementation of the Re-entry Policy for Girls after School Pregnancy**. A case study of Public Secondary Schools of Kuria District.

The bearer of this letter (Mr. Kodek) is therefore authorized to carry out the research.

Please accord him the required support.

**(D.A. SANGAKA)**
**FOR: DISTRICT EDUCATION OFFICER**
**KURIA WEST DISTRICT**

# Appendix D: Introduction letter from district commissioner, Kuria district

**OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT**

Telegrams: "DISTRICTER", Kehancha

TELEPHONE 059 52868/52898

When replying please quote

REF: ED/12/15/VOL.1/160

DISTRICT COMMISSIONER
KURIA WEST DISTRICT
P.O. BOX 1, - 40413
KEHANCHA

23RD March 2010

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

RE: MR. KODEK MIGIRO OMWANCHA.

The above named is a student in Victoria University of Wellington New Zealand who is undertaking a research in the whole Kuria on **"implementation of the re-entry policy for girls after pregnancy"**

He intends to finish the exercise on 30th june 2010.

The purpose of this letter is to authorize his research in our District and ask that he be accorded all necessary support to achieve the goal.

T. K. SIELE
FOR: DISTRICT COMMISSIONER
**KURIA WEST**

# Appendix E: Information sheets



TE WHARE WĀNANGA O TE ŪPOKO O TE IKA A MĀUI

**VICTORIA**
UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON

RESEARCH TITLE: *Implementation of Re-entry Policy after school Pregnancy. A case study of Public Secondary schools of Kuria District: Kenya*.

INFORMATION SHEET FOR DISTRICT EDUCATION OFFICER

I am a PhD student in the Faculty of Education at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand. I would like to invite you to take part in the research I am undertaking as part of my doctoral studies. The research I am undertaking is **the** investigation of the implementation of the re-entry policy for girls after school pregnancy.  A case study **approach** of public secondary schools of Kuria district, Kenya is being conducted.   Data will be collected using interview questions and focus group discussions. MOE officials and head teachers are the main implementing agents of this policy and that is why their views are a focus of this research. I would like to state that your participation and views are extremely important in this research **though you are not under any obligation to be involved. This research has been assessed and approved by the Victoria University Faculty of Education Ethics Committee**.

I would like to carry out the following procedures in your district as part of this research between January and March 2010:

- ✓ Conduct interviews with four MOE officials at the division level.
- ✓ Conduct interviews with eight head teachers of selected schools.
- ✓ Lead  focus group discussions with young girls in four divisions(one group per division)
- ✓ Lead focus group discussions with parents in four divisions (one group per division)
- ✓ Lead focus group discussion with current pupils in four divisions (one group per division)

Should any participant feel the need to withdraw from the project, they may do so without question at any time **before data collection and analysis is complete (May 2010).** Should you agree to participate (or for schools in your district to participate) you will be asked to give permission for me to approach schools and Board of Governors in your district and ask them to participate.

Responses collected will help me with my research topic. However it will not be possible for your district, the schools or individual participants to be identified personally. All material and information collected will be kept confidential. No other person besides me and my supervisors will access the collected information. The thesis will be submitted for marking to the Faculty of Education and deposited in the university library. All material will be destroyed five years after the end of the project.

All participants will have a right to check the notes taken after the interviews or discussions and **at a follow up meeting** and have a right to change or make amendments to the gathered data.

Data collected will be securely stored and destroyed after five years.

If you have any question or would require further information about the project, please contact me or my supervisors using the details below.

**Researcher's details:** Signed…………………………………

**Supervisors' details**

RESEARCH TITLE: *Implementation of Re-entry Policy after school Pregnancy. A case study of Public Secondary schools of Kuria District: Kenya*.

INFORMATION SHEET FOR SCHOOL BOARD OF GOVERNORS

I am a PhD student in the Faculty of Education at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand. I would like to invite you to take part in the research I am undertaking as part of my doctoral studies. The research I am undertaking is **the** investigation of the implementation of the re-entry policy for girls after school pregnancy. A case study **approach** of public secondary schools of Kuria district, Kenya is being conducted. Data will be collected using interview questions and focus group discussions. Ministry of Education officials and head teachers are the main implementing agents of this policy and that is why their views are a focus of this research. I would like to state that your participation and views are extremely important in this research **though you are not under any obligation to be involved**. **This research has been assessed and approved by the Victoria University Faculty of Education Ethics Committee**

I would like to carry out the following procedures in your school as part of this research between January and March 2010:

- ✓ Conduct interviews with the head teacher of your school.
- ✓ Lead focus group discussions with current pupils in your school.
- ✓ Lead focus group discussions with parents in your school.
- ✓ Lead focus group discussions with young girls who have continued schooling after school pregnancy.

Should you agree to participate you will be asked to allow me talk with parents from the school and invite them to participate in a focus group. Should any participant feel the need to withdraw from the project, they may do so without question at any time before **data collection and analysis is complete (May 2010).**

Responses collected will help me in my research topic. However it will not be possible for your district, the schools or individual participants to be identified personally. All material and information collected will be kept confidential. No other person besides me and my supervisors will access the collected information. The thesis will be submitted for marking to the Faculty of Education and deposited in the university library. All material will be destroyed five years after the end of the project.

All participants will have a right to check the notes taken after the interviews or discussions and **at a follow up meeting** and have a right to change or make amendments to the gathered data.

Data collected will be securely stored and destroyed after five years.

If you have any question or would require further information about the project, please contact me or my supervisors using the details below.

**Researcher's details** Signed…………………………………

**Supervisors' details**

RESEARCH TITLE: *Implementation of Re-entry Policy after school Pregnancy. A case study of Public Secondary schools of Kuria District: Kenya*.


INFORMATION SHEET FOR MOE OFFICIALS


I am a PhD student in the Faculty of Education at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand. I would like to invite you to take part in the research I am undertaking as part of my doctoral studies. The research I am undertaking is **the** investigation of the implementation of the re-entry policy for girls after school pregnancy.  A case study **approach** of public secondary schools of Kuria district, Kenya is being conducted.   Data will be collected using interview questions and focus group discussions.  I would like to state that your participation and views are extremely important in this research **though you are not under any obligation to participate**. **This research has been assessed and approved by the Victoria University Faculty of Education Ethics Committee**.


Should you agree to participate (or for schools in your district to participate) you will be asked to:

- ✓ Attend interview with me which will take about 1-2 hours in which I will ask for your views on re-entry policy and inclusive education.
- ✓ **Give permission for me to approach District Education officers, Head Teachers, Board of Governors, teachers and students and invite them to participate**

**MOE officials and head teachers are the main implementing agents of this policy and that is why their views are a focus of this research.**


Should you feel the need to withdraw from the project, you may do so without question at any time before **data collection and analysis is complete (May 2010).**

Responses collected will help me in my research topic.  However it will not be possible for you be identified personally.  All material and information collected will be kept confidential. No other person besides me and my supervisors will access the collected information.  The thesis will be submitted for marking to the Faculty of Education and deposited in the university library. It is intended that an article will be submitted for publication in a scholarly journal.  All material will be destroyed five years after the end of the project.

You will have a right to check the notes taken after the interviews or discussions and **at a follow up meeting** and have a right to change or make amendments to the gathered data.

Data will be collected using a tape recorder or written notes, whichever will be agreed upon. The data collected will be securely stored and destroyed after five years.

If you have any question or would require further information about the project, please contact me or my supervisors using the details below.

**Researcher's details** Signed…………………………………

**Supervisors' details**

RESEARCH TITLE: *Implementation of Re-entry Policy after school Pregnancy. A case study of Public Secondary schools of Kuria: District: Kenya*.


INFORMATION SHEET FOR HEAD TEACHERS


I am a PhD student in the Faculty of Education at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand. I would like to invite you to take part in the research I am undertaking as part of my doctoral studies. The research I am undertaking is **the** investigation of the implementation of the re-entry policy for girls after school pregnancy. A case study **approach** of public secondary schools of Kuria district, Kenya is being conducted. Data will be collected using interview questions and focus group discussions. MOE officials and head teachers are the main implementing agents of this policy and that is why their views are a focus of this research. I would like to state that your participation and views are extremely important in this research **though you are not under any obligation to be involved**. **This research has been assessed and approved by the Victoria University Faculty of Education Ethics Committee**.


Should you agree to participate you will be asked to:

- ✓ Give permission for me to approach teachers and pupils in year 14 and 15 in your school and invite them to participate.
- ✓ Attend interview with me which will take about 1-2 hours in which I will ask your views on the re-entry policy and inclusive education.


Should you feel the need to withdraw from the project, you may do so without question at any time before **data collection and analysis is complete (May 2010).** I would also like to talk to the School Board of Governors.

Responses collected will help me in my research topic. However **it will not be possible for you or your students to be identified personally.** All material and information collected will be kept confidential. No other person besides me and my supervisors will access the collected information. The thesis will be submitted for marking to the Faculty of Education and deposited in the university library. It is intended that an article will be submitted for publication in a scholarly journal. All material will be destroyed five years after the end of the project.

You will have a right to check the notes taken after the interviews or discussions and **at a follow up meeting** and have a right to change or make amendments to the gathered data.

Data will be collected using a tape recorder or written notes, whichever will be agreed upon. The data collected will be securely stored and destroyed after five years.

You participation in the research will not affect your position in the school in any way.

If you have any question or would require further information about the project, please contact me or my supervisors using the details below.

**Researcher's details** Signed…………………………………

**Supervisors' details**

RESEARCH TITLE: *Implementation of Re-entry Policy after school Pregnancy. A case study of Public Secondary schools of Kuria: District: Kenya.*

INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARENTS PARTICIPATING IN FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSSIONS

I am a PhD student in the Faculty of Education at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand. I would like to invite you to take part in the research I am undertaking as part of my doctoral studies. The research I am undertaking is **the** investigation of the implementation of the re-entry policy for girls after school pregnancy. A case study **approach** of public secondary schools of Kuria district, Kenya is being conducted. MOE officials and head teachers are the main implementing agents of this policy and that is why their views are a focus of this research. I would like to state that your participation and views are extremely important in this research **though you are not under any obligation to be involved**. **This research has been assessed and approved by the Victoria University Faculty of Education Ethics Committee.**

Should you agree to participate you will be asked to:

✓ Take part in a focus group.

✓ **Give permission for your daughter to participate in the research should she agree**.

Should you or your daughter feel the need to withdraw from the project, you or she may do so without question at any time before **data collection and analysis is complete (May 2010).**

Responses collected will help me in my research topic. However **it will not be possible for you or your daughter to be identified personally.** All material and information collected will be kept confidential. No other person besides me and my supervisors will access the collected information. The thesis will be submitted for marking to the Faculty of Education and deposited

in the university library.  It is intended that an article will be submitted for publication in a scholarly journal. All material will be destroyed five years after the end of the project.

You will have a right to check the notes taken after the interviews or discussions and **at a follow up meeting** and have a right to change or make amendments to the gathered data.

Data will be collected using a tape recorder or written notes, whichever will be agreed upon. The data collected will be securely stored and destroyed after five years.

If you have any question or would require further information about the project, please contact me or my supervisors using the details below.

**Researcher's details** Signed…………………………………

**Supervisors' details**

TE WHARE WĀNANGA O TE ŪPOKO O TE IKA A MĀUI

**VICTORIA**
UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON

RESEARCH TITLE: *Implementation of Re-entry Policy after school Pregnancy. A case study of Public Secondary schools of Kuria: District: Kenya*.

INFORMATION SHEET FOR   GIRLS PARTICIPATING IN FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSSIONS

I am a PhD student in the Faculty of Education at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand. I would like to invite you to take part in the research I am undertaking as part of my doctoral studies. The research I am undertaking is **the** investigation of the implementation of the re-entry policy for girls after school pregnancy.   A case study **approach** of public secondary schools of Kuria district, Kenya is being conducted.   MOE officials and head teachers are the main implementing agents of this policy and that is why their views are a focus of this research. I would like to state that your participation and views are extremely important in this research **though you are not under any obligation to be involved**. **This research has been assessed and approved by the Victoria University Faculty of Education Ethics Committee.**

Should you agree to participate you will be asked to:

✓ Take part in a focus group.

Should you feel the need to withdraw from the project, you may do so without question at any time before **data collection and analysis is complete (May 2010).**

Responses collected will help me in my research topic. However it will not be possible for you be identified personally.  All material and information collected will be kept confidential. No other person besides me and my supervisors will access the collected information. The thesis will be submitted for marking to the Faculty of Education and deposited in the university library.  It is

intended that an article will be submitted for publication in a scholarly journal. All material will be destroyed five years after the end of the project.

You will have a right to check the notes taken after the interviews or discussions and **at a follow up meeting** and have a right to change or make amendments to the gathered data.

Data will be collected using a tape recorder or written notes, whichever will be agreed upon. The data collected will be securely stored and destroyed after five years.

If you have any question or would require further information about the project, please contact me or my supervisors using the details below.

**Researcher's details** Signed…………………………………

**Supervisors' details**

TE WHARE WĀNANGA O TE ŪPOKO O TE IKA A MĀUI

**VICTORIA**
UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON

RESEARCH TITLE: *Implementation of Re-entry Policy after school Pregnancy. A case study of Public Secondary schools of Kuria: District: Kenya*.

INFORMATION SHEET FOR   PUPILS PARTICIPATING IN FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSSIONS

I am a PhD student in the Faculty of Education at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand. I would like to invite you to take part in the research I am undertaking as part of my doctoral studies. The research I am undertaking is **the** investigation of the implementation of the re-entry policy for girls after school pregnancy.  A case study **approach** of public secondary schools of Kuria district, Kenya is being conducted.  MOE officials and head teachers are the main implementing agents of this policy and that is why their views are a focus of this research.  I would like to state that your participation and views are extremely important in this research **though you are not under any obligation to be involved**. **This research has been assessed and approved by the Victoria University Faculty of Education Ethics Committee**.

Should you agree to participate you will be asked to:

✓   Take part in a focus group.
Should you feel the need to withdraw from the project, you may do so without question at any time before data collection and analysis is complete (May 2010).

Responses collected will f help me with my research topic. However it will not be possible for you be identified personally. All material and information collected will be kept confidential. No other person besides me and my supervisors will access the collected information. The thesis will be submitted for marking to the Faculty of Education and deposited in the university library.

It is intended that an article will be submitted for publication in a scholarly journal. All material will be destroyed five years after the end of the project.

You will have a right to check the notes taken after the interviews or discussions and **at a follow up meeting** have a right to change or make amendments to the gathered data.

Data will be collected using a tape recorder or written notes, whichever will be agreed upon. The data collected will be securely stored and destroyed after five years.

If you have any question or would require further information about the project, please contact me or my supervisors using the details below.

**Researcher's details** Signed…………………………………

**Supervisors' details**

# Appendix F: Consent forms

TE WHARE WĀNANGA O TE ŪPOKO O TE IKA A MĀUI

## VICTORIA
### UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON

CONSENT OF DISTRICT EDUCATION OFFICER FOR RESEARCH TO BE CONDUCTED IN DISRTICT

RESEARCH TITLE: *Implementation of Re-entry Policy after school Pregnancy. A case study of Public Secondary schools of Kuria: District: Kenya*.

 (Please tick each box)

○      I have been given and understood an explanation of this research project. I have had an opportunity to ask questions and have them answered to my satisfaction.

○      I understand that officers from my office, teachers and parents from selected schools have been invited to an interview with the researcher.

○      I understand that any information the participants provide during the interviews will be kept confidential to the researcher and his supervisors.

○      I understand that the **participants who include all schools from my district may withdraw themselves (or any information they have provided) from this project (before data collection and analysis is complete May 2010)** without having to give reasons.

○      I understand that the published results will not identify my district/office or the participants and no opinions will be attributed to the participants in any way that will identify them.

○      I understand that the information the participants provided will be used only for this
        research project.

○      I understand that when this research is completed, the information obtained will be
        **securely stored and destroyed after five years.**

○      I understand that data will be collected using a tape recorder or written notes,
        whichever will be agreed upon.

○      I understand that participants have a right to change or make amendments to the data
        gathered straight after the discussions or interviews.

○      I understand that participants would attend a follow up meeting to check transcript
        results.

○      I understand that I will receive a summary of the findings of the study should I choose
        to.

(*Please delete the statement that does not apply*)

○      *I agree/ do not agree* for my district to participate in the research

Signed………………………………………………………………………………..

Name of officer………………………………………..District.......................................……..

Date…………………………………………………………………………………..

CONSENT OF MOE OFFICIALS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH.

RESEARCH TITLE: *Implementation of Re-entry Policy after school Pregnancy. A case study of Public Secondary schools of Kuria: District: Kenya.*

(Please tick each box)

○ I have been given and understood an explanation of this research project. I have had an opportunity to ask questions and have them answered to my satisfaction.

○ I understand that I have been invited to an interview with the researcher. The interview may take place outside work hours and may last approximately 2 hours.

○ I agree to maintain confidentiality in relation to the information I share with the researcher.

○ I understand that any information I provide during the interviews will be kept confidential to the researcher and his supervisors.

○ I understand that I may withdraw myself (or any information they have provided) from this project (before data collection and analysis is complete) without having to give reasons.

○ I understand that the published results will not use my name, or identify my district/office and no opinions will be attributed to me in any way that will identify me.

○    I understand that the information I have provided will be used only for this research project.

○    I understand that when this research is completed, the information obtained will be **securely stored and destroyed after five years**.

○    I understand that data will be collected using a tape recorder or written notes, whichever will be agreed upon.

○    I understand that I have a right to change or make amendments to the data gathered straight after the interview.

○    I understand that I would attend a follow up meeting to check transcript results.

○    I understand that I will receive a summary of the findings of the study should I choose to.

(*Please delete the statement that does not apply*)

○    *I agree/ do not agree* to participate in the research

Signed……………………………………………………………………………………..

Name/ Position of Participant……………………………………………………………………………………

Date……………………………………………………………………………………..

CONSENT OF HEAD TEACHERS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH.

RESEARCH TITLE: *Implementation of Re-entry Policy after school Pregnancy. A case study of Public Secondary schools of Kuria: District: Kenya.*

(Please tick each box)

○      I have been given and understood an explanation of this research project. I have had an opportunity to ask questions and have them answered to my satisfaction.

○      I understand that I have been invited to an interview with the researcher. The interview may take place outside work hours and may last approximately 2 hours.

○      I agree to maintain confidentiality in relation to the information I share with the researcher.

○      I understand that any information I provide during the interview will be kept confidential to the researcher and his supervisors.

○      I understand that I may **withdraw myself and my school (or any information they have provided) from this project (before data collection and analysis is complete May 2010)** without having to give reasons.

○      I understand that the published results will not use my name, or identify my district/office and no opinions will be attributed to me in any way that will identify me.

○ I understand that the information I have provided will be used only for this research project.

○ I understand that when this research is completed, the information obtained will be **securely stored and destroyed after five years.**

○ I understand that data will be collected using a tape recorder or written notes, whichever will be agreed upon.

○ I understand that I have a right to change or make amendments to the data gathered straight after the interview.

○ I understand that I would attend a follow up meeting to check transcript results.

○ I understand that I will receive a summary of the findings of the study should I choose to.

(*Please delete the statement that does not apply*)

○ *I agree/ do not agree* to participate in the research

Signed……………………………………………………………………………..

Name of Participant…………...................................... School............................................

Date…………………………………………………………………………….

CONSENT OF GIRLS   TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH.

RESEARCH TITLE: *Implementation of Re-entry Policy after school Pregnancy. A case study of Public Secondary schools of Kuria: District: Kenya*.

(Please tick each box)

○       I have been given and understood an explanation of this research project. I have had an opportunity to ask questions and have them answered to my satisfaction.

○       I understand that I have been invited to attend a focus group discussion with four other girls from my school/locality. This may take place outside work hours and may last approximately 2 hours.

○       I agree to maintain confidentiality in regard to discussion within the group.

○       I understand that any information I provide during the discussion will be kept confidential to the researcher and his supervisors.

○       I understand that I may withdraw myself (or any information they have provided) from this project (before data collection and analysis is complete) without having to give reasons.

○　　　I understand that the published results will not use my name, or identify my district/office and no opinions will be attributed to me in any way that will identify me.

○　　　I understand that the information I have provided will be used only for this research project.

○　　　I understand that when this research is completed, the information obtained will be **securely stored and destroyed after five years.**

○　　　I understand that data will be collected using a tape recorder or written notes, whichever will be agreed upon.

○　　　I understand that I have a right to change or make amendments to the data gathered straight after the discussion or as soon as possible.

○　　　I understand that I would attend a follow up meeting to check transcript results.

○　　　I am aware that a summary of this research will be available for me to see when the research is complete should I choose to.

(*Please delete the statement that does not apply*)

○　　　*I agree/ do not agree*  to participate in the research

Signed………………………………………………………………………………..

Name of Participant……………………………………………………………………………………

Date…………………………………………………………………………………….

PARENTS CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH.

RESEARCH TITLE: *Implementation of Re-entry Policy after school Pregnancy. A case study of Public Secondary schools of Kuria: District: Kenya*.

(Please tick each box)

- ○ I/ we have been given and understood an explanation of this research project. I / we have had an opportunity to ask questions and have them answered to my satisfaction.

- ○ I/ we agree to be participant/participants in a focus group discussion with four other parents from my/our locality. This may take place outside work hours and may last approximately 2 hours.

- ○ I/we agree to my/our child/children to be participant/participants in a focus group.

- ○ I/we agree to the researcher approaching my/our daughter/daughters who left school due to pregnancy

- ○ I / we agree to maintain confidentiality in regard to discussion within the group.

- ○ I / we understand that any information I /we provide during the discussion will be kept confidential to the researcher and his supervisors.

- ○ I / we understand that I /we may withdraw myself / ourselves (or any information they have provided) from this project (before data collection and analysis is complete) without having to give reasons.

○       I / we understand that the published results will not use my /our name, or identify my /our child's school or my/ our child's name  and no opinions will be attributed to me/us in any way that will identify me us.

○       I / we understand that the information I /we have provided will be used only for this research project.

○       I/we understand that when this research is completed, the information obtained will be **securely stored and destroyed after five years.**

○       I /we understand that response/responses will be collected using a tape recorder or written notes, whichever will be agreed upon.

○       I/we understand that I /we have a right to change or make amendments to the data gathered straight after the discussion or as soon as possible.

○       I /we are aware that a summary of this research will be available for me to see when the research is complete should I choose to.

○       I/we may want to hear the confidentialised results of the research

(*Please delete the statement that does not apply)*

○       *I/we agree/ do not agree* to participate in the research

Signed…………………………………………………………………………………..

Name/s of Parent/s………..................................................................................…..

Date………………………………………………………………………………

CONSENT OF BOARD OF GOVERNORS FOR RESEARCH TO BE CONDUCTED IN SCHOOLS.

RESEARCH TITLE: *Implementation of Re-entry Policy after school Pregnancy. A case study of Public Secondary schools of Kuria: District: Kenya*.

(Please tick each box)

○    We have been given and understood an explanation of this research project.  We have had an opportunity to ask questions and have them answered to my satisfaction.

○    We understand that teachers, pupils and parents from our school have been invited to an interview with the researcher.

○    We understand that any information the participants provide during the interviews will be kept confidential to the researcher and his supervisors.

○    We understand that **the participants the school may withdraw themselves (or any information they have provided) from this project (before data collection and analysis is complete May 2010)** without having to give reasons.

○    We understand that the published results will not identify my district/office or the participants and no opinions will be attributed to the participants in any way that will identify them.

○      We understand that the information the participants provided will be used only for this research project.

○      We understand that when this research is completed, the information obtained will be **securely stored and destroyed after five years.**

○      We understand that data will be collected using a tape recorder or written notes, whichever will be agreed upon.

○      We understand that participants have a right to change or make amendments to the data gathered straight after the discussions or interviews.

○      We understand that participants will attend a follow up meeting to check transcript results.

○      We understand that we will receive a summary of the findings of the study should I choose to.

(*Please delete the statement that does not apply*)

○      *We agree/ do not agree* for our school to participate in the research.


Signed……………………………………………………………………………………..

Names of Members…………….............................School.......................................................

Date………………………………………………………………………………………..

PARENTS/GUARDIANS' CONSENT   FOR GIRLS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH.

RESEARCH TITLE: *Implementation of Re-entry Policy after school Pregnancy. A case study of Public Secondary schools of Kuria: District: Kenya*.

(Please tick each box)

○   I/ we have been given and understood an explanation of this research project. I / we have had an opportunity to ask questions and have them answered to my satisfaction.

○   I/ we understand that my/ our child have been invited to attend a focus group discussion with four other children.

○   I / we understand that any information my/our child provide during the discussion will be kept confidential to the researcher and his supervisors.

○   I / we understand that my /our child may withdraw from this research (before data collection and analysis is complete) without having to give reasons.

○   I / we understand that the published results will not identify my /our child's school or my/ our child's name and no opinions will be attributed to them in any way that will identify them.

○ I / we understand that the information my/our child have provided will be used only for this research project.

○ I/we understand that when this research is completed, the information obtained will be **securely stored and destroyed after five years.**

○ I /we understand that data will be collected using a tape recorder or written notes, whichever will be agreed upon.

○ I/we understand that my /our children have a right to change or make amendments to the data gathered straight after the discussion or as soon as possible.

○ I/we understand that I/we will attend a follow up meeting to check transcript results.

○ I /we are aware that a summary of this research will be available for them to see when the research is complete should they choose to.

(*Please delete the statement that does not apply*)

○ *I/we agree/ do not agree* to participate in the research

Signed…………………………………………………………………………………..

Name/s of Parent/s…………………………………………………………………………….......

Date……………………………………………………………………………..

CONSENT OF CURRENT PUPILS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH.

RESEARCH TITLE: *Implementation of Re-entry Policy after school Pregnancy. A case study of Public Secondary schools of Kuria: District: Kenya*.

(Please tick each box)

○ I have been given and understood an explanation of this research project. I have had an opportunity to ask questions and have them answered to my satisfaction.

○ I understand that I have been invited to attend a focus group discussion with four other pupils from my school/locality. This may take place outside work hours and may last approximately 2 hours.

○ I agree to maintain confidentiality in regard to discussion within the group.

○ I understand that any information I provide during the discussion will be kept confidential to the researcher and his supervisors.

○ I understand that I may withdraw myself (or any information they have provided) from this project (before data collection and analysis is complete) without having to give reasons.

○ I understand that the published results will not use my name, or identify my district/office and no opinions will be attributed to me in any way that will identify me.

○ I understand that the information I have provided will be used only for this research project.

○ I understand that when this research is completed, the information obtained will be **securely stored and destroyed after five years**.

○ I understand that responses will be collected using a tape recorder or written notes, whichever will be agreed upon.

○ I understand that I have a right to change or make amendments to the data gathered straight after the discussion or as soon as possible.

○ I understand that I would attend a follow up meeting to check transcript results.

○ I am aware that a summary of this research will be available for me to see when the research is complete should I choose to.

(*Please delete the statement that does not apply*)

○ *I agree/ do not agree* to participate in the research

Signed……………………………………………………………………………..

Name of Participant………………………………………………………………………………

Date………………………………………………………………………..

PARENTS/GUARDIANS' CONSENT   FOR CURRENT PUPILS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH.

RESEARCH TITLE: *Implementation of Re-entry Policy after school Pregnancy. A case study of Public Secondary schools of Kuria: District: Kenya*.

(Please tick each box)

○        I/ we have been given and understood an explanation of this research project. I / we have had an opportunity to ask questions and have them answered to my satisfaction.

○        I/we agree that my/our child to be part of a focus group as long as my/our child agrees.

○        I/ we understand that my / our children have been invited to attend a focus group discussion with four other children in the lunch time or other time that won't interfere with their studies.

○        I / we understand that any information my/our child provide during the discussion will be kept confidential to the researcher and his supervisors.

○        I / we understand that my /our child may withdraw from this research (before data collection and analysis is complete) without having to give reasons.

○        I / we understand that the published results will not identify my /our child's school or my/ our child's name and no opinions will be attributed to them in any way that will identify them.

○ I / we understand that the information my/our child have provided will be used only for this research project.

○ I/we understand that when this research is completed, the information obtained will be **securely stored and destroyed after five years**.

○ I /we understand that data will be collected using a tape recorder or written notes, whichever will be agreed upon.

○ I/we understand that my /our children have a right to change or make amendments to the data gathered straight after the discussion or as soon as possible.

○ I/we understand that I/we will attend a follow up meeting to check transcript results.

○ I /we are aware that a summary of this research will be available for them to see when the research is complete should they choose to.

(*Please delete the statement that does not apply*)

○ *I/we agree/ do not agree* to participate in the research

Signed…………………………………………………………………………………………..

Name/s of Parent/s………………………………………………………………………………………

Date………………………………………………………………………………………….

# Appendix G: Interview schedules for MOE officials, head teachers, current students and parents

TE WHARE WĀNANGA O TE ŪPOKO O TE IKA A MĀUI

**VICTORIA**
UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON

RESEARCH TITLE: *Implementation of Re-entry Policy for girls after school Pregnancy. A case study of Public Secondary schools of Kuria District: Kenya*.

**INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR MOE OFFICIALS**

- Name of division
- How many students are there in your division?
- Since the year 1994 how many students dropped out of schools in your division?
- Indicate the number of students who dropped out of each class.
- What were the reasons for dropping out?
- What is the MOEs' policy with regard to girls who become pregnant while in school?
- Is there provision in your standards assessment tool for making follow up on girls who drop out of school due to pregnancy?
- What is your view on girls' re-entry policy?
- Give any other information you may deem crucial for this study.

**INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE HEAD TEACHERS**

- How many students are there in your school?
- On average how many students are there per stream/class?
- What is the total number of streams/classes?
- Since the year 1994 how many students have dropped out of your school?
- What are the reasons for dropping out?
- For each reason indicate the total number of students who dropped out.

- Apart from the students who dropped out do you know of any other students who did not return to school in January 2010?

- How many students could not return to school because of pregnancy?

- What do you do when a girl in your school becomes pregnant?

- What is the MOE policy with regard to girls who become pregnant while in school?

- What (if any) is your school's Board of Governor's policy on pregnancies that occur while girls are still in school?

- What is your view on girls' re-entry policy?

- How do you think the implementation of the policy could be improved?


**NARRATIVE PROMPTS FOR PARENTS**

- Tell me about your own education?

- Tell me about your family

- Tell me what happened when your daughter got pregnant.

- How does your family deal with difficult decisions?

- What do you think about re-entry for girls?


**INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR CURRENT SCHOOL PUPILS**

- In which class are you?

- What do you think about school and education?

- Has any of your classmates had to terminate her studies before completing her education cycle?

- What happened when they had to leave school?

- What would you have liked to have happened?

- What do you think about re-entry policy for girls?

# Appendix H: Narrative prompts for young mothers

**NARRATIVE PROMPTS FOR YOUNG MOTHERS**

The following are some Narrative prompts for the discussion groups with girls and their Parents. Throughout the sessions I will use narrative prompts consisting of minimal encouragers such as: What happened? Tell me more? And then? How did that feel?

- What do you think about school and education – how important is it to you?
- Tell me about your time at school?
- What happened when you had to leave?
- What is it like no longer being at school?
- Or, tell me what it's like being back.
- How do decisions get made in your family?
- Could things have been different for you?