

This report is the result of a survey of 500 children, aged from 7 to 14 years, from ten regions in Mainland Tanzania. This study, the first of its kind for Tanzania, gives children's opinions on issues relating to education: school services such as health care, water supply and food, textbooks, teachers, discipline, extra charges, and their desired improvements to education.

In the second component of the survey researchers sought children's opinions on their role in society, particularly their social and economic contributions to their families and communities, their desire for and access to information, the formal and informal ways they are listened to, and their aspirations for the future.

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UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA

Tanzanian Children's Perceptions of Education and Their Role in Society Views of the Children 2007



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MKUKUTA Monitoring System:
Research and Analysis Working Group &
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This study, known as the 'Views of the Children' (VoC) study was designed to be complementary to the 'Views of the People' (VoP) survey. The Views of the People 2007 is a major survey commissioned as part of the Poverty Monitoring System (PMS) of MKUKUTA (the National Strategy for Growth and Poverty Reduction). The key findings from the Views of the Children study were included in the full report 'Views of the People' - however, this additional publication provides greater detail on the sister survey 'Views of the Children'.

The study is groundbreaking in its scope and content for Tanzania, and may be the first, or at least among the few such studies undertaken by countries in sub-Saharan Africa. Our children are our nations' future; the Government intends to continue this kind of research, particularly in the important area of child rights.

Many people contributed to this report and their contributions are gratefully acknowledged.

The members REPOA's Children Research Programme are thanked for the design of this project and their technical assistance throughout implementation. The analysis of the research findings and the drafting of the report was carried out by Kate Dyer, Derrick Mbelwa, Francis Omondi and Zubeida Tumbo-Masabo.

Regional Commissioners, District Education Officers, Ward Executive Officers, Ward Education Officers, and head teachers in the sampled districts of Dar es Salaam, Tanga, Arusha, Singida, Mtwara, Lindi, Mwanza, Shinyanga, Iringa and Rukwa are recognised for their support of the fieldwork.

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Last, but by no means least, special thanks goes to the children who participated in the study, including those representatives from the Temeke and Kinondoni Municipal Children Councils who took part in group discussions during the choice of research topics.

This study is the first of its kind in Tanzania. Five hundred children aged 7 to 14 years from ten locations of varying urban / rural and socio-economic mix took part in a participatory research project which was undertaken as part of the 'Views of the People' (VoP) survey. Summarised below are the findings:

Perceptions

Children see things differently to adults

Issues which the adult researchers saw as distinctly separate parts of the research (schooling and the position of children in society) children saw more holistically as part of the same issue. Issues which adults tend to see as strongly connected, such as fines as a form of punishment, children saw differently. To them, fines were another kind of financial contribution.

Children have opinions which can provide a valuable perspective to be taken into account by adults

Although children may have only a partial understanding of some issues - such as the level of contributions paid at school, (this is probably because of their age), they can prioritise issues differently to an adult. The children surveyed placed a higher value on home - school communication, and on their teachers having a good image in the local community (as opposed to being seen as a drunkard for example). Their value of these matters seemed to be higher than the weight given to these issues by some adults.

They also noted the apparent contradiction between the school curriculum which emphasises the importance of good nutrition, and the fact that they are not fed at school.

Education

Talking to children emphasised the fact that most learning in schools is top down, heavily reliant on notes copied from the blackboard and on textbooks

The need for teachers to have a good handwriting on the blackboard was frequently mentioned, showing how important it is to the children that they are able to read the writing.

Textbooks are highly valued and liked by the children, but also a source of frustration, because whilst the supply is generally improving, there are still far too few to go around. Children would like to be able to read books in their own time, but books are generally collected at the end of each lesson.

Students are clear about the qualities they want in a teacher

A teacher should be someone who really wants to teach, likes children, makes an effort, and ensures pupils understand. It was clear from the survey that some children did have teachers of this calibre.

With regard to teachers, researchers found some excellent practice such as efforts to fully integrate partially sighted children into an ordinary school.

Every school in the sample reported problems which amount to teachers not meeting basic contractual obligations, or at best having poor professional standards

Teachers failing to attend lessons is a significant issue. Children talked about teachers who gave notes, but didn't explain what they meant, or told them just to ask an older pupil if they didn't understand.

Corporal punishment regulations are not being adhered to in almost all cases. The fear of corporal punishment - engendered, for example, by teachers who carry a stick in class - was expressed by the children as a significant obstacle to learning.

The overall picture emerges of **schooling being a rather limited closed exercise** with teachers explaining a fixed body of knowledge to a largely passive body of children. The children in the study were not familiar with active teaching / learning methodologies.

Communication between schools and parents was weak.

Contributions in cash and kind were expected in all the schools in the sample, and children are being excluded from lessons for non-payment.

The children held a wide variety of opinions in whether education overall was better the year previous to this 2007 survey. The vast majority of children felt that the best way to improve education is to increase the more supply side inputs, including infrastructure, teachers, school supplies. They also wanted to have better teachers, a more diverse curriculum, and other services in school (such as health).

The children from Dar es Salaam who participated in the survey were assertive in saying that increasing their own commitment to study and listening to teachers and parents would also be a factor to improving their education.

Participation in Society

Children are active economically and socially and undertake a wide range of activities which directly benefit the family and community, or free up adults to undertake those tasks, and this responsibility starts from an early age.

Communication

Children thought they were listened to informally by parents, but the overall sense is of a **fairly limited range of communication** - issues relating to their schooling were mentioned most frequently - though this could also be because the research was taking place in a school context and setting.

Children demonstrated that they have a **wide range of interests and get information from a diverse range of sources**. Beyond home, family and face to face communication, radio is very significant for them.

'Institutionalised' listening to children is weak. The overwhelming impression of teachers is that their model of education is teacher not learner centred; their job is to explain well, so that a body of knowledge is understood rather than to facilitate children in a more open ended approach to understanding the world they live in.

'Listening' is not a quality strongly associated with teachers beyond the fairly limited answering pupils' questions in class, though pupils in one school said that they wanted to be able to give their opinions on issues to do with education.

Only one school in the sample of ten primary schools had an active school council - called a *baraza* in Tanzania. In the rare cases where pupils were represented in school committees, the pupils' perception was that they are not seriously listened to. Where they are not directly represented, pupils tended not to know about when meetings were held and what was discussed.

The major possible exception to this is in mosques and churches where children do seem to be given much more space for participation. However, this was apparent in only one research site. There were no non-governmental organisations NGOs, or Community Based Organisations CBOs, present in the research sites, so the researchers were not able to tell whether these 'newer sectors' offer children more opportunities to be heard.

Aspirations for Their Future

Children have a diverse range of aspirations for future jobs. Just over half wanted to join the service professions of education and medicine. A little more than 10% wanted to participate in governing the country in some way, as president, a minister, a member of parliament, or regional or district commissioner. Just under 10% were attracted to the army or defence and again a little more than 10% to join the productive sector as farmers, *fundis* (skilled or semi skilled craftspeople, technicians), or business people.

Conclusion

Underlying these specific points, however, is a clear message. **The children enjoyed taking part in the research, and found it a learning experience to express their opinions** in the way that the researchers invited them.

Sometimes, as reported later in this publication, they decided to take specific and responsible action over something that had emerged in the course of discussion, and which appeared to them unfair - demonstrating both how active learning and broader social participation can be nurtured.

Children are clear sighted about the contradictions between a curriculum that teaches the importance of clean water and good nutrition and what they actually receive at school. Very often their specific opinions and observations have value for policy makers and planners, and this justifies continuing with this kind of survey 'Views of the Children' on an on-going basis.

The findings from this study have a human dimension which challenges all adults, whether parents and/or professionals who work with children:

- **Children want to be listened to and taken notice of.**
- **They want to be taught by teachers who like children, like teaching and who make an effort.**
- **Children need to be heard.**

CHAPTER 1 Introduction

It is a commonplace in development that the perspectives of 'beneficiaries', the views of the people, need to be taken into account in planning and monitoring. Children are people too. The fact that around half the Tanzanians are under the age of 18, estimated to be about 18 million children¹, makes it vital to have an understanding of the perspectives of children and young people. Furthermore, this survey is regarded as an important contribution to the Views of the People (VoP) study, a survey of over 7,000 people living in Mainland Tanzania which was conducted at a similar time during 2007² (further information is contained in chapter 2).

Children are not, however, just mini-adults, and different kinds of approaches need to be made to understand them. This is the underlying ethos basis of the Views of the Children study, which the authors of the draft report subtitled for themselves as '*Learning to Listen to Children*', because the exercise itself was a learning process for the researchers.

Why 'Learning to Listen to Children', What Were the Researchers Learning?

The methodology, using both qualitative and quantitative research tools with carefully sampled groups of children across the whole country, is innovative in Tanzania. It is the first time children's views have been sought systematically in this way. Researchers in Tanzania are learning to adapt international good practice when researching children's views to Tanzania, and hence learning how to listen to their opinions.

The research findings show children have a lot to say which complements other research findings, and there would be clear gains for policy makers and planners as well as for parents, teachers and others who work with children, in learning from what they have to say. Children want to be listened to and engaged with – this is a clear message from the research – the challenge for 'their elders' is to work out how they can do it.

One of the research findings is that formal structures for listening to children are generally weak: children are expected to listen more than they are expected to participate in discussion of issues related to their own and their communities' development. The implications of this are not certain, but they probably do not bode well for the nurturing of adult responsibilities and democratic values. Listening, on the other hand, is the beginning of a process that can generate participation, and hence by promoting listening to children we encourage their broader participation.

Why Do We Need Children's Views?

Beyond the point that 'children are people too', and hence arguments around the benefits of participation for adults apply equally to children, there are two main justifications for focussing research attention on children:

1. Children have a right to be heard in matters that affect them – this is protected in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC or CRC)³. Many of the UNCRC's 54 articles are about respecting and including children, with particular emphasis on the best interests of the child and promoting equity and non-discrimination. Since Tanzania has ratified the CRC, researching children's opinions is an element of honouring its provisions.

¹ In 2004 Tanzania had a population of about 37.6 million, of whom 18.8 million (approximately 50%) were under 18.

² Itself part of the national Poverty Monitoring System of 'MKUKUTA', and aiming to ascertain popular views of MKUKUTA implementation and government performance more generally.

³ Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights (2003). *Convention on the Rights of the Child*. <http://www.unhcr.ch/html/menu3/b/k2crc.htm>. [Retrieved 23 January 2008]

2. Children are already participating in society as active members, not just “citizens in waiting – eager for the day they turn 18”⁴. They are often assumed to be passive recipients of basic social services, particularly health and education, but in practice sometimes make their own decisions about whether they use such services. They are subject to the state of the environment in the communities in which they live, and they are also decision makers and economic actors often contributing vitally to household income and well-being. Hence understanding their perspectives and priorities is beneficial to trying to improve the lives of households and communities, and the quality of programmes and policies.

In the Tanzanian context, research and information about children for planning purposes is a little patchy. There is a great deal of quantitative data about services used by children through routine data collection, particularly in health and education where children are the basic ‘consumers’ of services. However analysis of this data⁵ tends to establish correlations rather than explaining causes, and sometimes offers policy makers and planners little guidance on ways forward - such as, what kinds of spending has the greatest impact on enrolment and retention in schools: more teachers, greater investment in infrastructure, better teachers, and/or provision of school meals? As the front line recipients of these services children and young people are in a good position to be able to comment.

The Choice of the Research Topics

Consultation with several parties, including children identified several potential research issues:

1. Education and schooling;
2. Health, including sexual and reproductive health, and
3. The position of children in society.

On the basis of two to three hours being a reasonable length of time for working with a group of children, it was decided to tackle two issues. The position of children in society was maintained as central to understanding how children see themselves, how decision making works, and how citizenship develops. Education was retained because of its strong links with the concurrent ‘Views of the People’ survey, and the fact that children are the largest ‘consumers’ of this major government service.

The issue of health matters was reluctantly rejected on the grounds that it risked raising many sensitive issues, particularly relating to children’s own privacy and protection, which time and resources would not allow us to address properly. For example, it was felt that issues would emerge in discussion that might be better addressed in single sex discussion groups, with more differentiation of the research tool across the age range, in order to address issues appropriately and not leave children further exposed or confused. It was hoped by the research team that there would be scope for future surveys to explore how health issues could be appropriately addressed.

⁴ Jeremy Beecham (2001) cited in Unicef (2006). *Involving Children and Young People in Planning, Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation*.

⁵ For example, Ophelia Mascarenhas (2004). *What We Know About Children In Tanzania Based On A Review Of Studies* REPOA (2005) *‘Vulnerable Children in Tanzania and Where they are: Report to Unicef’*.

CHAPTER 2 Methodology

2.1 Links with the 'Views of the People' Study

This study, known as the 'Views of the Children' (VoC) study was designed to be complementary to the 'Views of the People' VoP survey. The Views of the People 2007 is a major survey commissioned as part of the Poverty Monitoring System (PMS) of the National Strategy for Growth and Poverty Reduction, which is known by its Kiswahili acronym 'MKUKUTA'. The Research and Analysis Working Group, which is one of the working groups of the PMS, commissioned REPOA to carry out the work, and whilst the research instruments for the VoP were being developed,⁶ the opportunity for linking with REPOA's Children Research Programme (CRP) became apparent.⁶ This research programme already had plans for undertaking innovative research using qualitative and quantitative methodologies with children, whereas the VoP was targeting adults aged 25-60, as well as smaller numbers of the elderly (those over 60) and young people aged 15-24. The opinions of the latter were sought specifically in connection with education and livelihoods.

As the VoP research instruments were developed⁷ it was recognised that there would be value in a more specific focus on younger age groups, not the least because approximately 50% of Tanzanians are under the age of 18. Moreover, government data on, for example, availability of school facilities, could be usefully supplemented by opinions from the users of those facilities.

However, it was also recognised that expecting younger children to respond to substantial questionnaires in the same way as adults would not be productive. The proposed age span of the children to be surveyed – 7 to 14 years, meant that their attention span would be shorter and there would be varying levels of language skills, thus making it hard to use conventional research methodology. For children to participate meaningfully in any research project they need research tools that are sensitive to their age and level of development. Also participation in research must be an enjoyable and stimulating experience for the children, which was achieved, judging by the children's evaluations of their participation.⁸

Hence it was agreed to pilot a methodology with younger children which would complement the 'VoP' work in the sense of addressing some similar issues with a view to eliciting findings which would enable some trends to be drawn from children as young as 7 years through to adulthood.

2.2 Sampling

The sample size was planned as 500 children. This made an attractive 10% of the size of the VoP, which was not inappropriate since the methodology was a pilot one. The survey would be conducted in the same regions as the VoP study, so this implied 50 children per region.

With advice from the statisticians, districts within the regions which would give a spread of income, as measured by high medium or low poverty headcount⁹, as well as a spread of rural, mixed and urban wards, as defined in the 2002 Census were selected.

⁶ Members of the Children Research Programme, which is coordinated by REPOA: Kate Dyer, Derrick Mbelwa, Francis Omondi and Zubeida Tumbo-Masabo, Mikala Lauridsen, Carol Watson, Rakesh Rajani, Theresa Kajjage, Valerie Leach, Rose Mwaipopo, Ophelia Mascarenhas, Amandina Lihamba, Rehema Tukai and Alice Rugumyambeto.

⁷ Using an iterative process involving a Technical Committee, REPOA consultants and staff and a number of national and international NGOs. Brian Cooksey, Rose Mwaipopo and Blandina Kilama provided technical input which shaped the research questions.

⁸ Described in the conclusion to section 5.3.

⁹ From poverty mapping work, cited in the 2005 Poverty and Human Development Report.

On this basis the following regions and districts were identified:

Table 1: Poverty Headcount of Sample

Poverty Head-Count	Urban	Mixed	Rural
High	Mwanza Region: Geita District	Iringa Region: Mufindi District	Lindi Region: Lindi Rural District
Medium	Singida Region: Singida Urban District	Mtwara Region: Mtwara Rural District	Shinyanga Region: Maswa District Rukwa Region: Sumbawanga Urban District
Low	Dar es Salaam Region: Kinondoni District	Tanga Region: Tanga Urban District	Arusha Region: Arusha Urban District

Wards were identified on the basis that they had the necessary designation of rural, mixed, or urban. However, the ward selection sometimes modified the aggregated picture for the district as a whole. Hence whilst as a whole, Geita has a high poverty headcount area, the ward selected served an economically more advantaged population. Similarly whilst Kinondoni as a whole is a low poverty headcount area, and despite some high income houses in the neighbourhood, basically the school serves a low income population. Sites were selected partly on the basis that they were also being visited by the VoP study, to minimise the additional logistical burden being given to the VoP fieldworkers, and to facilitate the sharing of information between the two studies. The end result was that the researchers did achieve a spread of income / poverty headcount levels and of geographic characteristics across the ten research sites.

Details of the characteristics of the individual schools follow, though names have been withheld. Furthermore, the information on the schools has been kept to a minimum, to avoid easy identification of the school in question.

Geita District, Mwanza

The school is situated along the main road. It has an extensive compound with over 1,000 pupils, and has recently been split into two smaller schools. The compound is fenced, and kept clean and well planted with flowers. It also has several new buildings including a nursery school.

Singida Municipality, Singida

The school is situated in the centre of the town, and has over 900 pupils. The compound is not fenced and a number of paths cross through the school.

Arusha Municipality, Arusha

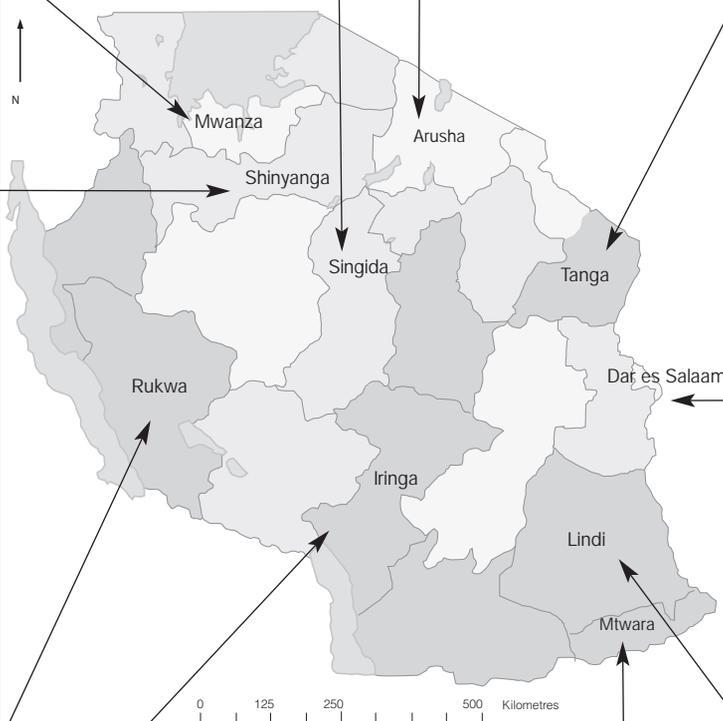
This school is outside the town centre, with very few houses nearby. Some pupils walk more than ten kilometres to school. The school site was neatly kept with grass squares surrounded by short trees. The surrounding area is bare and wind-swept. Some classrooms have glass window panes and the buildings were on the whole satisfactory, though the floors were rough and dusty. Pupils were generally well dressed including socks and shoes, and a red jumper that was part of the uniform.

Tanga Municipality, Tanga

The school is situated on the Tanga - Dar es Salaam road. Some of its buildings were put up in the 1950s' using burned brick construction, but these are now in a poor state of repair, including serious cracks and leaking roofs. There are also some new buildings and the grounds are well kept, with trees surrounding grass squares. The school also admits sight impaired pupils who live in the compound. They appear to be well mainstreamed into the school and fully accepted by pupils and teachers alike. Their presence did entail some alteration of the planned research methodologies as visual material could not be used.

Maswa, Shinyanga

Most pupils live far away and are not able to return home for lunch. There used to be a school feeding programme at the school, but donor support ended and the programme stopped, though there are discussions about restarting it. Researchers witnessed a 'school parade' after lunch on one of the days of the research. Pupils march around the school singing, led by prefects and monitors. This seems to be enjoyed by pupils and to have the effect of motivating them to work hard in school.

**Kinondoni Municipality, Dar es Salaam**

The school is in an unplanned residential area with pockets of better-off residences. However, the infrastructure - roads, drainage and open spaces, is poor. There is electricity at the head teacher's office only. The water supply is unreliable. Most of the water pipes are broken, hence the roadside area of the school is flooded. The school buildings are old, the floor is rough and the desks are not sufficient for all the pupils. The toilet facilities are new and clean, but there is no water. The view from the school is good, but the school lacks space or a playground as more buildings were constructed for an adjacent school. In other words, two schools share the same area that was meant for one school.

Sumbawanga Urban, Rukwa

This school is located away from Sumbawanga town. The school has a *shamba* where pupils do agricultural work, with the proceeds supporting school costs such as books. At this school parents had not actually read the letter, which asked permission for us to do research, but assumed that they were being called to school for a meeting. The head teacher spoke to them and sent them away, but it is an interesting example of failures of written communication and of parents assuming that any communication from school meant that they had to report to school.

Mufindi District, Iringa

The school is located off the Iringa/Mbeya road, near the ward offices. The school has a small compound that is attractively planted with flowers. The classrooms are all well constructed, with lockable doors. At the time of the visit by the researchers the school was closed for holidays, save for upper classes that were doing tuition and nursery school pupils. Through the head teacher a special arrangement was made to recall pupils who had been selected for the research.

Mtwara Rural, Mtwara

The school is located on the road to the border with Mozambique. The facilities are generally good, with sufficient toilets for boys and girls. Primary School Leaving Examination pass rates are good. Problems facing the school include water shortage which leads to health problems. Some parents were reported to be not very supportive of the school, but the school committee is better than many in that they bought a first aid kit for the school from their own money rather than school funds.

Lindi Rural, Lindi

The school is on the road to Mtwara. There are over 900 pupils and a good Primary School Leaving Exam PSLE pass rate. The school is not fenced, and is severely short of buildings and teachers. The school serves several distant villages, and wild animals are a real hazard for children coming to school. In 2006, according to the children, one of the villages in the same ward lost 25 people to lions. The school runs its own income generating activities.

Table 2: Sampled Children by Locality, Poverty Level and Age

Research Site	Actual School Characteristics		Age 7-10			Age 11-14		
	Region/District	Locality	Income	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Arusha, Terat	Rural	Low	13	12	25	13	12	25
Tanga, Tanga Urban	Peri-urban	Low	8	17	25	10	15	25
DSM, Kinondoni	Urban	Low	11	13	24	12	14	26
Lindi, Lindi Rural	Rural	High	10	13	23	12	14	26
Mtwara, Mtwara Rural	Peri-urban	Medium	12	14	26	14	12	26
Iringa, Mufindi	Peri-urban	High	13	14	27	12	13	25
Singida, Singida Urban	Urban	Medium	12	13	25	13	12	25
Rukwa, Sumbawanga	Rural	Medium	13	12	25	16	14	30
Shinyanga, Maswa	Rural	Medium	13	12	25	12	13	25
Mwanza, Geita	Urban	High	12	13	25	14	15	29
		Number	117	133	250	128	134	262
Total Sample								512

Primary schools were taken as the entry point because official data shows that in most areas of the country, the vast majority of children are at least enrolled in school – though this does not necessarily mean that they all regularly attend school. Focussing on children of primary school age was also complementary to the VoP study which was asking questions of youth aged 15-24. Whilst the official age of primary school pupils is 7-13, it is also well known that many pupils in the senior classes are older than the designated age for that level of schooling, (the school regulations say that children should commence attending school when they are seven years old). Hence the study focussed on those aged 7-14. These were divided into two age groups of 7-10 and 11-14, on the basis that a narrower age spread would enable greater depth in the focus group discussions.

Random sampling was undertaken at school level to select the research participants. This was mostly¹⁰ undertaken by fieldworkers for the main VoP study¹¹. They worked from attendance registers, with support from teachers to ensure children outside the designated age range were not included in the sample.

There was significant concern about out of school children. Experience had shown that reaching these in a meaningful and representative way would be a major challenge. Where non-formal education classes¹² were operational this would have been an attractive entry point, but these were not widely available. Out of school children attached to street children centres were felt not to be representative of most out of school children, and are already a much researched area. Asking head teachers or village leaders for help in accessing out of school children generally results in accessing children who have left primary school without further access to education. Children are not meant to be out of school, so village officials and outsiders trying to find them will always face difficulties. Hence it was decided not to include out of school children in the targeted sample of 500, but to allow additional time in the field in each research site to try and access such children in places where they are likely to be (fetching water,

¹⁰ However in some places the VoC fieldworkers did the sampling, as the VoP fieldworkers had not reached the sites.

¹¹ Dionice Boay, Municipal Education Officer for Kinondoni Municipal Council, facilitated field testing in some primary schools within the Kinondoni Municipality. The fieldworkers for the survey itself were Rose Beatus, John Kiango, Agnes Gabriel, Edwiga Temba, Albert Budondi, Irene Mboya, Latifa Rashid, Gertrude Venance, and Ally Manjasi.

¹² Known by their Kiswahili acronym MEMKWA.

watering animals, at bus stands) and to try and engage them in informal discussion on the issues of the main VoC work, and to use their opinions as an additional input and addendum to what was learned from the main study.

However, in practice this was not feasible. The following challenges emerged: transport problems, difficulties in communication meaning that VoC fieldworkers arrived in advance of the VoP fieldworkers in a few sites, permission from parents had not been obtained, there was need to spend time explaining the research to teachers, so that the additional time was, in practice, needed to ensure that the 'core' research went ahead as smoothly as possible.

2.3 Conducting Research with Children as Participants

It was fully recognised in advance that there are special challenges in generating quantitative data which is comparable over different research sites through participatory research with children. A team of researchers already experienced with children's research worked collaboratively to develop a research tool to take account of children's relatively short attention spans, the need to make the research enjoyable for them, and to provide a 'safe space' where they could give their opinions without fearing negative repercussions from those in authority in their school or community.

A major challenge was the trade-off between the principle of participatory research that it is driven by the participants and local dynamics, and the practical need to standardize the research tool so that findings from different sites, and opinions of children of different ages, could be directly compared. On the whole, this was successfully achieved, but there are places in the write-up that follows (chapters 3–5) where the authors are not able to refer to all ten sites or all twenty research groups. This happened when researchers ran out of time, usually because the group in question had taken longer than usual to 'warm up' with exercises and games, or to understand a particular question, or were getting tired, or needed to be released to go home, so researchers took the on the spot decision not to pursue that question with that particular group.

A further important consideration is that of the ethics of working with children. This was approached from three different angles: children's consultation during the development of the research tool, efforts to ensure children's (and their parents') informed consent to take part in the research, and to ensure that children were not left vulnerable in anyway through participation in the research project.

Further details of the research tool, its development and use, and tools used in data analysis are contained in annex 1.

2.4 The Preparation of this Report

Various themes and issues emerged in the course of data analysis, and in writing up the VoC study it was decided to focus on these, because it enables a clearer picture of children's views to come through. The process of developing the research tool was: breaking down the two large topics into small components easily able to be 'consumed' by the children; the writing of this report has been a process of putting the small elements back together to generate an overall picture, rather than just documenting question by question what the children said.



CHAPTER 3 Key Variables

3.1 Geographic Location

The overall picture was that geographic location (urban, peri-urban or rural area) did not make a very significant difference to the views that the children expressed. The major exception to this was the difference between Dar es Salaam and the rest of the country. Feedback from fieldworkers was that Dar es Salaam children were quicker to understand concepts of information, such as what information do they want and need, and whether they were able to get it when they needed it. They also took advantage of a more diverse range of sources of information, including television, mobile phones and advertisements. Rural children tended to rely much more on face to face communication and word of mouth from family members and teachers, and sometimes by telephone.

Booklets provided to children as a thank you for taking part in the study, were accepted with thanks but without particular surprise in Dar es Salaam and Mwanza (both urban sites) and in Tanga (peri-urban), from which the researchers infer that receiving or possessing booklets is relatively common. This is in contrast to some of the rural sites, where the children looked at the booklets and then handed them back to the researchers, not appreciating that they were gifts to keep.

Dar es Salaam children also had a more diverse range of job aspirations – which included being a beauty queen and football player/coach.

3.2 Income of Parents

The main question which showed a difference between different levels of income was that children from the 'low income' research sites all spoke of their responsibility as pupils to work harder as one of the ways to improve education. Dar es Salaam children gave several examples: being more attentive in class, not truanting, studying harder, and listening to parents and older siblings. Children in Tanga and Arusha did not elaborate their comments but just focussed on 'studying hard'.

There were no significant differences in the jobs children aspired to across the income groups, but it would appear children from poorer homes have already learned a lesson that accessing a good education will not be easy.

3.3 Age of Research Participants

There was a trend of older children having a clearer understanding of concepts and wider exposure to particular issues. When asked about their future job aspirations, younger children had fewer ideas for the jobs they would like than the older children¹³.

Younger children made a total of 26 different suggestions for how to improve education, whereas older children identified 40, and their suggestions were frequently more nuanced and focussed. Older children in Dar es Salaam, for example, mentioned the need for practical experience to support their studies: *"we just hear that if you mix acid and base you get salt and water, but we have never seen it with our own eyes"*, rather than just *"to be taught well"* – which was expressed by younger children in Arusha, Tanga and Mwanza, as well as some older children in Singida.

Younger children in Terat (Arusha), initially struggled to tell their left hand from their right, though after a little warm up it was clear that their level of Kiswahili was sufficient to cope with the research.

¹³ Younger groups averaged 7.7 suggestions, whereas groups of older children averaged 9.2

3.4 Gender

Our methodology set out to encourage broad-based participation by the group, and there were no differences between the willingness of girls and boys involved to express their opinions openly. Gender differences were not strongly apparent in much of what they told researchers, including, for example where it might have been expected in a gender division of chores at home. On the contrary, there were complaints in one urban group that some boys did not do a fair share, which suggests a sense that there should be an equal division of the tasks to be performed.

The biggest gender differences that were apparent came in terms of the jobs children aspired to. The traditional gender division of labour seems secure with 89% of those wishing to be nurses, and 70% of those wanting to be teachers, being girls. On the other hand more than a third of hopefuls to be president were also girls, and almost half of those wanting to be pilots. More details of job aspirations are described in section 5.4.

The only other evidence of gender differences was in children's reported differences between parents. Mothers were said to listen more than fathers over issues like school requirements and need for clothes, but this distinction is not clear and definite. In some communities the fathers would be approached over matters to do with schooling.

Children's Views on Schools, Teaching and Learning

One of the clearest observations about the findings is that whilst the researchers drew a distinction between two halves of the research tool, one related to schooling and the other on the position of children in society, the distinction is not so clear in terms of the children's responses. For them, the two are very much interlinked and overlapping. Family members and teachers are all sources of information which they draw on to learn about matters of importance to them in the wider world. Education sector specialists may clearly prioritise teachers, books and infrastructure as the key elements of education but children's approach tends to be more holistic, looking at learning also from parents, and each other, and being concerned with the wider school environment, including issues such as tree planting.

On the other hand, there are curious discrepancies in children's responses. For example, they never once mentioned fines for damage done to school property or books in the context of punishment, but fines were frequently mentioned in terms of contributions to school. Reasons for this are not clear – perhaps the parent pays the fine and the child does not understand the distinction between a fine for damage and a 'normal' contribution?

Similarly, beating was mentioned in 90% of schools in connection with definitions of a bad teacher, but in under 60% of discussions in connection with punishment. Perhaps children see a certain amount of beating as just a normal part of teaching/learning and not necessarily a punishment? Clearly there is scope for further research to find out more about these differences in perception.

4.1 Services at School

Asking questions about the range of amenities and services at the school was prompted by the consultation with children during the process of developing the research tool. It became clear that to those children the school is more than classrooms, teachers and books. The children said that issues of environment, health, clean safe water and food also need to be taken into account.

Environment

'Maeneo ambayo yanatuzunguka tunapoishi na kusoma' [the areas that surround us, where we live and where we study] (Tanga). Even the youngest children could explain the components of a good environment, though the youngest seemed to rely more on sayings such as *'mazingira ni rafiki'* [the environment is friendly] (Arusha). To the children, environment meant not only trees and grass around the school, but also the school environment, what the classrooms and desks were like, and whether there were enough as well as general cleanliness – mainly referring to sweeping. Several groups also mentioned the existence of a teachers' office as an aspect of a good environment. Children in Lindi specifically mentioned that they had 120 children to a classroom and this made for a bad environment.

Health

Children's responses to provision of health services at school show that they are fully aware of the importance of good nutrition and school feeding as well as access to clean water as components of their health. There is something of a contradiction that children are taught about these issues as part of the curriculum, but that the schools themselves are unable to make provision for these bodily needs of the students.

Most responses from the children about health services at the school were in terms of availability of first aid, or ease of getting permission to go to hospital, and how far away that was. Half the schools sampled had some kind of first aid provision. In other cases, a sick child is sent to a nearby hospital or dispensary. Dar es Salaam had the most comprehensive provision with children mentioning receiving inoculations at school and also dental checks and toothpaste. One school was able to ensure standard one children were treated without charge, and in one school older children remembered, in the past, that if you went with the school's *'daftari la wangonjwa'* [sick book] you could get free treatment, but that now you have to pay Tshs1,000/-. Only one school apparently had no provision for sick children.

Water

Again children are fully aware of the importance of clean water, both for washing/hygiene and for drinking. Its importance is magnified significantly when children were walking long distances to school, and consequently got very thirsty. However, only two of the sampled schools (Mwanza and Tanga) had piped drinking water available for the children. In Dar es Salaam, children either brought water with them from home or bought it at kiosks near the school.

The acting head teacher in one school mentioned cholera and diarrhoea as problems occurring in the school from time to time due to water problems. Children at the school confirmed that they only had water during the day if they went home during break times. 10 of the 25 children in the younger sample had to wait till they went home at the end of the school day before they could drink safe water.

In Tanga, boiled water for drinking was available to the children in the teachers' office and in the library – though even so some children just drank straight from the tap. Providing boiled water would appear to be an example of good practice which could be more widely replicated, especially if children are already in the habit of collecting firewood and bringing it to school, as was the case in one school in the sample, which could be used to boil the water.

Food

Only three schools (30%) of the sample provide food on a regular basis for children, one being high income and the others middle income – and even in the latter the programme seems to be in abeyance. In two others (Arusha and Dar es Salaam) it was pointed out that food is available for sale from small *dukas* [shops and kiosks] in the vicinity of the school. One other school has a nursery attached, and does provide *uji* [soft porridge] at a cost of Tshs1,500/- a month.

Children in Mtwara noted that in the previous year they had received some maize, potatoes and mangoes from the school *shamba* [farm], whereas in other places working on the school *shamba* was mentioned as a contribution that the children make to the school, they did not mention any benefits to them such as eating the produce.

Given the positive impact of school feeding on attendance, and also capacity to learn, considering the long distances many children are walking to school¹⁴, it seems that more should be done to ensure that proper provision for children's nutritional needs.

4.2 Books

This was a question prioritised as important to them by the children consulted when designing the survey. The overall picture about text books is clear: about 80% of children say they understand their textbooks, but that there are just not enough of them. Only 15% of the sample said they had enough books. Results show no significant difference according to the age of the children, the income level, or the geographic variables.

The number of books, and how easy they are to understand, are linked issues. One young child commented that books would be easier to understand if there were fewer than three sharing a book. Older children in one school claimed to be sharing up to 20 to a book – which was not disputed in a meeting with their teachers - and said that books would be easier to understand if pages were not torn and missing. A book that is continually being passed between desks and shared is more likely to suffer wear and tear.

Teachers are clearly in a difficult position over allowing children to use books in their own time. Usually the books are handed back at the end of the lesson. One child commented positively that this year they

¹⁴ National Bureau of Statistics (2007) The 2007 Household Budget Survey, Community Characteristics details walking time to primary schools. Only 3.2% report being more than one hour from the nearest government primary school (page 9) but in some rural areas this can be significantly more than one hour.

were allowed to take books home, but in another school books are no longer given out because last year when they were handed out some books were not returned. Some schools fine children for the loss of books, and in one school all children are expected to contribute when one of their classmate loses a book. Some children complained that books are not distributed evenly across classes, with the perception in one school that standard 4A got more books than standard 4B or C, but the researchers were unable to triangulate this with information from other sources.

Children offered some positive advice. The kind of books they like have large type face (this from an older child), and where the pictures are realistic or about a situation they can relate to.

4.3 Teachers

Children were most vocal and detailed when describing the characteristics of teachers they do understand – *'wanaeleweka'* [good teachers], and teachers they do not understand – *'wasioeleweka'* [bad teachers]. Because of the sensitivity of this issue and the appreciation of researchers of the challenges facing teachers in many schools, the researchers were careful to give the opportunity to talk about both positive and negative aspects, and indeed children's responses are fairly equally balanced between describing what they like and what they dislike.

There are some negative findings, and in analysing the findings the researchers were keen to avoid misrepresentation. For example, if, entirely hypothetically, children were to mention that a bad teacher is one who poisons pupils, would that necessarily mean that there was a poisoner in their school? Without the time and resources to fully triangulate what children said the researchers could not be sure. However, it is noticeable that in the one school where there were no reports of absenteeism by teachers, the children did not mention attendance as a feature of either a good teacher - they attend lessons, or a bad teacher - that they do not attend; – it seems as if attendance was just assumed. In every other research site children did specify attendance as an issue, and definitions of a good or a bad teacher included references to whether a teacher was present and actually taught. From this it seems reasonable to conclude that when children mention a negative characteristic they have seen examples of it.

Sometimes responses children gave were just opposites. A good teacher marks books, and a bad teacher is one who sets work and then does not mark it. However, by looking at children's overall comments, three points stand out as being mentioned in at least 9 out of 10 schools:

1. A good teacher is one who teaches *'mpaka wanafunzi wanaelewa'* [until the children understand], who keeps on teaching even if they don't understand, gives extra help, makes an effort *'wawe na bidii'*.
2. Teachers failing to attend lessons and teaching is an issue in 90% of the schools visited.
3. Corporal punishment, or fear of it, is an issue in 90% of the sample. Discipline is the subject of the following section, so suffice to highlight at this point that it is not only an issue of actual beating but fear of beating. In three schools it was mentioned that a teacher who walks into the class holding a stick *'anaogopesha watoto'* makes the children fearful. Or, as other children put it *'watoto wanaanza kutetemeka'* they start to tremble.

It is important to reiterate that the research tool's emphasis was on teachers the children could and could not understand. What is clear is that children are saying they cannot understand a teacher, as in learn from him or her, in the context of fear, and that just carrying a stick generates fear.

In terms of broader comments children make about good and bad teachers, they can be analysed into the following categories:

1. Observations children make about what they want from teachers, which interestingly show awareness of issues like home school communication, and knowledge of how individual teachers are seen in the wider community.

2. Shortcomings in terms of what children actually receive from some of their teachers:
 - (i) Failure to meet basic contractual obligations, in other words not carrying out the work they are paid to do.
 - (ii) Failure to observe good educational practice, in other words the teachers are present in class but not carrying out their work in a way which is likely to produce effective learning.
3. A broader picture which has minimal references to teachers as facilitators of learning, or any active/teaching learning methodologies.

Whilst some of the comments by pupils show teachers in a very negative light, researchers also observed some examples of very good practice, in taking the initiative to provide clean drinking water, and making effective efforts to integrate partially sighted children.

What Children Want from a Teacher

The overwhelming and unsurprising view is that a teacher is someone who teaches until children understand, and who gives help if you don't understand. The children thought it is important that the person likes teaching and likes pupils. They want someone who makes an effort '*wawe na bidii; anachamgamka na wanafunzi*' is lively and cheerful, who can laugh with the students, and also, according to one group, plays sports.

A good teacher is someone who gives good examples, and more than one example, speaks slowly and in one case it was specified speaks Kiswahili – presumably because it is a language they more readily understand. Clear writing on the blackboard was also mentioned as important in three of the ten schools.

Passing exams was only mentioned once by children in the whole research in connection with good and bad teachers.

Comments were made that showed children are seeking a little more from their teachers than just schooling. Children mentioned several times that a good teacher asks questions of pupils, but it is not clear whether this related to eliciting whether children have understood a particular topic, or a broader interest in children's well-being. There were hints that some children would like a little more of this from teachers, with one group of children saying that a good teacher gives advice to children, and another, a good teacher is one who cooperates with pupils and listens to their answers '*anaye washirikisha / anawasikiliza wanafunzi majibu wao*'.

Children are also aware of broader issues of relationships with parents and the wider community. They disliked a teacher who has a bad reputation in the wider community '*matendo yake yasiyo safi katika jamii*' and they felt that a good teacher follows up a pupil's progress and reports to parents '*anafuatilia maendeleo ya wanafunzi na anawaeleza wazazi*'. Conversely a bad teacher discourages parents who want to follow up on their pupils' progress '*wazazi wanapotaka kujua maendeleo ya wanafunzi anawakoromea*'.

Failure to Meet Basic Contractual Obligations

In every school except one, pupils mentioned problems with teachers not attending classes, or coming into class but not teaching, coming in and then going out again, attending one week but not subsequently '*anayekuja shuleni wiki moja nyingine anaacha kabisa*', skipping classes or topics, leaving class early, or '*anayesinzia tu darasani*' just dozing in class. In one school, pupils mentioned the extenuating circumstance of not enough teachers to go round so some classes were left untaught, and there are likely to be times when a teacher is attending but sick. However, the overall picture is one in which a very high proportion of pupils are frustrated that teachers are not doing what they are paid to do.

In some cases the situation is more serious, with both younger and older pupils in one school defining a bad teacher as one who drinks when he/she is supposed to be in class '*anaye kunywa pombe wakati wa kufundisha*', in a different school a bad teacher as one who smokes *bangi* [marijuana], and in another one, those who take bribes '*wanakula rushwa*'.

The very fact of carrying a stick into class, and the children's perception that it is likely to be used, suggests that the Government's corporal punishment regulations are not adhered to. Similarly, pupils in one low income school complained about teachers charging for extra tuition and holding the classes immediately before the lessons that everyone is meant to attend. This suggests, if not direct flouting of regulations, at least dubious ethics and insensitivity to poorer students.

Poor Professional Standards

Children gave many examples of what they do not like in a teacher, with the overall picture being that in 9 of the 10 schools sampled there are some teachers who do not like teaching, or pupils, and/or who are lazy or angry. Children mentioned the following specifically as things they dislike:

1. '*Wakali sana/kufundisha kwa hasira*' [very harsh/teaches with anger] referring to '*auti na maneno*' shouting and bad language, as well as corporal punishment.
2. Teachers who use up their exercise books with tests but who don't mark the books, or if they do, mark them after a long delay.
3. '*Ananyanyasa wanafunzi*' a teacher who picks on students or harasses them.
4. Getting a pupil to write notes on the blackboard for other students just to copy, and doing this without the teacher doing any explaining.
5. Teachers who start asking questions without having done any explaining to the class, or teachers who go into class, hand out books and set exercises '*bila kuelewasha*' without explaining anything, and then beating children if they get questions wrong.
6. A teacher who tells them to go and ask older students if they don't understand.
7. A teacher who cracks jokes in class, but then leaves without doing any teaching.
8. Teachers who talk fast, especially in English.
9. Teachers who have a bad reputation in the community.

Pupils also sometimes blamed teachers for things that are not necessarily their fault, such as a complaint about teachers handing out books at the beginning of a lesson and taking them back at the end. This may be a reflection of the need to ensure books are kept available for future years. Nevertheless, the picture which emerges is of pupils being frustrated in their desire to learn.

A Broader Picture

Beyond a simple recording of children's comments about teachers there is the scope to go a little deeper into what is said, and what is not said. For example, passing examinations was mentioned only once during the whole discussion. Perhaps for pupils the issue went without saying, but many times they specified issues which implied a strong interest in relationships: teachers who like them and make an effort, who listen to the answers they give, and who communicate with their parents, as opposed to those who appear so angry or strict or uninterested in them that they fail to meet some fairly basic professional standards.

It is interesting to note that the children's interest in communication between parents and the home and teachers is consistent with much international research about promoting better educational outcomes. Whilst channels for this exist, for example school committees, it seems as will be reported below (section 5.3) that they are not effective forums for bringing the key players (teachers, parents, and pupils) together to discuss needs and priorities. It was only in Tanga that researchers found evidence of a parents' committee effectively communicating with teachers to highlight their own and their children's concerns. There is no budget for school reports at primary school – the most schools do is hold a parents' day, but it is not an opportunity for discussing the progress in learning of individual children.

Teachers in some of the researched schools did not agree with the intention of the field workers to ask parents' permission for their children to participate in the research. They were of the opinion that there was no point in asking for such permission because since the research would take place in school time, it was for the teachers to decide what the children should be doing during those hours. It may be that the same attitude underlies getting children to undertake chores in teachers' houses.

In the context of these kinds of attitudes and relationships, it would appear that meaningful use of active teaching learning methodologies is a long way off. A good teacher who is seen as one who teaches 'until children understand' suggests having mastery of a fairly closed set of prescribed knowledge, rather than a teacher who helps children to come to understanding of the wider world and enabling them to acquire skills to engage with it. The emphasis in three out of ten schools on good handwriting on the blackboard suggests that copying notes from the board is a major activity – and indeed is an effective technique for keeping large numbers of children busy and quiet. Unfortunately it can be done without significant engagement in what is being copied, and as pupils sometimes specifically complained, it is sometimes not accompanied by any explanation from the teacher. Curiously, one group of younger children (Mwanza) actively gave as a characteristic of a bad teacher '*anawafundisha kufikiria*' a teacher who teaches children to think. This kind of attitude, set alongside the lack of noticeboards to inform anyone of school affairs, and the lack of knowledge children have about issues discussed by the school committee, their lack of representation on it (all described in the next section), portray an overall picture of a very limited and instrumental view of schooling. It would appear that many children have already picked up this limited view, with its diminished chances of really encouraging children's development, and truly educating them with the skills to take up their roles and responsibilities in society.

4.4 Discipline and Punishment

This view is reinforced by a consideration of the major role that punishment plays in children's experience of school. As mentioned above it was one of the three dominant issues children brought up in terms of their definitions of a teaching they could or could not understand. In order not to distort discussion around 'horror stories' of abuse of corporal punishment children were asked what happens when you do something right. Most replied in terms of material rewards from teachers, such as books, pens, or even socks and shoes. There was no mention of passing exams, getting a good mark, a positive report from the teacher to the parent, or of any intrinsic satisfaction in knowing about something which was not known previously.

School is not the only place where children get punished. At home they are beaten if they do not go to school. Children in Mtwara particularly mentioned their dislike of two punishments they received at home, being denied food and being chased away from home to go and sleep in the bush. This could be because of refusing to help with family chores like fetching water or helping on the '*shamba*' [farm]. Hence, it would be wrong to see all homes as places of listening to and nurturing children, in contrast to schools as places of physical abuse.

In neither home nor school does one get a sense of wrongdoing being discussed. It was never brought up as a circumstance under which a child might be listened to by either parent or teacher. A single comment in connection with defining a good teacher was one who was understanding if you were late

– this came from the school in Rukwa where distances from home are far for some students.

When children were asked about the characteristics of a bad teacher or one they did not understand, 'viboko' beating was mentioned in nine out of ten schools. However, when asked specifically about punishment, beating was only mentioned by eleven out of nineteen groups, alongside a whole range of alternative punishments to be discussed shortly. The explanation for this is not obvious, but might be because children by and large accept the need for punishment, they only make an issue of it when it seems unfair. Indeed, children themselves made the distinction between beating 'viboko' and beating with no reason, or because the punishment is not consistent with the original fault '*adhabu zinatolewa kulingana na makosa aliyofanya*'.

The national corporal punishment regulations sets out the rules of who carries out the punishment - the head teacher, or a teacher specifically delegated with that authority, using a flexible stick, on only the hands. It would appear that this rule is not widely adhered to. If it were, children would not be trembling when a teacher walks into class carrying a stick – clearly it is not their understanding that the stick is just for pointing with. Researchers also observed teachers walking around school with sticks, which again implies that it is not a single identified 'discipline teacher' who is carrying out any beating. Children in one school (in Dar es Salaam) said '*ukifanya kosa unachapwa na walimu wote*' if you are doing something wrong, you can be beaten by all teachers'¹⁵. Again children in two urban schools spoke of '*kupigwa mangumi*' being hit with fists, and two more '*kuchapwa mikono*' being slapped, in another school of '*kupigwa manjinga na makofi*' beaten with sticks and slapped and '*kupigwa mabao ya masikio*' slapped on the ears – quite apart from the whole range of painful punishments which are outside the regulations altogether.

Children in one school noted '*walimu hawataki kuchapa mikononi wanataka wachape matakonni*' teachers don't want to beat on the hands, they want to beat children on the buttocks. Where regulations are adhered to, in this respect at least, in Arusha, '*kuchapwa viboko viwili mkononi*' to be beaten twice on the hand, the children defined it as '*sio kali*' not strict.

Children reported a whole range of punishments which are not even mentioned in the corporal punishment regulations. They fall into the following categories:

1. Those which are physically painful (slapping over the ears mentioned above), and could cause severe long term damage. Pulling the ears '*kushika masikio*' was mentioned in 70% of schools. Children in one school specifically defined this as a severe punishment.
2. Exercises which are physically tiring, but not necessarily painful. These include a whole range of exercises, of which frog-jumps and push-ups, kneeling and kneeling with arms up or outstretched are the most common.
3. Those which are unpleasant, boring or time-consuming, but not dangerous or difficult; such as sweeping classrooms, cleaning toilets or picking up litter.
4. Activities which involve hard physical labour, these are often linked to agriculture such as digging, planting, weeding. There is also digging rubbish pits for the school, a necessary facility for the school.

A pertinent question that needs to be answered about these kinds of punishment is: what purpose are they trying to achieve and could there be any unwanted consequences? As mentioned earlier, there was no sense of any discussion of wrongdoing with a view to modifying a child's future behaviour. Sometimes the risk is that the opposite may be the result. Boys in two schools, for example, defined frog-jumps and push-ups as mild '*sio kali*' because they do that kind of exercise to keep fit – so it seems as if something

¹⁵ Children explained that the practice in their school was pupils being sent to the staff room to be beaten '*kuchapwa*' and all teachers would come up to the pupil, each one narrating another mistake and beating the pupil for the new mistakes given by the various teachers.

the boys want to do anyway is being used as a punishment on them, and they won't regard the punishment as serious. On the other hand, there are very real dangers that if keeping the school clean and tidy, or doing agricultural work are used as punishments, then motivating children to see those tasks as a general good, or a potentially valuable part of the curriculum '*elimu ya kujitegemea*' is going to be extremely difficult, as these activities have already been stigmatised as activities for wrongdoers.

As for whether the situation is getting better or worse, no clear picture emerges. This is not surprising because unlike quantities of school supplies, it is not an issue very susceptible to change year on year, unless there is a clear and enforced directive to adhere to existing regulations or to change them. Neither of these are likely to be effective without significant supporting efforts to improve the morale and motivation of teachers, and provide them with training in alternatives to corporal punishment, as a bare minimum.

4.5 Contributions

The Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP) established the principle that a child should not be excluded from school for lack of means to pay fees, and gave substantial support to building school facilities, as well as a 'capitation grant' to cover non-salary recurrent expenses at the school level, so the payment of fees should not be necessary. This research documents children's views of what is happening in practice.

What emerges is a varied picture, though contributions of some sort were specified by 19 out of the 20 groups. There is no particular trend over income level or geographic location. Younger and older groups of children in the same school do not always report the same costs and levels. The term 'fee' was only mentioned by one group, though there is a range of different charges, some of which seem largely unrelated to school such as the contribution for prisoners (Tshs 100/-, in one school) or for health services (Tshs 5,000/- in a different school). Others vary significantly, such as the contribution for watchmen for which the minimum paid was Tshs 400/- per child per year up to a maximum of Tshs 2,400/-. Some contributions were in cash, others were made in kind, such as firewood, manure, or vegetables. According to the children some schools were asking for as many as six or seven different kinds of contributions, varying from the unpredictable '*rambi rambi*' contribution paid on the death of a member of the community of only Tshs 20/- to a Tshs 5,000/- building contribution which was obviously on the children's minds in one school, as they knew it had to be paid in full in the near future to the time of this survey.

The research revealed that children are being excluded from school for not paying. Children in one school were very clear that '*wasiotoa wanarudishwa nyumbani*' those who do not pay are sent home. In another, pupils were clear that you could still come if you failed to have a school 'stamp' (*stempu*), which is the school's logo or badge often printed or stamped onto the breast pocket of the shirt of the school's uniform), or bring a hoe or firewood, but if you don't pay a fine for damaging school property you would not be allowed into school. In a different school, children reported that if you didn't pay, you would be punished with beating or squatting for a long time. Sixteen out of twenty-nine of the older children in the sample at one school had been excluded for non-payment at some point in their schooling. The younger ones at the same school reported that they were meant to be excluded for not having a school stamp, but in practice you were allowed in.

The amount paid for extra, as in out of school hours, tuition provided by the teachers, as well as payment for weekly and monthly tests is a significant cost. This is known as *tuisheni* in Kiswahili. There are widespread anecdotal complaints from parents and pupils that teachers only 'teach seriously' in tuition classes, as an incentive to make children attend.

Four out of the ten schools in the sample are charging for extra curricular tuition. An urban school came out as the most expensive, despite being in a low income neighbourhood, with standard six pupils paying Tshs 300/- for weekly tests on top of tuition costs of Tshs 200/- per week. 19/25ths of the sample

of children said they paid tuition, which fits well with children from low income areas having picked up a strong message that they are responsible for how well they achieve at school.

As for whether the picture is getting better or worse, six groups concluded that contributions were higher than the previous year, six that they were lower, and six that they were the same (the question was not asked of two groups). Unfortunately, lower contributions are not necessarily pro-poor – in two cases contributions in cash or kind were no longer being asked for because a school feeding programme was no longer being provided.

4.6 Are Things Getting Better? What Could Be Done To Improve Education?

The picture of changes in primary schooling which emerges from this sample is very mixed. Different children clearly have different priorities, and in some schools the older children did not agree with younger children over whether the situation was getting better or worse. Overall, ten groups said things were getting better, eight that they were getting worse, and two groups said that there was no change. Where there were improvements they were mainly to do with expansion of services, such as water supply or the availability of a computer in school (Mwanza), or in the general environment and buildings of the school. Where they were seen as getting worse it was related to a service which used to be provided, such as feeding, which was not available the year of this study, or having to pay for medical care when it used to be free.

Children came up with forty different suggestions about how education could be improved, as shown in table 3 below.

Table 3: Children’s Suggestions on How to Improve Schooling

Challenges to the Pupils Themselves (Demand side)	Increased Provision (Supply side)	Improved Quality of Provision (Supply side)
Study hard Listen to the teacher/parent Be obedient to the teacher Not be naughty Not be truant Be attentive in class Do homework Listen to older siblings	1. Provision of School Supplies More books More teachers More schools More classrooms More desks More pencils More exercise books More pens More desks Contribution for chalk 2. Provision of Additional Services If unable to pay, then receive free after school tuition Construction of dispensary Free transport 3. Changed Curriculum More sports in schools More subjects Have practicals, not just theory	1. Better Teachers Be taught well (teachers not truant) Accountability among teachers Less punitive approach to teaching/disciplining Pupils given the right to share their views on education 2. School Facilities More and permanent latrines Clean safe water Free access to medical services Installation of windows Construction of teachers’ houses Construction of library Installation of electricity so can read at night Improve school environment through tree planting/ improving garden Get a playground

By far the largest group of suggestions was around increasing school supplies. A detailed list of the additional requirements ('more...') formed the basis of suggestions about how to improve education in eighteen out of the twenty research groups. Dar es Salaam was the only exception, where the emphasis was rather on pupils working hard and being more attentive to the teacher.

Older children had a wider range of suggestions about how to improve education – their total number of suggestions comes to 40 as opposed to 26 from the younger children. Their list is also more subtle and specific – with children in Dar es Salaam wanting practical as well as theory for science, and those in Rukwa wanting more subjects as the means to a better education. Mwanza pupils want the right to share their views on education '*wapewe haki ya kuchangia maoni kuhusu elimu*', those in Singida want more learning materials so that they can study at home in their own time, and more and better teachers who can support them to understand the subjects. Clearly, as pupils get older they have a broader view of what better education is and how it can be obtained.

As aforementioned, children from the low income sample, and especially those in Dar es Salaam, put much more emphasis on the demand side of improving education, and what pupils themselves can do to make their education better. Dar es Salaam was also the only group which said that tuition should be free when children cannot afford it. These children also readily accepted the booklets offered by the researchers, so the overall picture that emerges is of a sense of entitlement to service provision for all, including those that cannot afford it, combined with an understanding of the need to work hard and make a success of their schooling.

Children's Views on Their Role in Society

Growing up and developing a sense of citizenship is a process of learning through interaction with social groups first within the family and subsequently within the wider community. The research tool explored the issue of the role or position of children *fursa ya watoto* from several interrelated angles to understand what interactions are taking place. The researchers asked about:

1. the contributions children are making to their families and communities,
2. the kinds of information they see as important and are able to access,
3. the various formal and informal ways children are listened to, and
4. their aspirations for the future.

5.1 Children Are Active Social and Economic Contributors

It is very clear that children, even in the younger age group, are economic and social actors, contributing to their homes and communities. This was particularly apparent in Lindi, as some children in the sample were the head of their household.

The younger age group contribute mainly in terms of domestic chores: washing clothes and utensils, sweeping, cleaning, cooking and so on. Often these activities are freeing up adults' time so that they can focus on economic and community work. Children also look after younger siblings, and contribute economically to the family through looking after animals (Arusha, Tanga) and serving in the family shop (also Tanga). As children get older their range of activities expands, including also looking after grandparents and more involvement in farming activities and caring for animals. However, older Dar es Salaam children complained that boys tended to go and play rather than contribute to domestic work: *'watoto wa kiume wengi wanaenda kucheza tu, si vizuri'* suggesting a sense that domestic chores should be shared equitably between the sexes, but are not.

Children carry on a range of activities in the school, including working on the school *shamba* [farm], or reporting when a fellow pupil had run away from school. There are also a range of activities carried out by both boys and girls for teachers: fetching water, cooking for them, and cleaning their houses. Children in one school also mentioned that they write on the blackboard for other children to see, implying that they are writing out teachers' notes, rather than the teacher doing this.

Children also contribute at the community level, often, as in Shinyanga and Lindi, in terms of taking part in community construction activities through fetching sand and water. Older children increasingly take on a wider social service role: caring for orphans (Shinyanga), helping the disabled and giving first aid (Mwanza), taking the sick to hospital and teaching people to read and write (Rukwa), making collections to help the elderly (Tanga), and educating their peers against drug abuse (Dar es Salaam).

Sometimes children contributed their opinions. Mwanza children phrased this as: *'kwa kutoa mchango wa mawazo kwa kila jambo linalostahili'* [by giving their views in all matters that concern them]. Even younger children in Lindi said that they are asked for their opinion about selling land. However, whilst they might be asked to suggest a price for the land, they said they would not be asked for their opinions on what to do with the money if it was sold. Older children mentioned sensitising parents and the wider community about what they had learned about HIV/AIDS. On the whole, however, children giving opinions or sharing understanding, is much less common in children's perceptions of what they contribute than carrying out chores.

5.2 Information of Interest to Children and the Sources they Rely On

From the twenty groups who took part in the research, the children identified a total of 26 issues about which they were interested to receive information *'kupata taarifa'*. Fieldworkers reported that younger children and those in rural areas had problems understanding this question in the survey. This may be

because it is only when you are exposed to a wider range of information that you are interested in, or can assimilate, do you begin to ignore some of it, and hence be in a position to think about what is interesting or important to you. It is hard to imagine what kind of information you would like to have if it is not available, or you are not aware that it is available.

In one case older children in Mtwara actively wanted information, but it was not available to them. This concerned how school funds were being used. Given the publicity given to making information about school funds available, and children's supposed involvement in school committees¹⁶, this information should have been available.

Table 4: Information of Interest to Children

Older children identified the same issues as the younger ones, and, in addition, the issues shown in italics.

Education /School Related	Self or Family Related	Related to the Wider Community
Reading	Wedding	Music
Writing	Funeral	Agriculture / planting flowers
Games / sports*	Family events e.g. death	Games / sports*
School calendar/ <i>Timetable for exams</i>	Health / sickness <i>- information about HIV/AIDS, malaria, Rift Valley Fever</i>	Wild animals passing by
<i>Issues to do with the school environment and development plans</i>		Insecurity in the community e.g. robbers/ unsafe places
<i>Registration for class**</i>		Story telling
<i>School competitions</i>		Meetings (e.g. village)
<i>The right to education - including specifically Hakielimu advertisements</i>		Getting a job
		News <i>- including information from outside Tanzania</i>
		Children's programmes
		<i>The environment</i>
		<i>Farming/agriculture</i>
		<i>The elderly</i>
		<i>Child Rights</i>

Note: * It wasn't always obvious from the context whether children were referring to school based games or formal matches between well-known teams and hence whether sports/games should be listed under school related as an aspect of information about the wider community.

** Not everyone automatically gets a place in Standard 1, parents have to register their children to ensure this. Schools make provision to register children from a certain date, but if this information is not widely known some children are likely to lose out. It is usually the children whose parents have the least social capital and are generally not much engaged in community matters.

¹⁶ School Committees are part of established national policy and practice; they involve mainly parents and some teachers as well as the head teacher. Under current practice the Chair of the School Committee is a signatory on the school bank accounts and so has some control over funding disbursed to school level and how it is used. From time to time, such as when PEDP was initiated, there have been efforts to have children as members of school committees, but this has faced resistance from some adults who do not want to be on equal footing with children on such committees.

This table shows that older children want a much wider range of information. The emphasis on information about schooling is very apparent, with especially the older children, presumably as some in the group near their leaving examination, prioritising it as very important. Both age groups focus on the importance of information about health and avoiding sickness, as well as family news particularly of deaths in the family. Older children also prioritised as important news, including news from outside Tanzania, information about farming and the environment. For one specific case a child mentioned information about the elderly – presumably because of a growing awareness of responsibility for the child or children involved and another child mentioned child rights.

An interest in farming or the environment is likely to be connected with a growing awareness of livelihoods and life after school. It is interesting however, that despite the information being seen as important to children in the discussion groups in Arusha, Lindi, Mtwara, Iringa and Shinyanga, a total of only sixteen children thought they would become farmers, and twelve of those were girls in the older group from Mtwara.

The sources of information also tell an interesting story. Older children receive information from a wider range of sources than their younger peers.

Table 5: Sources of Information Used by Children

Source of Information	Mentioned By 7-10 Year Olds	Mentioned By 11-14 Year Olds	Total Mentions*
Radio	5	5	10
Being told by teachers	3	5	8
Television	4	2	6
Talking with each other	2	3	5
Telephone / mobile	1	4	5
Letters	0	4	4
Newspapers	0	3	3

Note: * “Total Mentions” means the total number of times in the focus group discussions that children mentioned using that source of information.

The following sources of information received one or two mentions from children: ‘on the streets’, being told by a relative, computer, noticeboards, books, village assemblies, school parades, pamphlets, village officials, roadside advertisements, and public announcements.

The researchers tried to find out about whether children see themselves as getting the information they need when they want it. Mostly children said that they did, but hints came through of their frustrations. In one school, children said much of what they are told by teachers is about what contributions are due and when, but that they do not get information about when teachers are about to issue books. Several groups said that they were not told in advance that researchers were coming to speak to them. Children in Singida complained that they participate in research but no-one ever sends them any feedback about what happened on the basis of the research – a matter that this research will prioritise accordingly.

What this research project has not managed to pin down is the extent to which children are on the receiving end of information / instructions ‘being told by a relative’, ‘being told by a parent’, and to what extent they are actively seeking it out, by accessing a newspaper or reading a noticeboard. Neither are the researchers able to say how much time children spend on issues of getting or reflecting on information, and hence how important the whole matter is to them.

5.3 Who Listens to Children and Why?

Informal Listening Scenarios

Children were asked in very general terms about who listens to them, and their responses were overwhelmingly in terms of family and relatives and largely informal interactions. Teachers listening to them only came up once before the children were specifically asked about formal channels of communication and participation. Parents are overwhelmingly the most important people for listening to children, followed by aunts and uncles. Grandparents and other siblings came third. Where children specified an answer mothers listen more over issues of new clothes for public holidays, and fathers tend to listen more over matters to do with education, such as the provision of new exercise books, though in Dar es Salaam children said their mothers listened more over issues of schooling.

Schooling is a large part of children's communication with their parents. 55% of the research groups mentioned schools in general as a topic over which their parents listened to them, most mentioning school supplies, but Dar es Salaam children also specified if they passed exams, if they are beaten at school, or if they need money for tuition.

When asked why they are listened to, children's responses fall under a number of headings. They are put here in order of priority, with the highest number of responses first:

1. Being listened to conditionally
Children were listened to because they behaved in a way which entitled them to be heard. For example: if you use good language (Iringa), if you are not naughty (Dar es Salaam), if you work hard in school/have good behaviour/ are disciplined (Dar es Salaam and Mwanza – both urban sites), when you have done something good (Rukwa and Mtwara), if you do what you are told to do by parents (Rukwa), and if you respect your parents (Rukwa).
2. Being listened to unconditionally
Children thought they were listened to because they were young and are loved (Dar es Salaam, Lindi, Mwanza, Shinyanga), and so they could be helped (Rukwa). This seems to imply some children have a sense of being unconditionally listened to.
3. Because they are providing useful information
The children are advising their parents, and hence are listened to. Examples given were their speaking about tree conservation (Tanga), or delivering a message from teachers (Mtwara). An additional reason was simply because they go to school (Rukwa), though this could also come under the category of good behaviour).
4. Because they have a right to be listened to
This response came from older children in three sites – two of them serving high income areas and one of them middle income. This indicates that ideas about rights are not universally held.

Formal Listening Scenarios

Children were also asked about formal mechanisms for listening to their opinions. With regards to family, the findings were substantially the same. The vast majority of children felt listened to by their family, mainly in relation to school related matters. Shinyanga children explained this is because when they are grown up they will assist their parents if they are educated and have a good job. The only major exception to this was younger children in Arusha – and Terat is a largely pastoralist community – who said '*sisi tunaongozwa na wazazi*' [we are led by our parents].

Listening By Teachers

There are teachers who listen to children. This can be gleaned from the occasional reference to a good teacher being one who offers advice (and hence presumably listens to what pupils want advice on) and to a teacher who listens to explanations for why a child is late to school, rather than jumping straight to punishing the child for being late. Teachers in Tanga obviously were in the habit of doing extra to

mainstream partially sighted children into the school, and their modelling of this behaviour was picked up by the children – pupils were anxious that the research activities did not start before all of their peers including some partially sighted were ready to take part.

However, the research suggests that they are in a small minority. Only three of the eighteen groups (this question was not asked in Singida) said teachers answer questions in class, implying that one-way communication by the teacher was the predominant kind of listening that children experience from teachers. The concept of a teacher as one who listens to children is hard to put together with the level of corporal punishment, the apparent lack of discussion of discipline issues, and the lack of a school *baraza*, pupil's council or other forms of institutional listening to children, which will be described in the next section.

Many teachers seem to hold a perception of their own role and mandate towards children, which is not subject to significant challenge or negotiation, and where listening and two way communication does not really figure as an aspect of the communication process. This is indicated by the perception in some schools that there was no need to even communicate with parents about research being conducted on their children, the freedom with which some teachers assign children domestic tasks in teachers own homes, and evidence that some teachers are not maintaining basic contractual obligations of their job.

Institutional Structures for Listening by Schools

In terms of schools as an institution having formal structures for listening to children, the picture is very varied, from the entire discussion group saying the school had structures for listening to them, to the exact opposite. In one school, children choose representatives to the school committee and they can speak at the school *baraza*¹⁷. In one school, pupils taking part in the research knew who their representatives were, although they are not part of the school committee. However they felt that children were not listened to, as adults think they are too little¹⁸.

Five of the nine groups of younger children who were asked felt that their school listened to them, including the case given above. In Tanga there are study groups which help children who are partially sighted, and the teachers support these groups after class at no extra cost. Four of the older groups felt that their school listened to them, with a further group being equally divided between those who did and those who did not. In addition, in Tanga, although there was no formal representation by the pupils, there is a parents' committee (as distinct from the school committee), whom the children said presented their views to teachers. The most strongly justified affirmation that the school listens came from Shinyanga where there is a children's parliament '*bunge la watoto*' which facilitates their participation in school activities and helps them with learning about children's rights. Curiously, however, Shinyanga children did not mention child rights in the context of a 'right to be heard'.

Overall only two of the eighteen sites mentioned children's representation in school committees, and in one of those, with the caveat that views are not actually listened to. Most schools do not have *barazas* to promote children's participation, and even the choosing of class leaders, or prefects, seems to be done by teachers.

Listening By Other Institutions

There were no non-governmental organisations NGOS or community based organisations CBOs in the communities that were researched to provide potential opportunities for participation, and other avenues such as through faith based organisations were not mentioned by the children, except in Dar es Salaam.

¹⁷ A *baraza* is a semi-formal assembly convened in some schools. How it is run and just how freely opinions are expressed varies from school to school.

¹⁸ As a follow up to the research, children decided to follow up with the committee some of the issues raised during the VoC research. In particular they focussed on bringing firewood to school every Monday for it to be sold to raise income for the school. Children felt that the firewood is sold very cheaply and that this is not respectful to the time and effort they put into collecting it. Furthermore, the children had no information on what is done with the money collected in this way.

Here children are involved in choosing leaders for children's prayers, and for the welcoming of a new pastor. In the mosque children were also consulted about what contribution they could make for the construction of a new building. In this sense, religious institutions seem to offer more open space for children's participation than do schools. However, the sample is really too small to generalise from. It would be interesting to know why adults seem to make these institutions more child friendly, with more activities open to children's input.

Conclusions on Aspects of Listening

Judging by their response to the researchers, children want to be listened to, and they were almost unanimously positive to the last question in the research tool about whether they enjoyed taking part. Typical was the older group in Singida where 25 out of 26 said they were happy '*kuchangia mawazo yetu*' to contribute their opinions. The dissenting voice challenged '*kurudisha chakula kwenye shule za msingi ni ndoto. Hivyo kuzumgumzia masuala ya chakula ni kupoteza muda*' – [to get school feeding back into primary school was a dream, so talking about it was a waste of time]. Asked specifically what they had liked children said not only that they had enjoyed songs, role plays and games, but that also used words like '*kuelimishwa*' [to be educated] '*kushirikiana nao*' [to cooperate with] and '*kujifunza*' [to learn], which shows that participation in the research had also been a learning experience for them. It also implies that children taking part enjoyed the spirit of two-way communication and learning.

The overall picture is that such two-way communication is not strongly present in many interactions with adults. Children tend to be on the receiving end of information, being told, rather than actively seeking it out. There does not seem to be a very strong link between information being given out, and listening to children. It appears they are not being encouraged to respond and engage with information, and come forward with opinions, but if they make an observation, on a rather limited issue such as whether they need a new exercise book, a parent will respond.

Schools are not really nurturing children's interest and capacity to participate in the institution, outside of the family, which most directly affects their daily lives. Although they contribute economically to their families, and to the community through support to construction projects, the underlying spirit seems that they should be passive recipients of the schooling they receive, despite the insightful comments they can make about how the process could be improved.

However, the researchers do need to express a caveat, it has to be borne in mind that the researchers were with the children as complete outsiders for a short period of time. To delve deeper into more sensitive issues such as whether and how an adult listens to an orphan's opinion as to whom they should live with, or how parents address concerns about teacher who is (ab)using corporal punishment, the researchers should have spent a longer time in the school and community, to ensure that their raising of questions did not leave a child more vulnerable or exposed than before.

5.4 Aspirations for the Future

After gathering information about children's different opinions on schooling, and asking about the position of children in society, what information interested them, who listens to them and so on, the researchers wanted to ask how children see their future options. Asking about 'what you would like to be when you grow up?' is often much more a concern to adults than it is to children. In addition, the distinction between what you would ideally like to be, and what you think is actually going to happen to you, is a fine distinction that is sometimes difficult for especially younger children to grasp. Unfortunately time did not allow the researchers to ask why children made these particular choices, so much of the interpretation below is speculative.

Almost every research site managed to return information about the sex of the child as well as the job they wanted to do, but in a few cases the data was not available. For the most popular jobs the approximate breakdown as follows:

Table 6: Children's Job Aspirations

Job	Number of Boys and Girls (Total 449)	Of Those Choosing This Job, Number and % Who Were Girls
Doctor	35 8%	13 37%
Nurse [<i>nesi</i>]	38 8%	34 89%
President	39 9%	13 33%
Teacher	143 32%	100 70%
Driver	18 4%	1 6%
Pilot	15 3%	7 46%
Soldier/Police	43 10%	5 11%
Pursue further studies	10 2%	2 20%
Farmer	16 4%	15 93%
Not sure / multiple choices	8 2%	7 88%

This table represents the most frequently identified jobs and there doesn't appear to be a serious challenge to the traditional gender division of the labour force in the more traditional careers (teaching and nursing). However, it is noticeable that being a pilot is not seen as a particularly a male preserve, and that one in three of those aspiring to the 'top job' of president are girls.

Children's aspirations can also be broken down by how they place themselves in the labour market and governance structures of the country.

Table 7: Classification of Children's Job Aspirations

Classification	Types of Job Included	Percentage (N=450)
Professional/ salaried	Doctors, teachers, nurses, also pilots	54.9% (247)
Governance	President, Ministers, Member of Parliament, District and Regional Commissioners	12.7% (57)
Defence and Security	Army and police	10.4% (47)
Productive / skilled labour	Business people, <i>fundis</i> [skilled or semi skilled craftspeople, technicians], farmers	9.3% (42)
Other	This includes 'administrators' and 'managers' as they could be either professional/salaried in government service or 'productive'. Category also includes beauty queens, football players and coaches	6% (27)
Unknown / multiple choices	Also includes 'sista' as not clear from context whether this means nun or nurse.	4.9% (22)
Students	Any kind of further study (secondary upwards), but without specifying what they would like to do afterwards.	1.8% (8)

Over half the sample of children aspired to the traditional professions of education and health care (whether as doctors or nurses), with a small number of lawyers, but also a number of pilots. It is not clear why this comes over so strongly: it may be because the researchers were in schools so children were thinking more of jobs that you might obtain through education. There is also possibly a bias of children thinking more of what they would ideally like rather than what they thought they would do in practice. It does suggest a strong bias towards the caring professions, but perhaps this is because these professions are more familiar to the children. One could also surmise that their parents will likely have seen some children from the community going to train as teachers and nurses, but relatively few going to train as lawyers, so there may be a perception that the entry qualification into teaching and nursing is relatively much lower than the entry qualification to train to become a lawyer.

The next biggest group, at almost 13%, is of children aspiring to run the country. Local government councillors do not figure amongst these aspirations, perhaps it is because they are not so visible to children, given that they get information from radio and hence the national news. Alternatively, it may be that being a councillor is not seen as a job in the way that being a member of parliament is.

Almost 10% of the children, mainly boys, aspire to join the army, the police or the local militia.

It is very noticeable that few children (less than 10%) are aspiring to work in jobs that contribute directly to growth. The changing aspirations of children can be an indication of whether or not thinking overall is changing. If children see adults around them making money out of business, then one could expect that more children would aspire to this vocation, but positive examples in rural areas are relatively few and far between, despite the focus on growth at a macro level. However, there are bound to be time delays between changes around economic growth/social change and children's perceptions of what opportunities might be open to them.

Even farming, which is in practice the likely future for many children in rural areas, is not their future of choice. Agriculture is the backbone of the economy, and if there had been an increase in agriculture extension, or local marketing opportunities for agriculture opening up, one might expect older children especially to know about it, and to see a possible future for themselves.

It is possible that the low level of choice here is in part a reflection of being in school, and in part because children felt there is no point in thinking of going into business if you need capital to do it, and they see no prospect of obtaining capital. It may also be because they see few positive role models of business people in their community.

1. Regarding the methodology, this was innovative work in Tanzania asking children these kinds of questions systematically over a representative sample of the country – albeit a small sample of only 500 children. Many lessons were learnt about the methodology and research tools for work of this kind, including the length of time needed in training, and in the field, the overall length of the research tool, and how the international standard of ‘informed consent’ can be implemented in remote areas with lower levels of literacy amongst parents. Further detail on the methodology is contained in annex one.
2. Children’s outlook can be significantly different from adults. Their responses to questions showed that they view issues of schooling and their role in society holistically, rather than as two distinct ‘topics’ in the way that the adult researchers had conceptualised the research tool.

On the other hand, some issues which adults see as a single concept, such as fines as a form of punishment, children seem to see as a kind of financial contribution – suggesting that discipline, and ‘making the punishment fit the crime’ is not a straightforward issue.

3. In terms of key variables, the strongest is the age of children. Not surprisingly, older children’s responses are more nuanced, detailed and indicated a greater exposure to new ideas and experiences.

The major difference in terms of income, was that the three low income schools all put emphasis on children themselves working harder as a means to better education, whereas in all the other sites there was a predominant emphasis on the need for more supply side inputs such as teachers, books, buildings, etc.

Gender differences come out most strongly in terms of jobs that the children said they aspired to.

The major geographic variable was between Dar es Salaam and all the other research sites. Dar es Salaam children are clearly more exposed to a wider range of information and ideas from a wider range of sources, they have a much more diverse range of jobs that they want to do, and a stronger sense of entitlement. They were the only children that complained about teachers charging for tuition to the detriment of children who could not afford to pay, and were also the strongest affirmers that the way to improve education was for the children themselves to work harder.

4. Children have opinions on many issues to do with schooling, which can provide an interesting input to adult perspectives, and should be very useful to those working in the education sector. Because of their age they may only have a partial or limited view of some issues – such as the level of contributions being paid and for what – but on others such as the importance of nutrition and water supply in schools, and the value placed on home - school communications, they clearly have a sophisticated understanding.
5. Specific insights about schooling coming from this study include:
 - a. Children understand the importance of the environment, both within the narrow confines of ‘the teaching/learning environment’, and within the broader issues of the environment around the school, tree planting and so on.
 - b. Their schooling teaches them the importance of good health, nutrition and clean water and yet in practice schools do minimal amounts to provide these amenities.
 - c. Learning is heavily reliant on notes from the blackboard and textbooks, and whilst the latter are liked, and in some schools quantities are improving, the lack of sufficient textbooks is still a source of frustration because there are just too few of them. Children are sharing books between very large numbers in class, and are frustrated by not being able to read them in their own time.

- d. With regard to teachers, there are some examples of excellent practice and dedication, such as efforts to fully integrate partially sighted children, and more generally, indications that some teachers in some places are really making an effort to teach well. Students are very clear in what they want as a teacher: someone who really wants to teach, likes pupils, makes an effort, and in some cases that is what they are getting.
 - e. On the other hand, many teachers are apparently failing to meet basic contractual obligations. Failing to attend lessons comes across as a significant issue. Poor professional standards are being shown to children, such as in giving children notes but not actually explaining them. Corporal punishment regulations do not seem to be adhered to.
 - f. The overall picture is of schooling being quite a limited closed exercise with teachers explaining a fixed body of knowledge to a largely passive body of children. Communication between the school and parents in the upbringing of the children is weak.
 - g. Contributions in cash and kind are being expected in schools and children are being excluded from school because of non-payment.
 - h. The picture of whether things are getting better or worse since last year is mixed, with children having a wide variety of opinions. The vast majority of children feel that the best way to improve education is more supply side inputs, including infrastructure, teachers, school supplies, also better teachers, a more diverse curriculum, and other services in school (such as health). Children in Dar es Salaam were assertive in saying that increasing their own work and listening to teachers and parents would also be a factor.
6. The bigger picture of children growing up shows that they are active economically and socially and undertake a wide range of activities which directly benefit the family and community, or free up adults to undertake those tasks. They are listened to informally by parents, but the overall sense is of a fairly limited range of communication – issues to do with schooling were mentioned most frequently – thought this could also be because the research was taking place in a school context and setting.
 7. Children demonstrated that they have a wide range of interests and get information from a diverse range of sources. Beyond home, family and face to face communication, radio is very significant.
 8. Institutionalised' listening to children is weak. The overwhelming impression of teachers is that their model of education is top-down: their job is to explain so that a body of knowledge is understood, rather than to facilitate children in a more open ended approach to understanding the world they live in. 'Listening' is not a quality strongly associated with teachers beyond the fairly limited answering pupils' questions in class, though pupils in one school said that they wanted to be able to give their opinions on issues to do with education.

Only one school in the sample had an active *baraza*. In the rare cases where pupils are represented in school committees, the pupils' perception is that they are not seriously listened to; where they are not directly represented, pupils tend not to even know about when meetings are held and what is discussed. The major possible exception to this is in mosques and churches where children do seem to be given much more space for participation. However, this was apparent in only one research site. There were no NGOs or CBOs present in the research sites, so the researchers are not able to tell whether these newer 'sectors' offer children more opportunities to be heard.

9. Children have a diverse range of aspirations for future jobs. Just over half want to join the service professions of education and medicine. A little more than 10% want to participate in governing the country in some way, as president, a minister, a member of parliament or regional or district commissioner. Just under 10% are attracted to the army or defence, and again a little more than 10% to join the productive sector as farmers, *fundis* or business people.

10. Underlying these specific points, however, is a clear message. The children enjoyed taking part in the research, and found it a learning experience to express their opinions in the way that the researchers invited. Sometimes, as in the case of the Lindi children (see footnote 18), they decided to take specific and responsible action over something that had emerged in the course of discussion, and which appeared to them unfair – demonstrating both how active learning and broader social participation can be nurtured.

Children are clear sighted about the contradictions between a curriculum that teaches the importance of clean water and good nutrition and what they actually receive at school. Very often their specific opinions and observations have value for policy makers and planners, and this justifies continuing this research project, the *'Views of the Children'* on an ongoing basis.

Above and beyond such technical points, there is a human level which challenges all adults, whether as parents or professionals: children want to be listened to and taken notice of. They want to be taught by teachers who like children, like teaching and who make an effort, and even if it is only at the level of listening to requests for school equipment. Children want and need to be heard.

This annex summarises a longer document focussing specifically on the methodology of this study, the *'Views of the Children'*. It intends only to highlight how the work was done, given that participatory research with children is a developing field in Tanzania, and in the hope that others will be interested to follow up the work this study has started.

1. Development of Research Tool Combined with Training of Fieldworkers

The research tool was developed in a participatory way, involving different stakeholders. Potential topics were identified through discussion with the Research and Analysis Working Group (RAWG) of the Poverty Monitoring System of the Ministry of Planning, Economy and Empowerment, and those working on the *'Views of the People'* study which was being undertaken by RAWG. A children's workshop was held to obtain their opinions on the topics, and their advice as to how to open up discussion in a simple and accessible way.

The full elaboration of the research tool was done in the space of a week, using researchers that were already experienced in researching with children¹⁹. Training inputs were given on the difference between qualitative and quantitative research methodologies. The list of topics emerging from the children's workshop was refined down into a focus on issues of education/schooling and also on the position of children in society. This was further refined into smaller research questions, with decisions made on which questions were essentially quantitative (seeking numbers of children responding yes or no), and those where the researchers would be looking for more qualitative responses (giving children space to discuss the issue and air views), and those questions which were a mixture of each.

Research questions were then matched to particular tools to elicit the kinds of responses the researchers were seeking. The emphasis is on keeping an upbeat pace so that children maintain a high level of interest, at the same time ensuring children feel safe and secure, so that if they want to express a dissenting view, or bring up a problem they will not feel exposed or left vulnerable.

Examples of these tools include:

- For quantitative questions: *'Are there enough teachers in your school?'* (yes or no). *'Is the situation better or worse than last year?'* (yes or no). Responses were gathered by a show of hands, or 'voting', with small seeds, stones etc – whatever was to hand locally. In other cases the game *'the sun shines on'* was played. Children are all moving around in a loose circle and the researcher calls out a question such as *'the sun shines on those who pay (or don't pay) school contributions'* and those for whom the answer is yes move into the centre. Other facilitators stand on the outside and quickly count how many are involved, before another question is called. A variation is *'there is room on the bus for...'*, and the children who would give a 'yes' response join up with the bus in a 'crocodile'.
- For qualitative questions: *'Who listens to you and about what?'* Children performed scenes from their daily interactions as role plays.
- For mixed answers: Opinion lines were used. A line is marked on the ground and children told at one end of the line teachers are kind, listening people who help you, and at the other end they are discipline figures who you are afraid of. Children are then invited to place themselves on the line according to their overall estimation of their teachers. This gives a quantitative response such as most children at 70% seeing teachers as more helpful than disciplinarian, as well as enabling some qualitative responses as children discuss amongst themselves where they should be.

¹⁹ Some fieldworkers had received training in using participatory research to generate quantitative data about children at the UNICEF workshop: *'Participatory Approaches for Working with Children and Young People in Programme Planning, Implementation and Studies and Evaluation'*, April 3rd-8th, 2006, in Dar es Salaam, facilitated by Dynamix Ltd. and had also been involved in developing a manual of research tools for use with children, in Tanzania, titled *'Mwongozo wa Mbinu Shirikishi: Ushiriki wa Vijana na Watoto'*

More details of these kinds of tools are available from *'Mwongozo wa Mbinu Shirikishi: Ushiriki wa Vijana na Watoto'* (2006) in the REPOA library.

A draft research tool was trialled by three teams, each of four people, in three different Dar es Salaam schools. In retrospect, more time should have been devoted to this aspect of research preparation, because of the need to ensure complete standardisation of the way the research tool was used by each of the three research teams.

A basic principle of participatory research is that it is driven by local dynamics, so that if research participants show a particular interest in an issue, time should be devoted to exploring it fully. The researchers were fully familiar with this approach. The challenge was to ensure comparability across the work of the three teams, and hence enforce a degree of standardisation. This was additionally difficult with children, because if more time was spent exploring a particular issue in detail, the finish time for the work could not be extended because either the children would be too tired, or they would be expected back at home. The researchers did not always achieve that standardisation, which is why some parts of the research documented here report data from less than the twenty research groups.

Refinements to the draft research tool were made by the research team leaders on the last day of the training, and then time allocated for team leaders to explain these minor changes to their teams before work started.

2. Ethics of Working with Children

Participation

Children participated in setting the research agenda as well as being research participants. In terms of the former, the researchers tried to implement good practice as defined amongst others by 'Hart's Ladder',²⁰ and experience from the training workshop held at REPOA on participatory research with children²¹. Researchers were honest with them that the level of participation was children being consulted, informed and invited to give advice on projects or programs designed and run by adults. The young people were informed about how their input would be used and the outcomes of the decisions made by adults. One example of an issue which might otherwise not have been part of the survey was children's interest in whether children understand their textbooks.

The research tool was designed to elicit maximum participation from children, through a range of different kinds of activities (fast, slow, noisy, quiet, talking, listening singing and so on). Judging by the children's feedback (see main text, section 5.3) they were happy with the fieldwork, and also keen to see a follow-up to it.

Ethics during Fieldwork

As part of the fieldwork training focus was on how to ensure at the very least researchers 'did no harm' through the research. One of the research team leaders led a session in which all possible causes of vulnerability were brainstormed, followed by thinking through what could be done to avoid this happening. Examples included:

²⁰ Roger A Hart (1997) *'Children's Participation: The theory and practice of Involving Young Citizens in community Development and Environmental Care.'* Unicef / Earthscan. Hart drew attention to the ways in which children are involved in different kinds of activities, largely with adults, and labeled the kinds of participation in ascending order: manipulation, decoration, tokenism, assigned but informed, consulted and informed, adult initiated shared decisions with children, child initiated and directed, child initiated and shared decisions with adults. Numerous commentators have critiqued the work, but the overall message about being adults being clear to themselves and to children about the what the how and the why of their participation has remained clear.

²¹ The training on participatory research with children was held at REPOA on 13-19 April 2005. The training sponsored by Save the Children was facilitated by Deborah Wason, Rosemarie Mwaipopo and Derrick Mbelwa. A number of participatory approaches were introduced at the training including a practical exercise with young researchers.

- Children getting into trouble at home for not doing chores or getting home late.
Adopted solution: seek parents' permission for child to take part in research; finish research session at the agreed time.
- Girls getting into trouble for being seen with 'strange men'.
Adopted solution: ensure that if, for example, a girl wants to talk to one of the researchers after the formal session is over, that there is always a woman present.
- Teachers trying to find out from children who said what in the research, and whether anything negative was said about them or the school.
Adopted solution: ensuring the research took place away from where it could be overheard, ensuring teachers understood that what was said was confidential and that the write up would not identify any one school in particular, ensuring that children understood that what was said in the context of the research session should not be repeated or attributed elsewhere.

Each member of the research team then signed a code of conduct that he/she would ensure that no harm would happen to the child participants. A copy of the signed code of conduct was kept in a file at REPOA and a copy was taken by the researcher.

Informed Consent

A further aspect of ethics was to attempt to ensure that the children's parents were properly informed about the research and had the opportunity to opt out if they did not want their children to take part. Researchers intended to do this through a letter sent to children's parents after the researchers had completed the selection of participants from the school attendance register. In most cases this worked well, and there were no cases of parents saying they did not want the children to take part. However, in one case the teachers did not send the letters home because they said it was for them to choose how children spent their time during school hours, so that there was no need to seek parental consent. In two other cases, the letters were obviously sent without any meaningful explanation to the children, and to parents who might have had very limited literacy. What happened was that parents then arrived at the school on the day of the research, clutching unopened letters and asking to be excused from the meeting. They had clearly not understood that it was their children the researchers wanted to see, and were used to interpreting any communication from school as a summons for them to come to the school.

3. Documentation and Analysis

The following system was used to try and ensure good documentation whilst in the field. Fieldworkers were advised to draw the following grid on their field notes.

Points of Interest	Fieldwork Notes	Clarifications / Explanations
This space is used during the fieldwork process for any thoughts from the person recording, e.g. children struggling to understand this question; children getting tired by this point; child looked worried about being asked about being listened to at school, etc.	<p>This is the space which is used during the fieldwork itself – for recording what children say (also, if possible age and sex of child), results of voting, etc.</p> <p>It will be a bit messy and scrappy but so long as it's readable, it's OK!</p> <p>This bit is in Kiswahili</p>	<p>This space is used during the evening to highlight key points, draw attention to useful quotations etc</p> <p>This could be in English</p>

To try to avoid nuances being lost, fieldworkers were discouraged from re-writing field notes, and fieldworkers themselves were involved in doing early analysis of the notes before the process of writing up began.

The first analysis was done by summarising field notes onto flip chart paper which was marked up with the following grid. Comparing across rows and down columns enabled the research team to see emerging patterns, details of which were then followed up with a thorough examination of the field notes.

Question Number (from research tool) and Age of Children	Urban	Mixed	Rural
High Income	Mwanza: Geita	Iringa : Mufindi	Lindi: Lindi Rural
Medium Income	Singida: Singida Urban	Mtwara: Mtwara Rural	Shinyanga: Maswa Rukwa: Sumbawanga Urban
Low Income	Dar es Salaam: Kinondoni	Tanga: Tanga Urban	Arusha: Arusha Urban

From this analysis the overall picture emerged, as documented in the main text of this report.

4. Lessons Learnt about the Research Methodology

This study 'The Views of the Children' was about piloting a methodology as well as about the specific findings. In the light of this, the following lessons have been learned.

1. More time was needed to be devoted to ensuring standardisation of the way the research tool was used than in familiarising the researchers with participatory approaches. Rather than having the three teams trialling the tool in different places, it would have been better to do all the trialling as one large group, so that common ground could be clearly established about how each tool would be used.
2. There is value in the participation of all fieldworkers in the development of the research tool, but the cost is the length of time involved in each person having their say. With any larger group of researchers than the twelve used here, it probably would not be possible. It would have been better to have a shorter period of more intense work by the fieldwork team leaders, followed by more specific training of fieldworkers on an already agreed standardised research tool.
3. The training only took one week, but six to seven days would have enabled more time to be devoted to giving fieldworkers practice in capturing children's exact words. It would also have been good to make more use of complementary recording methods, especially cameras and video.
4. The researchers probably tried to ask too many questions, despite efforts to refine the research tool down to bare essentials. It was found that two to two and a half hours is the limit of time for children to actively participate without having a proper break and some refreshment – which was not in the budget. In practice the researchers were in the schools/communities for at least two consecutive days, so in retrospect it might have been better to meet the children twice – one day on the first issue of education and the second day on the second issue of children in society, and for about one and a half hours each time.
5. It would have been good to be able to devote more time to triangulating data from children with other sources at the school and in the community – particularly issues like the costs of schooling. The cost of the school stamp (only about Tshs 100/-) was obviously of significance to many children, but children never mentioned the cost of school uniform, which would be significantly higher, (for example in Lindi the uniform for a standard one pupil costs Tshs 6,000). It would be interesting to know if parents prioritised issues of cost similarly, and if so why or why not?

5. Limitations of the Findings

1. The sample was small. It is not clear whether the findings are of a particular school, or a reflection of more widespread attitudes and practice in a district or region.
2. The approach was not completely standardised across all research sites. Unlike questionnaires where the question is asked with identical wording to each respondent, the participatory approach entailed rephrasing and explaining issues in different ways to ensure that the children understood. In Tanga the presence of partially sighted children necessitated dropping any research tools that relied on visuals.
3. Not every question in the research tool was asked in every research site. This is because of the issue of time, if time had been taken up explaining an issue to enable children to respond, sometimes researchers ran out of time to cover all the issues as originally planned. This meant that it is difficult to make particularly quantitative comparisons across the sites.

4. The findings are more descriptive than explanatory, and researchers were left with issues for further research to engage with, such as why Dar es Salaam and Tanga participants focussed on improving the quality of education through their own efforts, whereas in other parts of the country, they responded with a list of needs, such as books, teachers and classrooms? Why do so many children want to become teachers? Because that's one of the few salaried jobs they have been exposed to? To do a better job than the current ones? To 'get their own back' on other children? With the exception of odd cases where a child volunteered their reason, the data doesn't show.
5. Last but not least, the researchers only canvassed the opinions of children who are in school. According to the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training only 2.7% of children of primary school age are not in school, and the overall sample size of 512 would have implied identifying 14 out of school children as representative of all others, or 1-2 children in each research site. This seems a little unfair to the complexities of the issues facing out of school children. Ensuring their voices are heard is a major challenge for future work of this kind.

Despite these limitations, the picture which does emerge is sufficiently clear to enable us to give the findings with some confidence and to be sure that a secure start has been made in the process of learning to listen to the views of Tanzania's children.

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